

BEFORE THE FLORIDA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

In Re: Petition for Approval of) DOCKET NO. 941250-EI
Tariff Revision to Require) ORDER NO. PSC-95-0132-FOF-EI
Customers to Obtain Their Own) ISSUED: January 26, 1995
Self-Contained Meter Enclosures)
by Tampa Electric Company)
_____)

The following Commissioners participated in the disposition of this matter:

SUSAN F. CLARK, Chairman
J. TERRY DEASON
JOE GARCIA
JULIA L. JOHNSON
DIANE K. KIESLING

ORDER GRANTING APPROVAL OF TARIFF REVISION

BY THE COMMISSION:

On December 1, 1994, Tampa Electric Company (TECO) filed a petition requesting authority for a tariff revision requiring all of TECO's customers to obtain self-contained meter enclosures and meter sockets at the customer's expense. These self-contained enclosures, instrument transformer enclosures, and meter sockets are the metallic casing and slots which house the customers' electric usage meter, and are installed by the customer when the customer builds a facility. The company is now providing these devices free of charge to anyone who requests one, pursuant to Commission Order No. 6674.

Order No. 6674, issued in Docket No. 73632-EU(CI), on May 20, 1975, directed the regulated electric utilities to provide self-contained meter enclosures at no cost to contractors of residential properties. This requirement appears to have been an attempt to create uniformity of costs among IOU's in the Underground Residential Distribution docket. The order did not address any other reason for the requirement. In Order No. 18893, issued in Docket No. 870225-EI, on February 22, 1988, the Commission granted Florida Power & Light Company a waiver to Order No. 6674 allowing Florida Power & Light to require residential customers to purchase and maintain their own self-contained meter enclosures and meter sockets.

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TECO points out that self-contained meter enclosures are not a part of the utility function, but simply house the meter itself. As such, TECO argues that the costs for meter enclosures and sockets should be borne by the customer when the structure is initially wired for electric service or when it must be replaced due to obsolescence or wear, and not by the general body of ratepayers.

In addition, instrument transformer enclosures for TECO's industrial customers were inadvertently omitted from TECO's filing. The company was asked to revise and resubmit Tariff Sheet No. 5.550 to include the instrument transformer enclosures. TECO promptly revised and resubmitted the filing in accordance with the request.

Instrument transformer enclosures should be provided by the customer based upon the same reasoning as that given for the self-contained meter enclosures. It is appropriate for all types of customers to provide their own meter enclosures and meter sockets since the devices relate strictly to the construction of the customers facility and only house the meter.

Although the cost of providing the enclosures was included in costs considered in TECO's last rate case, the total dollar impact is estimated to be \$287,159. Removal of this cost will have no effect on base rates. In addition, the effect of Tampa Electric Company's petition will be to gradually shift the burden of meter enclosure ownership from the company to the ratepayers over an extended period of time. Only when the meter enclosure which is presently owned by TECO is damaged to the extent that it requires total replacement would the customer be advised that it is his responsibility to have the entire enclosure replaced at his expense.

Based on data submitted by other utilities, self-contained meter enclosures have an anticipated lifetime of over 25 years. Meter enclosures appear to have a low failure rate and may actually last 50 to 60 years before replacement is needed. Recognizing the extended lifetime of these meter enclosures, it will be many years before company-owned meter enclosures will be totally replaced by customer-owned meter enclosures. Due to the gradual nature of this process, base rates will not be revised at this time. Any adjustment to base rates made necessary by a declining investment in meter enclosures, and by a declining level of maintenance expenditures and depreciation, shall be addressed during future rate case proceedings.

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Based on the foregoing, it is therefore

ORDERED that Tampa Electric Company's petition to revise Tariff Sheet Nos. 5.520, 5.540, 5.550, 5.560, and 5.570 to require customers to obtain their own self-contained meter enclosures and instrument transformer enclosures is approved. It is further


ORDERED that base rates shall not be revised at this time. It is further

ORDERED that the revised tariff shall become effective on January 18, 1995. It is further

ORDERED that, should a timely protest be filed, this tariff shall remain in effect pending the resolution of the protest. It is further

ORDERED that if no protest is filed in accordance with the requirements set forth below, this docket shall be closed.

By ORDER of the Florida Public Service Commission, this 26th day of January, 1995.



BLANCA S. BAYÓ, Director
Division of Records and Reporting

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