

BEFORE THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

In re: Complaint of Sears, Roebuck and Company against Florida Power & Light Company and motion to compel FPL to continue electric service and to cease and desist demands for deposit pending final decision regarding complaint.

DOCKET NO. 050890-EI
ORDER NO. PSC-06-0383-PAA-EI
ISSUED: May 9, 2006

The following Commissioners participated in the disposition of this matter:

LISA POLAK EDGAR, Chairman
J. TERRY DEASON
ISILIO ARRIAGA
MATTHEW M. CARTER II
KATRINA J. TEW

NOTICE OF PROPOSED AGENCY ACTION
ORDER DENYING MOTION TO COMPEL, DENYING MOTION TO DISMISS,
AND DENYING COMPLAINT OF SEARS, ROEBUCK AND COMPANY
AGAINST FLORIDA POWER & LIGHT COMPANY

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 substantially affected files a petition for a formal proceeding, pursuant to Rule 25-22.029, Florida Administrative Code.

BACKGROUND

Sears, Roebuck and Company (Sears) is a corporation doing business in Florida as a multi-line retailer. A number of Sears' retail stores take electrical service from Florida Power & Light Company (FPL), an investor-owned electric utility. In October 2005, Sears received a notice dated September 28, 2005, from FPL requesting payment of a security deposit. The notice stated that in 1997, FPL waived Sears' security deposit as a result of Sears' excellent credit worthiness. However, a recent review of Sears and its parent company's credit resulted in a much less favorable rating, indicating that a deposit had become necessary. FPL therefore requested that Sears provide a deposit in the amount of \$1,002,705.

On November 21, 2005, Sears filed a complaint against FPL for alleged violations of Rule 25-6.097, Florida Administrative Code. Sears contends that "suddenly and without any reasonable basis," FPL demanded that Sears provide the deposit to continue to receive electric service from FPL. Sears states that FPL has failed to allege that Sears is a new customer or that Sears failed to maintain a prompt payment record, and that FPL has attempted to circumvent

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Rule 25-6.097, Florida Administrative Code, by claiming reliance upon “demonstrably arbitrary information.”

Sears also filed with its complaint a motion to compel FPL to continue electric service and to cease demands for the deposit pending the Commission’s final decision regarding Sears’ complaint. On November 23, 2005, FPL filed a response in opposition to Sears’ motion to compel. On December 2, 2005, Sears filed a “renewal” of its motion to compel, and on December 6, 2005, FPL filed a response in opposition to Sears’ renewal of its motion to compel.

On December 13, 2005, FPL filed a motion to dismiss Sears’ complaint, contending that, accepting all allegations in Sears’ complaint as true, Sears’ complaint must nevertheless be dismissed with prejudice for failure to provide a basis upon which we can grant relief. On December 27, 2005, Sears filed a response in opposition to FPL’s motion to dismiss, stating that FPL’s procedure for assessing new deposits is not authorized by Rule 25-6.097(3), Florida Administrative Code, and that Sears’ complaint does state a viable cause of action upon which the Commission may grant relief.

We have jurisdiction over the matters addressed herein through the provisions of Chapter 366, Florida Statutes, including Sections 366.04, 366.041, and 366.05, Florida Statutes.

FINDING SEARS’ MOTION TO COMPEL MOOT

On November 21, 2005, Sears filed with its complaint a motion to compel FPL to continue electric service, and to cease demands for a deposit pending our final decision regarding Sears’ complaint. In its motion, Sears states that it had been informed that FPL would discontinue all electric service to Sears locations unless Sears provided FPL with the deposit amount of \$1,002,705. Sears cites to Rule 25-22.032, Florida Administrative Code, which provides that a company shall not discontinue service to a customer because of any unpaid disputed amount until the complaint is closed. Sears contends that it would suffer irreparable harm to its business operations and reputation if FPL was “permitted to illegally discontinue electric service,” and therefore requests that we enter an Order prohibiting FPL from discontinuing service to any Sears location pending resolution of Docket 050890-EI.

On November 23, 2005, FPL filed a response in opposition to Sears’ motion to compel, stating that Sears’ motion to compel was moot, since FPL was already required to provide uninterrupted service to Sears while the complaint is pending under Rule 25-22.032(3), Florida Administrative Code, and that FPL has every intention of complying with the Rule.

On December 2, 2005, Sears filed a “renewal” of its motion to compel, stating that the holiday shopping season is critical to Sears’ business, and that any disruption in electric service during this period would result in substantial damages and irreparable harm to Sears’ business.

On December 6, 2005, FPL filed a response in opposition to Sears’ renewal of its motion to compel, stating that neither the initial motion to compel nor its renewal are necessary under

Rule 25-22.032(3), and in light of FPL's continued assurances that it intends to comply with the Rule.

FPL has complied with the requirements of Rule 25-22.032(3), Florida Administrative Code, which specifically sets forth measures for the protection of customers during the pendency of unpaid disputed amounts. As such, Sears' motion for an order compelling FPL to continue electric service is unnecessary and moot, and we need not rule upon the motion.

Furthermore, FPL correctly points out in its December 6th response that Sears' "renewal" of its motion is premature, in that no disposition of its original motion has yet been made. We therefore find that Sears' renewal of its original motion is also moot and unnecessary, and we shall take no further action on the matter.

DENYING MOTION TO DISMISS SEARS' COMPLAINT

Rule 25-6.097(3), Florida Administrative Code, provides as follows:

New or additional deposits. A utility may require, upon reasonable written notice of not less than thirty (30) days, a new deposit, where previously waived or returned, or additional deposit, in order to secure payment of current bills. Such request shall be separate and apart from any bill for service and shall explain the reason for such new or additional deposit, provided, however, that the total amount of the required deposit shall not exceed an amount equal to twice the average charges for actual usage of electric service for the twelve month period immediately prior to the date of notice. In the event the customer has had service less than twelve months, then the utility shall base its new or additional deposit upon the average actual monthly usage available.

Section 6.1 of FPL's tariff addresses security deposits and guarantees, and provides that before FPL renders service or upon termination of an existing Unconditional Guaranty Contract, each applicant will be required to provide: a) information which satisfies the Company's application requirements for no deposit; or b) a Security Deposit consisting of cash, surety bond, or irrevocable bank letter of credit; or c) a guaranty satisfactory to the Company to secure payment of bills. In addition, the amount of the initial Security Deposit, if required, shall be based upon estimated billings for a period of two average months, but not less than \$25.00. The tariff also provides that FPL "may require a subsequent Security Deposit from a Customer, including one whose initial Security Deposit was refunded/released. A Security Deposit/guaranty may be held by the Company until refunded or released under the terms of rule 6.3. [Refund of Cash Deposit/Release of Other Security or Guaranty]."

In October 2005, Sears received a notice from FPL requiring a deposit. The September 28, 2005 letter to Sears from FPL states:

In 1997 Sears, Roebuck & Co.'s security deposit was waived as a result of its excellent credit worthiness.

FPL's credit evaluation processes include monitoring the financial status of customers to whom this courtesy has been extended. We perform these reviews using both internal and external sources, such as Dun & Bradstreet and Standard & Poor's. Results from the current credit ratings of Sears, Roebuck & Co. and its parent company, much less favorable than such results utilized in 1997, indicate that a deposit is necessary at this time.

FPL's deposit requirement is equal to two month's average billings as allowed by the Florida Public Service Commission. According to this standard formula, Sears, Roebuck & Co.'s deposit requirement is \$1,002,705 at this time. A bill for this amount will be issued within the next five business days for which payment will be expected to be made 30 days after the bill issue date. This deposit may be satisfied in the form of an Irrevocable Letter of Credit, a Surety Bond, or cash. Six percent interest is paid on all cash deposits.

The letter further asks that Sears contact FPL if it has any questions, or if it needs the proper forms for an Irrevocable Letter of Credit or a Surety Bond.

In its Motion to Dismiss, FPL states that its request for a deposit arose after an annual review of Sears and its parent company, Sears Holdings Corporation (SHC), indicated that FPL should be concerned about the creditworthiness of Sears, a very large customer. According to the most recently filed Form 10-Q, Sears Holdings Corporation is a corporation formed for the purpose of consummating the business combination of Kmart Holding Corporation and Sears, which was completed on March 24, 2005. FPL states that the triggering mechanisms for the deposit requirement were the Standard and Poor's credit rating of Sears (BB+, Negative Outlook), and SHC, Sears' parent company (BB+, Negative Outlook), that raised concerns on FPL's part regarding Sears' creditworthiness. FPL further states that it wishes to protect the entire body of customers from potential default or bankruptcy by Sears.

Sears' Complaint

In its complaint, Sears contends that "suddenly and without any reasonable basis," FPL demanded that Sears provide the deposit to continue to receive electric service from FPL. Sears states that FPL has failed to allege that Sears is a new customer or that Sears failed to maintain a prompt payment record, and that FPL has attempted to circumvent Rule 25-6.097, Florida Administrative Code, by claiming reliance upon "demonstrably arbitrary information."

Sears states that "[i]t is an illegal delegation of authority for the State of Florida to allow a utility blindly to rely upon the unsupported opinions of third-parties who are not politically or legally accountable for their actions in setting the conditions upon which that utility would serve the public." Sears contends that third-party evaluators such as Dun & Bradstreet and Standard and Poor's are free to base their results on inaccuracies, illogical criteria, and an opaque process. Further, the reliance on such information as a basis for demanding a deposit from a customer despite the customer's prompt payment record and other objective evidence of the customer's ability to pay the bills as they come due, denies due process.

Sears argues that FPL must treat each customer who applies for electric service equally. Rule 25-6.097, Florida Administrative Code, recognizes the need for protection for all consumers by permitting a utility to require a deposit from its customers. However, Sears contends that the Rule does not permit FPL to arbitrarily require a deposit from selected customers on any basis it chooses. Sears states that we are only authorized to enforce service rules [tariff provisions] which are on file with the Commission. Further, while our interpretation of a service rule is given considerable deference on review, the tariff provisions should provide sufficient detail as to allow this Commission to reasonably predict the utilities application of such a rule.

Sears contends that a review of the history of Rule 25-6.097(3), Florida Administrative Code, demonstrates that new or additional deposits from existing customers are only authorized under limited circumstances, and that this Commission and the Florida courts have not interpreted the Rule as authorizing FPL to require a deposit from an existing customer with a prompt payment record. FPL's tariff contains no specific guidelines regarding the criteria FPL may use as a basis for determining whether to request a new or additional deposit from an existing customer.

Sears also contends that FPL's demand is illegally based on consideration of SHC's financial status, and that, as a mere shareholder of Sears, SHC's credit rating is completely irrelevant to any appropriate determination by FPL of Sears' creditworthiness and right to continue receiving electric service.

Sears requests that we find that FPL's tariff as applied is unfair, unreasonable, and unjustly discriminatory, and to order FPL to cease and desist its demand for a deposit of \$1,002,705 and from threats of disconnection to any Sears location for failure of Sears to comply with FPL's deposit demands. Sears also requests that we issue an order establishing standards for determining the satisfactory credit rating of existing customers.

FPL's Motion to Dismiss Sears' Complaint

On December 13, 2005, FPL filed a motion to dismiss Sears' complaint, stating that the relief sought by Sears in this proceeding is that we adopt a new and different interpretation to an existing Commission rule, which interpretation contradicts the plain and unambiguous language of the rule. Specifically, Sears requests that we interpret our rule on customer deposits to, among other things, "require advance public disclosure of the criteria a utility uses for determination of satisfactory credit," in contrast to the plain and unambiguous language of the rule. FPL asserts that we should reject Sears' argument on legal grounds because we lack legislative authority to add new requirements to an existing rule without following the procedures established in the Florida Administrative Procedure Act, Chapter 120, Florida Statutes. Sears also argues that the deposit rule constitutes an illegal delegation of authority; again, FPL contends that the relief requested conflicts with the procedures outlined in Chapter 120, and is not germane to this substantial interests proceeding. FPL contends that Sears cites to no statute or rule that entitles it to the relief requested in the context of a substantial interest determination.

FPL states that is responsible for managing its own debt and seeking additional deposits from customers as needed, which was essentially recognized in Order No. PSC-95-0500-FOF-EI, issued April 24, 2005, in Docket No. 950195-EI, In re: Petition for approval of tariff revisions regarding budget billing, bill proration, and deposit waiver by Florida Power Corporation [FPC]. That Order concerned a deposit waiver provision in a FPC tariff, in which we recognized that “[t]he deposit requirement is discretionary to a utility, but the utility is responsible for managing bad debt.” FPL argues that, in the act of managing bad debt, it is FPL’s responsibility to take the action of requiring an additional deposit where, as here, the amount of the deposit does not exceed the exposure the utility would have if Sears filed for bankruptcy. If Sears disputes the credit-rating agency reports and predictive scorings, FPL contends that Sears has the right to challenge the evaluation independently of the utility’s right to seek an additional deposit. See Order No. PSC-95-0500-FOF-EI at p. 5 (“The credit rating agency will inform FPC whether the deposit can be waived or not. In the case of a negative evaluation, like with any application process for a credit card, the customer has the right to challenge the credit evaluation.”). Furthermore, FPL states that if the creditworthiness concerns subside, then the deposit may be refunded to Sears with interest, pursuant to Rule 25-6.097, Florida Administrative Code, and the provisions of FPL’s tariff.

FPL also contends that Sears’ arguments that Rule 25-6.097(3), Florida Administrative Code, applies only to “new customers” and customers that do not have a “satisfactory payment record” are not supported by the plain language of the rule. Rather, the plain language of the rule provides that FPL may require “a new deposit ... or additional deposit,” and there is no waiver of the additional deposit requirement for customers with a “satisfactory payment record.” Nor is there any prohibition against considering the financial status of a parent or holding company in assessing the financial viability of the corporate customer. FPL contends that Sears would have this Commission apply a different interpretation to the plain language of the rule, and add such requirements as specific advance notice and a satisfactory payment record in an attempt to circumvent FPL’s request for an additional deposit. Therefore, Sears’ complaint amounts to an untimely and inappropriate request for rulemaking.

In conclusion, FPL contends that, accepting all allegations in Sears’ Complaint as true, and drawing all reasonable inferences in favor of Sears, Sears’ Complaint must be dismissed with prejudice as a matter of law because Sears has provided no basis upon which we can grant the requested relief.

Sears’ Response in Opposition to FPL’s Motion to Dismiss Sears’ Complaint

On December 27, 2005, Sears filed a response in opposition to FPL’s motion to dismiss, stating that FPL’s procedure for assessing new deposits is not authorized by Rule 25-6.097(3), Florida Administrative Code, and that Sears’ complaint does state a viable cause of action upon which we may grant relief.

Sears argues that it seeks relief based on a reasonable and necessary interpretation of Rule 25-6.097(3), Florida Administrative Code, and does not seek to amend the rule. Further, FPL mischaracterizes the nature of Sears’ claims and misstates Sears’ request for relief as an untimely rulemaking challenge. Sears asserts that (1) FPL’s reason for demanding a new deposit

is arbitrary, and that a deposit is not reasonably required to secure payment of current bills and thus is not authorized; and (2) that FPL's September 28, 2005, notice demanding the additional deposit fails to adequately explain the alleged reason for the demand and violates Rule 25-6.097(3).

Further, FPL's current tariff lacks the guidelines relied upon to support the reasonableness of FPL's deposit demands. Sears therefore requests that we order FPL to provide more specific and objective standards for determining the need to secure payment of current bills from existing customers.

Decision Denying FPL's Motion to Dismiss Sears' Complaint

A motion to dismiss raises as a question of law the sufficiency of the facts alleged in a petition to state a cause of action upon which relief may be granted. See Varnes v. Dawkins, 624 So. 2d 349, 350 (Fla. 1st DCA 1993). The standard to be applied in disposing of a motion to dismiss is whether, with all factual allegations in the petition taken as true and construed in the light most favorable to the petitioner, the petition states a cause of action upon which relief may be granted. See id. at 350. In determining the sufficiency of the petition, we must confine our consideration to the petition and documents incorporated therein and the grounds asserted in the motion to dismiss. See Flye v. Jeffords, 106 So. 2d 229 (Fla. 1st DCA 1958); Rule 1.130, Florida Rules of Civil Procedure.

Under this standard, we find that, with all factual allegations in the petition taken as true and construed in the light most favorable to Sears, the complaint states a cause of action over which we have jurisdiction, and upon which relief may be granted. If one assumes as true the factual allegations that FPL's demand for a new deposit violates Rule 25-6.097, Florida Administrative Code, then that is certainly a matter over which this Commission has jurisdiction, and may exercise its authority to grant such relief as may be appropriate, pursuant to provisions of Chapter 366, Florida Statutes, including Sections 366.04, 366.041, and 366.05, Florida Statutes. Sears' complaint states a sufficient factual basis to survive a motion to dismiss, and we therefore deny FPL's motion to dismiss.

DENYING SEARS' COMPLAINT

The arguments raised by the parties in support of and in opposition to Sears' complaint against FPL are discussed at length above, and are not repeated herein so as to avoid unnecessary repetition.

Sears contends that the credit review performed by FPL was not set forth in sufficient detail in its tariff. Further, Sears argues that it is not a new customer, and that it has a prompt payment record; therefore, FPL is not entitled to require a new deposit amount. However, FPL correctly points out that the plain language of Rule 25-6.097(3), Florida Administrative Code, contemplates the assessment of a new deposit from an existing customer: "A utility may require, upon reasonable written notice of not less than thirty (30) days, a new deposit, where previously

waived or returned, or additional deposit, in order to secure payment of current bills.” Emphasis added.¹

Sears cites to Order No. 10733, issued April 21, 1982, in Docket No. 810471-EU, In re: Complaint of Pan American World Airways, Inc. [Pan Am] v. Florida Power and Light², in support of its position. The complaint at issue in Order No. 10733 concerned a determination by FPL that Pan Am, newly merged with another corporation, constituted a new customer, and thus FPL assessed an additional deposit pursuant to Rule 25-6.97 [later renumbered to Rule 25-6.097], Florida Administrative Code. We find that Order No. 10733 is not supportive of Sears’ position; rather, by that Order we found that FPL’s request for an additional deposit was correct under our rule and FPL’s approved tariff, and ordered that Pan Am must post the additional deposit in order to receive continuous service from FPL. Notably, we also found that:

The confusion arose in the first place because neither the Commission rules nor FPL's tariff contain a definition of a new customer. Similar controversies may be averted if FPL revised their tariff to include a definition of a new customer. However, FPL took the position that "to specifically address deposit requirements for all possible situations such as mergers, acquisitions, business reorganizations, bankruptcies or any of a multitude of other related changes in customer status would be unreasonably lengthy and the effort could not possibly cover all situations". We are inclined to defer to the Company's judgment on this point.

Id. at 7-8 (emphasis added).

While Order No. 10733 is distinguishable in that it involved the assessment of an additional deposit amount due to a customer’s merger (and thus classification as a “new customer”), our comments above are instructive and applicable to this instance. Sears has not set forth adequate justification as to why continued deference should not be given to FPL in regard to the specificity of its deposit standards. As mentioned in Order No. 10733, FPL may wish to consider revising its tariff to specifically address its deposit review process and standards, in order to avoid future confusion on this point. However, a change in a customer’s creditworthiness reasonably qualifies as a “change in customer status,” such that may merit reevaluation of that customer’s deposit requirements. Rule 25-6.097(3), Florida Administrative Code, plainly contemplates the possible assessment of a new deposit from an existing customer. While it may be advisable that a utility specify in its tariff the circumstances under which it will assess a new or additional deposit, neither the Rule nor Commission precedent require that a tariff addressing new or additional deposits must necessarily be all-inclusive.

¹ In its complaint, Sears cites to Order No. 5778, issued June 18, 1973, in Docket No. 73322-RULE, In re: Proposed Amendment of Rule 25-6.97 relating to customer deposits of electric utilities. In that Order, we state: “We recognize, of course, that circumstances may dictate the necessity of requiring new or additional deposits from a customer.” The Order provides examples (but not a definitive list) of such circumstances, such as excessive slow payment, or a marked increase in consumption together with a slow payment record.

² Order No. 10733 was affirmed in Pan American World Airways, Inc. v. Florida Public Service Commission, 427 So. 2d 716 (Fla. 1983), in which the Court found that Pan Am failed to demonstrate that the Order appealed from departs in any way from the essential requirements of law, nor was it shown to be unsupported by substantial, competent evidence.

SHC is the sole shareholder of Sears Corporation. As such, it does not appear that FPL's concerns regarding the creditworthiness of SHC, and its potential impact on Sears, is unreasonable or arbitrary in nature. SHC was formed for the purpose of consummating the business combination of the Sears and Kmart on March 24, 2005. SHC and Sears' subsequent credit scores were taken into account, together with concerns regarding potential default or bankruptcy, in whether Sears' deposit should be re-evaluated.

Specifically, FPL's November 23rd response in opposition to Sears' motion to compel, states that Kmart Corporation filed for reorganization under Chapter 11 of the Bankruptcy Code in December 2001, and emerged from Chapter 11 in May 2003. FPL, a creditor of Kmart in the bankruptcy proceeding, lost a substantial sum of money. The 2005 merger of Kmart and Sears, coupled with the viability concerns raised by the Dun & Bradstreet and Standard and Poor's information, appear to support FPL's re-evaluation of the need for Sears' security deposit. As stated in Order No. 10733, "the purpose of security deposits is to protect the general body of ratepayers in the event of default by one. When the assets and liabilities of a corporate entity change, the risk-of non-payment also changes (it may increase or decrease)." We also note that the information provided by Dun & Bradstreet and Standard and Poor's is the type commonly reviewed and relied upon in the financial community; it appears that it might reasonably be relied upon as a part of FPL's overall annual credit assessment of its large customers.

By e-mail correspondence dated February 6, 2006, counsel for FPL provided the following additional information to our staff. The total number of customers billed an additional deposit in 2005 was 187,180. Of these, 12,432 were commercial customer accounts, and 174,748 were residential customer accounts. The total number of additional deposit complaints received in 2005 was 34 and of these, two were on a commercial revenue rate. None of the complaints related to major customer accounts. For large commercial accounts, the process to determine if a deposit needs to be billed is to conduct an annual credit review. Also, at any time during the year, if information becomes available that would present a concern, a review is conducted which entails credit risk scores or payment patterns.

Sears' complaint contends that we have urged utilities to be consistent in their application of their deposit requirements, and that FPL must treat each customer who applies for electric service equally. This is what FPL has done. As noted above, FPL reviews large commercial accounts annually in order to determine if a new or additional deposit needs to be billed. If information becomes available that would present a concern, a review is conducted which entails credit risk scores or payment patterns, such as the one conducted with respect to Sears. Having made a determination that a deposit should be assessed, FPL calculated the additional amount in accordance with Rule 25-6.097(3), Florida Administrative Code.

FPL's actions in this matter appear to be consistent with the requirements of Rule 25-6.097, Florida Administrative Code, and FPL's tariff. Accordingly, Sears' complaint is hereby denied, and within 30 days of the date of the order, Sears should pay a deposit in the amount of \$1,002,705, either in the form of an Irrevocable Letter of Credit, a Surety Bond, or cash, in order to receive continuous service from FPL.

Based on the foregoing, it is

ORDERED by the Florida Public Service Commission that Sears, Roebuck and Company's motion to compel Florida Power & Light Company to continue electric service, and Sears' "renewal" of its motion to compel, are moot, and require no further action by this Commission. It is further

ORDERED that Florida Power & Light Company's Motion to dismiss Sears, Roebuck and Company's complaint is denied. It is further

ORDERED that Sears, Roebuck and Company's complaint against Florida Power & Light Company is hereby denied. It is further

ORDERED that within 30 days of the date of the order, Sears, Roebuck and Company shall pay a deposit in the amount of \$1,002,705, either in the form of an Irrevocable Letter of Credit, a Surety Bond, or cash, in order to receive continuous service from Florida Power & Light Company. It is further

ORDERED that the provisions of this Order, issued as proposed agency action, shall become final and effective upon the issuance of a Consummating Order unless an appropriate petition, in the form provided by Rule 28-106.201, Florida Administrative Code, is received by the Director, Division of the Commission Clerk and Administrative Services, 2540 Shumard Oak Boulevard, Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0850, by the close of business on the date set forth in the "Notice of Further Proceedings" attached hereto. It is further

ORDERED that if no person whose substantial interests are affected by the proposed agency action files a protest within 21 days of the issuance of the order, this docket shall be closed upon the issuance of a consummating order.

By ORDER of the Florida Public Service Commission this 9th day of May, 2006.

BLANCA S. BAYÓ, Director
Division of the Commission Clerk
and Administrative Services

By: Kay Flynn
Kay Flynn, Chief
Bureau of Records

(S E A L)

JSB

NOTICE OF FURTHER PROCEEDINGS OR JUDICIAL REVIEW

The Florida Public Service Commission is required by Section 120.569(1), Florida Statutes, to notify parties of any administrative hearing that is available under Section 120.57, 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 will be granted or result in the relief sought.

Mediation may be available on a case-by-case basis. If mediation is conducted, it does not affect a substantially interested person's right to a hearing.

The action proposed herein is preliminary in nature. Any person whose substantial interests are affected by the action proposed by this order may file a petition for a formal proceeding, in the form provided by Rule 28-106.201, Florida Administrative Code. This petition must be received by the Director, Division of the Commission Clerk and Administrative Services, 2540 Shumard Oak Boulevard, Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0850, by the close of business on May 30, 2006.

In the absence of such a petition, this order shall become final and effective upon the issuance of a Consummating Order.

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