

BEFORE THE FLORIDA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

In re: Petition to determine need for Turkey Point Nuclear Units 6 and 7 electrical power plant, by Florida Power & Light Company. | DOCKET NO. 070650-EI
| ORDER NO. PSC-08-0062-PCO-EI
| ISSUED: January 28, 2008

ORDER GRANTING INTERVENTION

On October 16, 2007, Florida Power & Light Company (FPL) filed a petition for determination of need for Turkey Point Nuclear Units 6 and 7 electrical power plants in Dade County pursuant to Sections 366.04 and 403.519, Florida Statutes (F.S.), and Rules 25-22.080, 25-22.081, and 28-106.201, Florida Administrative Code (F.A.C.). By Order No. PSC-07-0869-PCO-EI, issued October 30, 2007, the matter has been scheduled for a formal administrative hearing commencing on January 30, 2008.

By petition filed January 9, 2007, JEA filed its Petition to Intervene (petition) in this docket. JEA is a public agency electric utility responsible for electric generation, transmission, and distribution services to its customers within Duval, Clay, and St. Johns Counties, Florida.

Petition for Intervention

In its petition, JEA contends that it is entitled to intervene in this matter based upon the following assertions: (1) Section 403.519, Florida Statutes, and Rule 25-22.081, F.A.C., requires FPL to hold discussions with other electric utilities, and to include in its petition a summary of those discussions with other electric utilities' ownership interests in the proposed nuclear plants;¹ (2) as a electric utility in need of nuclear base load generation resources, JEA has a substantial interest in pursuing co-ownership opportunities in nuclear base load facilities throughout Florida, specifically the proposed FPL nuclear power plants subject to the Commission's determination in

¹ Section 403.519(4), F.S., sets forth those matters which the Commission must consider when making its determination on a proposed electrical power plant using nuclear materials:

In making its determination to either grant or deny the petition, the commission shall consider the need for electric system reliability and integrity, including fuel diversity, the need for base-load generating capacity, the need for adequate electricity at a reasonable cost, and whether renewable energy sources and technologies, as well as conservation measures, are utilized to the extent reasonably available.

In a separate subparagraph, the statute requires additional information which must be included in the applicant's petition, including "[i]nformation on whether there were any discussions with any electric utilities regarding ownership of a portion of the nuclear or integrated gasification combined cycle power plant by such electric utilities." Section 403.519(4)(a)5., F.S.

Rule 25-22.081, F.A.C., sets forth the required contents for a petition for nuclear fuel electric plants. Rule 25-22.081(2)(d), F.A.C., specifies that a nuclear power plant petition shall also contain "[a] summary of any discussions with other electric utilities regarding ownership of a portion of the plant by such electric utilities."

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this proceeding; and (3) the Commission must ensure that meaningful discussions with electric utilities have occurred before making an affirmative determination of need.

FPL's Response

In its response, FPL asserts that the relief requested by JEA is not of a type contemplated by Section 403.519, F.S., and thus may not be sought in this need determination. Moreover, FPL states that because the relief requested is not contemplated by Section 403.519(4), F.S., JEA has failed to assert a sufficient basis for the Commission to grant it standing as an intervenor in this matter.

In support of this contention, FPL asserts that it is not required by statute or rule to hold joint ownership discussions with other electric utilities. Rather, FPL states that Section 403.519(4)(a)(5), F.S., simply requires that an applicant seeking a determination of need for a nuclear power plant must include in its petition information on whether there were any discussions with any electric utilities regarding ownership of a portion of the nuclear power plant. Thus, it is FPL's contention that there is no expectation, stated or implied, that discussions with electric utilities must take place. Moreover, FPL argues that it has fulfilled this informational requirement by informing the Commission that preliminary discussions related to joint ownership opportunities in Turkey Point 6 and 7 have occurred.

In addition, FPL contends that Rule 25-22.081(2)(d), F.A.C., requires only that an applicant include in its petition for a determination of need "a summary of any discussions with other electric utilities regarding ownership of a portion of the plant by each electric utilities." FPL asserts that this language does not require it to engage in any joint ownership discussions whatsoever.

FPL further contends that in making a determination of need for a nuclear power plant Section 403.519(4), F.S., requires the Commission to take into account matters within its jurisdiction which it deems relevant. FPL asserts that the Legislature did not design the determination of need proceeding under Section 403.519(4), F.S., to ensure that other utilities are afforded the opportunity to discuss ownership interest in a proposed nuclear power plant. Thus, FPL contends, that a finding that adequate and meaningful discussions with other electric utilities is not a necessary predicate to a determination of need under Section 403.519(4), F.S.

FPL argues in its response that JEA has failed to establish that its substantial interests will be affected by this proceeding. Citing the two-pronged test for standing in Agrico Chemical Company v. Department of Environmental Regulation, 406 So. 2d 478, 482 (Fla. 2d DCA 1981), FPL argues that JEA has failed to demonstrate that it meets the second prong of this test because its asserted interest in having this Commission reach conclusions about the proper extent of joint ownership and whether FPL's discussions have been adequate and meaningful is not within the zone of interest that Section 403.519(4), F.S., is intended to protect. FPL thus asserts that JEA has failed to satisfy the Agrico test, and its petition for intervention should be denied.

Finally, FPL specifically requests that, if intervention is granted, the Commission clarify in its order that (1) the requirement in Section 403.519(4)(a)(5), F.S., for FPL to report its joint ownership discussions is for informational purposes only; (2) the scope of this proceeding does not extend to requiring FPL to offer JEA joint ownership of Turkey Point units 6 and 7, nor to taking discussions about joint ownership into consideration in determining the need for Turkey Point 6 and 7; and (3) JEA will not be permitted to raise issues, engage in discovery, or examine witnesses beyond the proper scope of the proceeding.

Standard for Intervention

Pursuant to Rule 25-22.039, F.A.C., persons other than the original parties to a pending proceeding who have a substantial interest in the proceeding, and who desire to become parties, may petition for leave to intervene. Petitions for leave to intervene must be filed at least five days before the evidentiary hearing, must conform with Rule 28-106.201(2), F.A.C., and must include allegations sufficient to demonstrate that the intervenor is entitled to participate in the proceeding as a matter of constitutional or statutory right or pursuant to Commission rule, or that the substantial interests of the intervenor are subject to determination or will be affected by the proceeding. Intervenors take the case as they find it.

To have standing, the intervenor must meet the two prong standing test in Agrico Chemical Company v. Department of Environmental Regulation, 406 So. 2d 478, 482 (Fla. 2d DCA 1981). The intervenor must show (1) that he will suffer injury in fact which is of sufficient immediacy to entitle him to a Section 120.57, F.S., hearing, and (2) that this substantial injury is of a type or nature which the proceeding is designed to protect. The first aspect of the test deals with the degree of injury. The second deals with the nature of the injury. The “injury in fact” must be both real and immediate and not speculative or conjectural. International Jai-Alai Players Assn. v. Florida Pari-Mutuel Commission, 561 So. 2d 1224, 1225-26 (Fla. 3d DCA 1990). See also Village Park Mobile Home Assn., Inc. v. State Dept. of Business Regulation, 506 So. 2d 426, 434 (Fla. 1st DCA 1987), rev. den., 513 So. 2d 1063 (Fla. 1987) (speculation on the possible occurrence of injurious events is too remote).

Analysis & Ruling

Section 403.519(4)(a)5., F.S. was enacted by the Florida Legislature in 2006. In this regard, JEA essentially contends that section 403.519(4)(a)5., F.S., and Rule 25-22.081(2)(d), F.A.C., provide a basis for raising co-ownership issues and nuclear access claims in the context of a nuclear power plant need determination proceeding.² Accordingly, the consideration of the nuclear access argument advanced by JEA represents an issue of first impression to the Commission requiring interpretation of the recently enacted statute and associated rule.

² Historically, nuclear access claims have been litigated within the federal court system. See generally Florida Cities v. Florida Power & Light Co., 525 F. Supp. 1000 (1981); Alabama Power Co. v. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, 692 F.2d 1362 (1982).

Section 403.519(4)(a)5., F.S., requires that a petition for need determination of a nuclear plant shall include information on whether there were any discussions with any electric utilities regarding ownership of a portion of the nuclear or integrated gasification combined cycle power plant by such electric utilities. Further, Rule 25-22.081, F.A.C., states that a nuclear power plant petition shall also contain a summary of any discussions with other electric utilities regarding ownership of a portion of the plant by such electric utilities.

In its petition, JEA contends that Section 403.519, F.S., requires FPL to hold meaningful discussions with other electric utilities, and that JEA has a substantial interest in pursuing a co-ownership opportunity in FPL's proposed nuclear power plants subject to the Commission's determination in this proceeding.

I agree that JEA has a substantial interest in this proceeding to address whether FPL's petition includes: (1) information on whether there were any discussions with any electric utilities regarding ownership of a portion of the nuclear or integrated gasification combined cycle power plant by such electric utilities, pursuant to Section 403.519(4)(a)5., F.S.; and (2) a summary of any discussions with other electric utilities regarding ownership of a portion of the plant by such electric utilities, pursuant to Rule 25-22.081(2)(d), F.A.C. Therefore, JEA shall be granted intervention in this proceeding. However, as with all parties to this proceeding, JEA's intervention shall be limited to the issues that are within the Commission's jurisdiction, and that the Commission deems relevant.

I am not persuaded by JEA's argument that Section 403.519, F.S., requires FPL to hold discussions with it regarding the issue of co-ownership. The plain and unambiguous language of the statute requires the disclosure of whether such discussions took place, and Rule 25-22.081(2)(d), F.A.C., requires only that a summary of any such discussions be included in the petition. As such, I find it unnecessary to look further than the statute itself.³ A plain reading of the statute does not impose a requirement that FPL engage in such discussions with other electric utilities regarding ownership of a portion of its proposed plants; rather, the statute requires disclosure of whether or not these discussions have taken place. The Commission has the authority to take into consideration any matter within its jurisdiction that it deems relevant, pursuant to Section 403.519(b), F.S. Consistent with my rulings at the January 14, 2008, Prehearing Conference, while the disclosure aspect of these provisions may be addressed, issues as to the merits of co-ownership will not be entertained in this proceeding.

³ It is a general rule of law that where a statute is unambiguous, the trier of fact need look no further than the statute itself. Department of Legal Affairs v. Sanford-Orlando Kennel Club, Inc., 434 So. 2d 879, 882 (Fla. 1983); see also St. Petersburg Bank and Trust Co. v. Hamm, 414 So. 2d 1071 (Fla. 1982). Even so, the determination that no ambiguity is present does not necessarily foreclose statutory construction. State v. Ross, 447 So. 2d 1380, 1383 (Fla. 4th DCA 1984). In this case, however, even if it were necessary to consider the legislative intent of Section 403.519(4)(a)5., F.S., there is no express statement of legislative intent as to the subparagraph in question.

Conclusion

In conclusion, JEA meets the two prong standing test in Agrico; therefore, its petition shall be granted as set forth herein. Pursuant to Rule 25-22.039, F.A.C., JEA takes the case as it finds it.

Based on the foregoing, it is

ORDERED by Commissioner Nathan A. Skop, as Prehearing Officer, that the Petition to Intervene is granted with respect to JEA, as set forth herein. It is further

ORDERED that all parties to this proceeding shall furnish copies of all testimony, exhibits, pleadings and other documents, which may hereinafter be filed in this docket, to:

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By ORDER of Commissioner Nathan A. Skop, as Prehearing Officer, this 28th day of January, 2008.



NATHAN A. SKOP
Commissioner and Prehearing Officer

(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 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.

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.

Any party adversely affected by this order, which is preliminary, procedural or intermediate in nature, may request: (1) reconsideration within 10 days pursuant to Rule 25-22.0376, Florida Administrative Code; or (2) judicial review by the Florida Supreme Court, in the case of an electric, gas or telephone utility, or the First District Court of Appeal, in the case of a water or wastewater utility. A motion for reconsideration shall be filed with the Office of Commission Clerk, in the form prescribed by Rule 25-22.060, Florida Administrative Code. Judicial review of a preliminary, procedural or intermediate ruling or order is available if review of the final action will not provide an adequate remedy. Such review may be requested from the appropriate court, as described above, pursuant to Rule 9.100, Florida Rules of Appellate Procedure.