

BEFORE THE FLORIDA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

In re: Request for approval of  
Budget Billing tariff revisions  
by Gulf Power Company.

DOCKET NO. 980530-EI  
ORDER NO. PSC-98-0747-FOF-EI  
ISSUED: May 29, 1998

The following Commissioners participated in the disposition of this matter:

JULIA L. JOHNSON, Chairman  
J. TERRY DEASON  
SUSAN F. CLARK  
JOE GARCIA  
E. LEON JACOBS, JR.

ORDER APPROVING BUDGET BILLING TARIFF REVISIONS

BY THE COMMISSION:

On April 16, 1998, Gulf Power Company (Gulf) filed a Request for Approval of Budget Billing Tariff Revisions to Tariff Sheet Nos. iii, 6.14, 7.1, and 7.24. Gulf's proposed revisions will extend the Budget Billing option to commercial and industrial customers. Gulf claims that the proposed revisions will also make it easier for all customers choosing this billing option to apply for it without creating any significant burden on the general body of ratepayers.

Currently, Budget Billing is only offered to Residential Service (RS) class customers. Gulf has proposed to extend its Budget Billing tariff to its commercial customers (GS, GST, GSD, GSdT, LP, and LPT class). According to Gulf, customers of these various classes have expressed interest in the Budget Billing program. Gulf believes that it can provide better customer service by extending the Budget Billing program to customers who have shown interest, without affecting the general body of ratepayers. The methodology for determining the bill will remain unchanged and will still provide for a monthly and annual true-up. The monthly bill will be reset if the actual monthly amount owed plus one-twelfth any deferred amount is  $\pm 10\%$  of the established levelized billing amount. At the end of each annual period, commensurate with the customer's anniversary date, any under or over recovery will be

DOCUMENT NUMBER-DATE

05837 MAY 29 8

REGISTRATION UNIT

eliminated. These true-up provisions will eliminate any significant impact on non-participating ratepayers. The Commission recently approved a similar request by Tampa Electric Company to offer Budget Billing to its commercial customers, Order No. PSC-97-0265-FOF-EI, issued March 11, 1997.

Current procedures require a customer wishing to subscribe to the Budget Billing tariff to apply in writing by filling out and submitting Tariff Sheet No. 7.24 (Request for Residential Budget Billing, Form 8). Upon receiving the customer's written request and verifying that the customer is in good standing, Gulf immediately changes the billing arrangements on the customer's account to reflect a levelized monthly bill. However, because Gulf receives most initial requests for the Budget Billing tariff over the telephone and some via the Internet, Gulf has requested that the customer no longer be required to apply in writing for the tariff. Tariff Sheet No. 7.24 (Request for Residential Budget Billing, Form 8) would no longer be necessary. Without the need for a written request, Gulf will be able to process requests received through many different media, making it easier for Gulf to accommodate its customers. In order to insure that the requests can be handled properly, Gulf has requested a 30-day window after a request to arrange a customer's account for Budget Billing.

Previously, because of limitations in Gulf's Customer Service System (CSS), if the customer relocated while on the Budget Billing tariff the customer was removed from Budget Billing and placed back on standard billing. Gulf's CSS has since been modified to accommodate customers who relocate, allowing them to remain on Budget Billing after they move. Therefore, Gulf has requested to remove language in the tariff which states that the customer will be removed from Budget Billing when the customer changes location. This will allow a customer to remain on the Budget Billing program as long as he is in Gulf's service territory.

Gulf has also proposed new language that clearly defines the annual review (true-up) of an account on the Budget Billing tariff. The new language does not reflect a change in the current methodology; rather, the methodology is more clearly stated.

It appears that Gulf's proposed modifications are an attempt to better serve its customers by offering a service that customers desire and by making that service more readily available. The proposed changes will not have any significant affect on Gulf's general body of ratepayers. Accordingly, we approve of Gulf's

ORDER NO. PSC-98-0747-FOF-EI  
DOCKET NO. 980530-EI  
PAGE 3

proposed changes. The proposed tariff changes shall become effective May 19, 1998, the date of our vote.

Based on the foregoing, it is

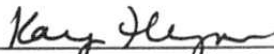
ORDERED by the Florida Public Service Commission that Gulf Power Company's Request for Approval of Budget Billing Tariff Revisions, as set forth in the body of this Order, is approved effective May 19, 1998. It is further

ORDERED that if a protest is filed in accordance with the requirement set forth below, the tariff shall remain in effect with any increase in revenues held subject to refund pending 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 29th day of May, 1998.

BLANCA S. BAYÓ, Director  
Division of Records and Reporting

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Kay Flynn, Chief  
Bureau of Records

( S E A L )

GAJ

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

ORDER NO. PSC-98-0747-FOF-EI  
DOCKET NO. 980530-EI  
PAGE 4

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.

The Commission's decision on this tariff is interim in nature and will become final, unless a person whose substantial interests are affected by the action proposed files a petition for a formal proceeding, as provided by Rule 25-22.036(4), Florida Administrative Code, in the form provided by Rule 25-22.036(7)(a)(d) and (e), Florida Administrative Code. This petition must be received by the Director, Division of Records and Reporting, 2540 Shumard Oak Boulevard, Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0850, by the close of business on June 19, 1998.

In the absence of such a petition, this Order shall become final on the day subsequent to the above date.

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 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 date this Order becomes final, 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.