

BEFORE THE FLORIDA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

In re: Petition to modify wood pole inspection  
plan by Progress Energy Florida, Inc.

DOCKET NO. 080256-EI  
ORDER NO. PSC-08-0644-PAA-EI  
ISSUED: October 6, 2008

The following Commissioners participated in the disposition of this matter:

MATTHEW M. CARTER II, Chairman  
LISA POLAK EDGAR  
KATRINA J. McMURRIAN  
NANCY ARGENZIANO  
NATHAN A. SKOP

NOTICE OF PROPOSED AGENCY ACTION  
ORDER APPROVING PROPOSED MODIFICATIONS  
TO WOOD POLE INSPECTION PLAN

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

On February 27, 2006, we ordered each electric investor-owned utility (IOU) to implement an eight-year wood pole inspection cycle and submit annual reports.<sup>1</sup> In that order we required each electric IOU to implement an eight-year wood pole inspection program utilizing the sound and bore technique for all wood poles and directed all utilities to excavate all Southern Pine poles and other pole types as appropriate per Rural Utilities Service (RUS) Bulletin 1730B-121.

In Order No. PSC-07-0078-PAA-EU, we held that excavation is not practical in instances where poles are surrounded by concrete or pavement.<sup>2</sup> However, we found that some other kind of inspection methods should be used to ensure that those poles are still safe and reliable. In Order No. PSC-07-0078-PAA-EU, Progress Energy Florida, Inc. (PEF) proposed to implement the use of a drilling resistance measuring device (RMD), instead of traditional sound and bore inspection methods, to assess pole integrity for concrete encased poles. We found that this method reasonably addressed the concerns.

<sup>1</sup> Order No. PSC-06-0144-PAA-EI, issued February 26, 2006, in Docket No. 060078-EI, In Re: Proposal to Require Investor-Owned Electric Utilities to Implement a Ten-Year Wood Pole Inspection Program.

<sup>2</sup> Order No. PSC-07-0078-PAA-EU, issued January 29, 2007, in Docket No. 060531-EU, In re: Review of All Electric Utility Wooden Pole Inspection Programs.

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On May 7, 2008, PEF filed a petition requesting approval to modify its wood pole inspection plan. PEF's proposed modifications include the traditional sound and bore inspection method as an option when inspecting concrete encased poles. Such a modification allows PEF the flexibility to use either the traditional sound and bore inspection methods or the RMD on concrete encased poles.

We have jurisdiction pursuant to Sections 366.04 and 366.05, Florida Statutes.

Discussion and Decision

PEF is currently utilizing Osmose Utilities Services, Inc. (Osmose) to perform wood pole inspections. Osmose's inspection process, for concrete encased poles, utilizes traditional sound and bore inspection methods. PEF's current Wood Pole Inspection Plan, however, includes the use of a RMD, instead of the more traditional sound and bore inspection methods, for concrete encased poles.

PEF employed a pilot program to evaluate the effectiveness of the RMD when compared to the inspection process performed by Osmose. The pilot program, which was completed in 2008, sampled 345 poles from PEF's 2007 pole database. The results of PEF's pilot program, summarized in Table 1 below, indicate that the RMD produces similar results to those produced by Osmose's inspection process.

**Table 1: Summary of Pole Failures Identified (345 Poles Sampled)**

Osmose:	94
RMD:	92

PEF has estimated that, on a per pole basis, the RMD inspection method costs \$17.00 more than the traditional sound and bore inspection methods employed by Osmose. PEF's wood pole inspection plan indicates that approximately 2,869 concrete encased poles are inspected each year. Therefore, allowing PEF the flexibility to use the traditional sound and bore inspection could result in an annual savings of more than \$45,000.

PEF has demonstrated that the RMD inspection method and the more traditional sound and bore inspection methods provide similar inspection results. Based on the results of PEF's pilot program as well as potential cost savings, it appears that the proposed modifications will allow PEF the flexibility to perform the least costly inspections without adversely affecting safety and reliability. Therefore, we find it appropriate to approve the proposed modifications.

Based on the foregoing, it is

ORDERED by the Florida Public Service Commission that the proposed modification of Progress Energy Florida, Inc.'s wood pole inspection plan is hereby approved, as set forth above. It is further

ORDERED that if no person whose substantial interests are affected by this 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 6th day of October, 2008.

ANN COLE  
Commission Clerk

By:

  
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Hong Wang  
Office of Commission Clerk

( S E A L )

KY

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 Office of Commission Clerk, 2540 Shumard Oak Boulevard, Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0850, by the close of business on October 27, 2008.

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.