

BEFORE THE
FLORIDA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

In the Matter of:

DOCKET NO. 20250062-TP

Commission approval of Florida
Telecommunications Relay, Inc.'s,
fiscal year 2025/2026 proposed budget.

PROCEEDINGS: COMMISSION CONFERENCE AGENDA
ITEM NO. 1

COMMISSIONERS
PARTICIPATING: CHAIRMAN MIKE LA ROSA
COMMISSIONER ART GRAHAM
COMMISSIONER GARY F. CLARK
COMMISSIONER ANDREW GILES FAY
COMMISSIONER GABRIELLA PASSIDOMO SMITH

DATE: Tuesday, July 1, 2025

PLACE: Betty Easley Conference Center
Room 148
4075 Esplanade Way
Tallahassee, Florida

REPORTED BY: DEBRA R. KRICK
Court Reporter and Notary
Public in and for the State
of Florida at Large

PREMIER REPORTING
TALLAHASSEE, FLORIDA
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1 P R O C E E D I N G S

2 CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: All right. Let's now move
3 to our discussion items. I will allow folks to get
4 into place. I am going to, of course, start with
5 No. 1.

6 Mr. Williams, I think when you are ready, we
7 are ready to go.

8 MS. WILLIAMS: All righty. Good afternoon,
9 Commissioners. Curtis Williams with the Office of
10 Industry Development and Market Analysis.

11 Item 1 addresses Florida Telecommunications
12 Relay, Incorporated's, proposed budget and the
13 telecommunications relay surcharge for fiscal year
14 2025/2026.

15 In Issue 1, staff recommends the Commission
16 modify FTRI's proposed budget expenses of 4.1
17 million to decrease TRS provider expense by
18 \$409,796, decrease legal expense by \$22,661, and
19 increase VCP speech impaired equipment expense by
20 \$2,000, and approve a total budget expense of 3.6
21 million for fiscal year 2025/2026.

22 Staff also recommends the Commission allow
23 FTRI to transfer up to \$897,011 from the reserve
24 account to offset staff's projected revenue
25 shortfall.

1 In Issue 2, staff recommends are the
2 Commission maintain the current TRS surcharge at
3 eight cents, and recommends the Commission order
4 all local exchange companies to continue billing
5 the eight-cent surcharge for fiscal year 2025/2026.

6 Mr. Cecil Bradley, FTRI's Executive Director,
7 is here to address the Commission.

8 CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Great. Mr. Bradley, you
9 are recognized, sir, when you are ready.

10 MR. BRADLEY: Good afternoon, Commissioners.
11 I have nothing more to say at this point except
12 thank you so much for your continued support since
13 the beginning of the program in 1991, and also for
14 the support of the last two years, the support
15 towards us offering wireless equipment at FTRI.

16 We just had our bill passed, which is amazing,
17 all senators, the full House, everyone passed the
18 bill. No opposition. The Governor signed the bill
19 on June 19th, I think it is, the Senate Bill 344.
20 It was amazing. It was really -- we had great and
21 strong support for this bill. And a lot of people
22 said it's about time, 34 years we have been waiting
23 to get these changes in the law, and so it's time
24 to go forward. So we really thank you for your
25 support. We really do. So that was it.

1 CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Thank you. Commissioners,
2 questions or discussion?

3 Commissioner Fay.

4 COMMISSIONER FAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I
5 know you are shocked that I want to talk about this
6 item.

7 You know, I echo some of what Mr. Bradley
8 provided for this hearing. I mean, it was a long
9 time coming. Probably the biggest winners of all
10 of this are my colleagues who don't have to hear me
11 complain about the statute anymore, and the
12 limitations that it has on. I do think it opens
13 the door for a lot of engagement.

14 I want to, I guess, just get clarity from our
15 staff. So, you know, we go through the typical
16 annual budget process. Mr. Bradley and his team
17 present their budget going forward, and we review
18 that, and the recommendation has adjustments in
19 there which I support.

20 With that said, I couldn't find in the history
21 FTRI bringing forward their budget where it almost
22 seemed like an LBR, where they brought forward
23 later in the year some sort of budget amendment or
24 a process to where they could bring forward some
25 sort of budget amendment if they -- you know, I

1 guess it's sort of ironic or just a coincidence. I
2 mean, today is the effective date for the bill --
3 for Senate Bill 344, so it might give them an
4 opportunity to bring something forward that they
5 wouldn't have been able to bring forward otherwise,
6 or do you envision it has they would need to wait
7 until bringing forward their budget a year from
8 now?

9 MS. WILLIAMS: They -- it's their option. We
10 ask that question as we went through the budget
11 process, because they did seek approval of some
12 more advanced equipment, equipment that was
13 wireline based equipment, not wireless, but was
14 more advanced equipment than what they provided
15 before, and that's included in the budget. And so
16 we asked them, with that equipment being in the
17 budget, do you anticipate, you know, coming in and
18 seeking approval of more advanced equipment if the
19 bill becomes law. And, you know, they indicated
20 that they may, but at this point, they do have that
21 option.

22 COMMISSIONER FAY: Okay. They have no
23 prohibition to doing that.

24 Mr. Chairman, would it be okay if we directed
25 that question to Mr. Bradley and see if they have

1 any input?

2 CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Of course. Absolutely.

3 MR. BRADLEY: Okay. So thank you so much,
4 Commissioner. There is a lot of things that we do
5 need to do first. We know that the bill is new.
6 We know it just passed. We have several things
7 that we need to deal with with the PSC staff. We
8 have to do financial eligibility level. That's the
9 first thing we need to discuss with the staff.

10 Secondly, we also have to upgrade our website.
11 We need to include the second track of eligibility
12 in reference to wireless.

13 Currently, landlined equipment does not have a
14 financial eligibility. Wireless will have a
15 financial qualification. And it's going to take
16 about three to six months to get to that point. I
17 do not anticipate us giving out -- distributing any
18 equipment until probably January '26 sometime. But
19 it will take some time to do this, so we are not
20 going to do it immediately. Possibly January 2026.

21 So we need to sit down with the PSC staff and
22 kind of go over our plans, share our plans. And if
23 we can make any amendments to the budget, I would
24 discuss it with them so we can bring it before you
25 at a later date, possibly in the fall.

1 The reason why we need the website to be
2 designed is because we have got to add some things.
3 I have some money set aside in the budget to revamp
4 our website. So there is a lot of things that need
5 to be done in the fall, which we can address at
6 that time.

7 Thank you.

8 COMMISSIONER FAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
9 And I think -- it sounds like it may be appropriate
10 at the time, but we may not see that until the next
11 fiscal year, and so that will be just a
12 determination of what FTRI brings forward, but I
13 appreciate the response.

14 There isn't a prohibition, it's just not
15 something that we have done before necessarily, so
16 it will depend on what they bring forward at that
17 time.

18 MS. WILLIAMS: Commissioner, I would like to
19 also add that as Mr. Bradley indicated, there are a
20 lot -- there will be a lot involved in the process.
21 I mean, once they do present a proposal to the
22 Commission, there are things that staff would need
23 to look at before we bring it to you. There may be
24 rulemaking that will need to be done to address the
25 income eligibility criteria that Mr. Bradley

1 mentioned, and also for us to, you know, take a
2 look at the overall mechanics of how they would
3 seek to distribute the information.

4 Of course, we anticipate that there will be
5 more stringent eligibility requirements, and more
6 involvement from hearing professionals to assess
7 because we are, you know, looking at approving more
8 advanced equipment, so it's a process that may --
9 that may take a while. It may not be, you know, a
10 proposal is filed and then we can bring it to you.
11 Rulemaking may be need to occur first to have rules
12 in place to address the income criteria.

13 COMMISSIONER FAY: So that income limit, to
14 your point, you would have to do that all of that
15 before you --

16 MS. WILLIAMS: Yes, we would anticipate doing
17 all, that's why we asked FTRI during the process,
18 we just wanted to kind of get an indication of when
19 we may be seeing something.

20 But to answer your, you know, initial
21 question, they do have the flexibility to file. So
22 we, you know, we wouldn't -- we didn't want to
23 discourage them from doing that, but we wanted to,
24 you know, make sure that it's understood that it
25 would, you know, it would be a more involved

1 process than just saying, you know, here's your
2 proposal. There are certain rules that would need
3 to be in place, and staff would need to develop
4 more detailed criteria to evaluate their proposal
5 before we bring it to you.

6 COMMISSIONER FAY: Okay. And then the devices
7 that are presented in here that don't meet that new
8 definition that essentially are somewhat
9 workarounds, you see those as kind of a
10 steppingstone towards --

11 MS. WILLIAMS: Yes, exactly. And that gave us
12 comfort with that also, because we asked those
13 questions. The XLC8-GLT Deluxe and the VCP speech
14 impaired equipment, those are new pieces of
15 equipment that FTRI recently started to distribute.
16 Even though they are wireline based, they have some
17 functionality of some of the types of equipment
18 that they want to start distributing in the future.

19 So, you know, they request in their budget,
20 you know, a significant increase for the XLC8,
21 about \$111,000. So it's a good interim resource
22 for them to have to serve their customers. FTRI
23 indicated that there was significant demand for
24 that equipment. And that equipment, it still
25 addresses some customers who may not have access to

1 broadband, who may not have access to wireless, or
2 who may not feel comfortable using wireless. So I
3 think FTRI's goal in that was to, you know,
4 continue to try to address the needs of those
5 customers by providing them with more advanced
6 equipment as they prepare to, you know, provide
7 even more advanced equipment.

8 COMMISSIONER FAY: Sure. I appreciate that.

9 And then from our perspective, I know they
10 have got marketing in their budget. Historically,
11 they have had to adopt their methods of what they
12 are promoting. When we get to the point of this
13 new technology being implemented, do you foresee
14 anyways maybe the Commission can engage with them?
15 I mean, it sounds like Mr. Bradley, they are going
16 to update their website and some things that they
17 are doing so the information gets out, but I -- you
18 know, my hope is that the Commission can find ways
19 to support, I mean, I think the narrative has
20 significantly changed over the past years, in that,
21 we have been, in many ways, a burden to FTRI being
22 able to innovate and do what they do just because
23 of what the statute said, and our limitations
24 implementing that. But now that we are where we
25 are, the hope would be that that exposure to these

1 different devices could be helpful for them to
2 essentially get more people on there.

3 My concern is just that they are going to have
4 limitations as to how they could market. The
5 Commission engages with customers in different
6 ways, and I hope we can look at it internally how
7 we are able to support that.

8 I mean, this is a bill that Mr. Bradley and
9 his team have worked on for a few years. It was
10 run by a democratic Senator and a super majority
11 House, Republic House, and Senator Rodriguez on the
12 Senate side, and it passed, as Mr. Bradley
13 mentioned, unanimously and was signed by the
14 Governor. It's really good policy. I am just
15 concerned, from an implementation standpoint, that
16 most won't know about it. I haven't seen an
17 article written about it. I haven't seen anything
18 written about it.

19 And so as they look to expose individuals who
20 can now access this technology, I hope maybe we can
21 look at ways within our own agency to be supportive
22 of that. And I know the Chair has been
23 prioritizing putting information up constantly so
24 customers can access that. Maybe when they come
25 forward with their proposal next year, we will be

1 able to advise or guide them in some ways as to a
2 way that would be effective with their money.

3 So I know they have got it in their budget
4 this year for marketing, but I think that targeting
5 might change a little bit when they start being
6 able to provide new technology.

7 I will give you an opportunity to respond if
8 you there is anything you think that we can do
9 with, you know, from an agency perspective.

10 MS. WILLIAMS: Well, I agree with you. We can
11 assist with some of their outreach efforts. I
12 mean, you know, they presented their outreach
13 budget, and they do, you know, advertise, and they
14 have a sizable outreach marketing budget, but, you
15 know, it's -- staff can do whatever the Commission
16 would direct us to do, or seek us to do to assist
17 that effort.

18 COMMISSIONER FAY: And the good news is I am
19 committing the communications staff to doing it,
20 and not your staff, by proposing that, and so I
21 think we will work with them and see what we can do
22 to work collaboratively with them to do something
23 going forward.

24 I really appreciate your work on the budget,
25 Mr. Bradley's work with his group, and the folks

1 that they brought on to make these changes and
2 just, you know, really grateful to my colleagues
3 and the Chair for, you know, over the years,
4 working towards being responsive to the statute,
5 providing recommendations that were required to
6 provide to the Legislature. And seeing some of
7 these changes made, it's certainly not a short
8 road, but it's one that I think will benefit these
9 individuals in a way that will go far beyond our
10 time at the Commission, so I want to thank you guys
11 for your work on this, and thank Mr. Bradley.

12 MR. BRADLEY: Yes, I have a comment. Can I
13 add a few more words?

14 We do have an outreach team, and we have what
15 is called a marketing company. They do a lot of
16 promotion for our program. We do do that, and we
17 are also looking at a new one. So what will happen
18 is, in the fall, as we begin to get closer to
19 letting the public know about the new devices,
20 marketing what's available, that's our plan to
21 continue to work on that.

22 But the word is out that the bill has passed.
23 It's become a law. And so we are letting them know
24 there is going to be some changes in that area in
25 the future, but as you said, we will work with the

1 PSC staff.

2 And also one more thing. If you realize, in
3 reference to the bill, it also did allow us --
4 what's the word for it? To provide new technology
5 for the future that really hasn't even been devised
6 yet. We are not stuck with why just current
7 technology from right now, today. The bill covers,
8 say, if broadband is replaced by something else, we
9 will be ready. We will be able to move forward.
10 And that was the nice thing about the bill.

11 CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Thank you.

12 And, Commissioner Fay, I think maybe what we
13 will do, we will definitely continue this
14 conversation, I think, with an Internal Affairs
15 meeting later in the fall, we can possibly get an
16 update from them, invite them in and have further
17 discussion and also talk about the outreach that we
18 can do as an agency, and we don't have to put poor
19 Mr. Williams on the spot there and come up with an
20 idea. I was kind of curious on the answer he was
21 going to provide.

22 But you definitely -- you got it from me that
23 we are committed to continued discussion and see,
24 you know, what gets developed over time, and do
25 that as an agency.

1 COMMISSIONER FAY: Appreciate that, Mr.
2 Chairman. And Mr. Williams is used to me putting
3 him on the spot at this point, so he tolerates it.

4 With that, Mr. Chairman, if my colleagues
5 don't have anything, I am prepared to move the
6 item.

7 CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Okay. Any further
8 questions or discussions?

9 All right, seeing none.

10 COMMISSIONER FAY: Thank you.

11 Mr. Chairman, with that, I would move for the
12 approval on all issues in Item 1.

13 CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Excellent. Hearing a
14 motion, is there a second?

15 COMMISSIONER GRAHAM: Second.

16 CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Hearing a motion and
17 hearing a second.

18 All those in favor signify by saying yay.

19 (Chorus of yays.)

20 CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Yay.

21 Opposed no?

22 (No response.)

23 CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Show that Item No. 1
24 passes. Thank you. Thank you, staff, and thank
25 you.

1 (Agenda item concluded.)

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COUNTY OF LEON)

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DATED this 18th day of July, 2025.


DEBRA R. KRICK
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