

BEFORE THE FLORIDA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

In re: Petition to gross-up) DOCKET NO. 910557-WU
contributions-in-aid-of-) ORDER NO. PSC-92-0253-FOF-WU
construction (CIAC) for the) ISSUED: 04/27/92
related tax impact by LAKE)
HILLS UTILITIES, INC. in Lake)
County)
_____)

The following Commissioners participated in the disposition of this matter:

THOMAS M. BEARD, Chairman
SUSAN F. CLARK
J. TERRY DEASON
BETTY EASLEY
LUIS J. LAUREDO

NOTICE OF PROPOSED AGENCY ACTION

ORDER APPROVING CONTINUED GROSS-UP
OF CONTRIBUTIONS-IN-AID-OF-CONSTRUCTION

BY THE COMMISSION:

NOTICE is hereby given by the Florida Public Service Commission that the action discussed herein is preliminary in nature and will become final unless a person whose interests are adversely affected files a petition for a formal proceeding, pursuant to Rule 25-22.029, Florida Administrative Code.

BACKGROUND

In Order No. 16971, issued December 18, 1986, the Commission granted approval for water and wastewater utilities to amend their service availability policies to meet the tax impact on Contributions-in-aid-of-construction (CIAC) resulting from the amendment of Section 118(b) of the Internal Revenue Code. In Order No. 23541, issued October 1, 1990, we determined that any water and wastewater utility currently grossing-up must file a petition for continued authority to gross-up no later than October 29, 1990, and also ordered that no utility may gross-up CIAC without first obtaining the approval of this Commission. Orders Nos. 16971 and 23541 also prescribed the accounting and regulatory treatments for the gross-up and required refunds of certain gross-up amounts collected.

During our review of the tariffs, we discovered that Lake Hills Utilities, Inc. (Lake Hills or utility) had not received notice of Order No. 23541 and thus, it failed to request permission

DOCUMENT NUMBER-DATE

04107 APR 27 1992

F-PSC-RECORDS/REPORTING

to continue gross-up by the deadline set forth in Order No. 23541. However, on September 12, 1991, pursuant to Order No. 23541, Lake Hills filed for authority to continue grossing-up CIAC. Although the information as filed did not meet the filing requirements of Order No. 23541, on November 18, 1991, the utility filed a supplement to its petition containing additional data and the proposed tariffs. Further, on February 17, 1992, the utility filed its second supplement in support of its petition.

APPROVAL TO CONTINUE GROSS-UP

In accordance with Order No. 23541, Lake Hills has provided the Commission with a schedule which reflects that the utility will incur an actual above-the-line tax liability; a statement of interest coverage indicating a times interest earned (TIE) ratio of less than 2x; and a statement that it does not have an alternative source of financing available at a reasonable rate. Further, as justification for the gross-up, the utility states that based on the total operating revenues generated in 1990, it will not be able to generate enough revenues to cover its operating expenses, service debt, and pay the taxes associated with CIAC.

The utility also states that it is unable to obtain alternative financing on the strength of its own operations as a result of its continued losses. Additional borrowings, even if available, would further erode the utility's capital structure and add to operating losses via additional interest expense. Lake Hills also indicated that it selected the full gross-up method because it is the least costly alternative. Finally, the utility submitted proposed tariffs for the gross-up.

Based on the information filed, we find that Lake Hills will continue to have an actual above-the-line tax liability associated with the collection of CIAC and has demonstrated a continued need to gross-up. The utility's request to continue collecting CIAC gross-up is, therefore, approved. The tariffs submitted by the utility shall be effective upon the expiration of the protest period set forth in the Notice of Further Proceedings attached to this Order, if no timely protests are filed.

All gross-up CIAC collections are to be made in accordance with the accounting and regulatory treatments and record keeping method prescribed in Orders Nos. 16971, and 23541, and all matters discussed in the body of those Orders are expressly incorporated herein by reference.

ORDER NO. PSC-92-0253-FOF-WU
DOCKET NO. 910557-WU
PAGE 3

Based on the foregoing, it is therefore,

ORDERED by the Florida Public Service Commission that approval is granted for Lake Hills Utilities, Inc., to continue collecting the gross-up on CIAC. It is further

ORDERED that all gross-up collections are to be made in accordance with the provisions of Orders Nos. 16971 and 23541, which are incorporated herein by reference. It is further

ORDERED that the tariffs filed by Lake Hills Utilities, Inc., for CIAC gross-up shall be effective upon the expiration date of the protest period set forth in the Notice of Further Proceedings attached to this Order, if no timely protests are filed. It is further

ORDERED that all provisions of this Order are issued as proposed agency action and shall become final, unless an appropriate petition in the form provided by Rule 25-22.029, Florida Administrative Code, is received by the Director of the Division of Records and Reporting at his office at 101 East Gaines Street, Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0870, by the date set forth in the Notice of Further Proceedings below. It is further

ORDERED that this docket shall be closed upon expiration of the protest period, if no protest is received.

By ORDER of the Florida Public Service Commission, this
27th day of April, 1992.



STEVE TRIBBLE Director
Division of Records and Reporting

(S E A L)

LAJ

NOTICE OF FURTHER PROCEEDINGS OR JUDICIAL REVIEW

The Florida Public Service Commission is required by Section 120.59(4), Florida Statutes, to notify parties of any administrative hearing or judicial review of Commission orders that is available under Sections 120.57 or 120.68, Florida Statutes, as well as the procedures and time limits that apply. This notice should not be construed to mean all requests for an administrative hearing or judicial review will be granted or result in the relief sought.

The action proposed herein is preliminary in nature and will not become effective or final, except as provided by Rule 25-22.029, Florida Administrative Code. Any person whose substantial interests are affected by the action proposed by this order may file a petition for a formal proceeding, as provided by Rule 25-22.029(4), Florida Administrative Code, in the form provided by Rule 25-22.036(7)(a) and (f), Florida Administrative Code. This petition must be received by the Director, Division of Records and Reporting at his office at 101 East Gaines Street, Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0870, by the close of business on May 18, 1992.

In the absence of such a petition, this order shall become effective on the day subsequent to the above date as provided by Rule 25-22.029(6), Florida Administrative Code.

Any objection or protest filed in this docket before the issuance date of this order is considered abandoned unless it satisfies the foregoing conditions and is renewed within the specified protest period.

If this order becomes final and effective on the date described above, any party adversely affected may request judicial review by the Florida Supreme Court in the case of an electric, gas or telephone utility or by the First District Court of Appeal in the case of a water or wastewater utility by filing a notice of appeal with the Director, Division of Records and Reporting and filing a copy of the notice of appeal and the filing fee with the appropriate court. This filing must be completed within thirty (30) days of the effective date of this order, pursuant to Rule 9.110, Florida Rules of Appellate Procedure. The notice of appeal must be in the form specified in Rule 9.900(a), Florida Rules of Appellate Procedure.