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Pensacola, Florida 32520

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March 14, 2003

030270-EI

Ms. Blanca S. Bayo, Director  
Division of the Commission Clerk and Administrative Services  
Florida Public Service Commission  
2540 Shumard Oak Boulevard  
Tallahassee FL 32399-0870

Dear Ms. Bayo:

RE: Request for Exclusion under Rule 25-6.0455(3)

Enclosed are an original and fifteen copies of Gulf Power Company's Request for Exclusion under Rule 25-6.0455(3) on February 22, 2003.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Susan D. Ritenour".

Susan D. Ritenour  
Assistant Secretary and Assistant Treasurer

lw

cc: Beggs and Lane  
Jeffrey A. Stone, Esquire

DOCUMENT NUMBER-DATE

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**REQUEST FOR EXCLUSION  
UNDER RULE 25-6.0455(3)  
February 22, 2003**

**Subject:** Gulf Power Company Request for Exclusion under Rule 25-6.0455 (3) for outage events associated with storm on February 22, 2003.

**Reason for Exclusion:** The outages associated with this weather event were not within Gulf Power Company's control and could not reasonably have been prevented.

**Summary of Events:** A long band of storms moving eastward began affecting Gulf's Western District at approximately 3 am, Saturday, February 22, 2003.

Outages reported by customers affected 63 feeders or 22% of the company feeders as this storm band moved through the system.

The impact severity of this band of storms is illustrated at Okaloosa Island in the Fort Walton Beach District where customer property damage was estimated near \$2 million. The fire chief and building inspector of that area independently told Gulf Power representatives that a waterspout/tornado appeared to be the cause of damage based on the narrow destruction path and wide debris field. There was substantial damage to the roof of the Blue Horizon condominium. The entire roof was lifted off of one section of the condo and scattered across Santa Rosa Blvd. Flying pieces of the roof caused further property damage to buildings and automobiles north of Santa Rosa Blvd. Gulf Power had three utility poles broken approximately 20 ft. up and several palms were broken as well. Attached as Exhibit A-1 to A-2 are several news media articles and as Exhibit B-1 to B-11 digital pictures of the damage and Exhibit C the metrological technical description of the weather event.

**Impact:**

- Number of customers interrupted 6,072. Reported outages and restoration work spanned approximately a 13 hour time period.
- Company SAIDI for 02-22-03: 2.976
- Company 4 Year SAIDI Average for 2/22: 0.087
- SAIDI impact for the Districts (2.976) was 34 times greater than an average February day for the past 4 years.
- Outages for the Districts (96) were 7 times greater than an average February day for the past 4 years.

EXHIBIT A-1 GULF POWER COMPANY  
EXCLUSION REQUEST FOR 02-22-03

Document Viewer

Page 1 of 2

**Storm rips up Okaloosa Island hotels and knocks out power**

**Storm rips up island hotels**

**Okaloosa County officials estimate damage near \$2 million.**

By AMBER BOLLMAN Daily News Staff Writer

James Berry doesn't know if it was a tornado or just wind that tore the roof off his hotel Saturday morning. He knows it was strong. The National Weather Service still has to determine whether the severe weather that ripped across Okaloosa Island and over Choctawhatchee Bay was a water spout, a tornado or straight-line winds. Whatever experts label the blast of wind and rain that swallowed the roof of the Blue Horizon Beach Resort and spit it out on the north side of Santa Rosa Boulevard, Berry said Saturday afternoon that the damage is indisputable. "We're 60 rooms short of what we had this time yesterday," the resort's general manager said. Sixty-three rooms, to be exact. A three-story wing on the west side of the Blue Horizon suffered major structural damage from a line of storms that officials say blew into the area rather unexpectedly at around 4 a.m. Saturday. A part of the Blue Horizon building was moved off its foundation, one official said. No injuries were reported, but emergency responders took two people to area hospitals after they complained of chest pain. Okaloosa County Emergency Services Manager Randy McDaniel estimated storm damage on Okaloosa Island at just under \$2 million.

A more detailed assessment of the damages will be completed this week. Though tornado watches were in effect for parts of Northwest Florida Friday night, Okaloosa County did not seem to be threatened.

"We were on a state conference call last night, and everyone seemed to think that the heaviest cells of the storm were going to hit pretty far east of us," said McDaniel.

But shortly before 4 a.m., weather on Okaloosa Island took a turn for the worse, with wind gusts growing stronger by the second.

Berry, who lives in Fort Walton Beach, said he had awakened a few minutes earlier and turned on the Weather Channel when he noticed menacing weather outside.

"Then the phone rang, and I knew something had to be wrong," Berry said. "They told me the roof was gone."

A portion of the west wing's roof landed in the hotel's parking lot, while another piece shot across Santa Rosa Boulevard and zipped a hole in the roof of the Sugar Isle Motel.

Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office spokesman Rick Hord said emergency dispatchers received nearly a dozen calls within minutes.

One of the first calls was from local disc jockey and cab driver William "Taxi Bill" Gast, who received a panicked phone call from an acquaintance at the Sugar Isle.

"I picked up the phone, and in a halted voice, all he was able to piece together was 'Taxi Island tornado fire department help,'" Gast said. "He was really shaken up to the point that he was almost speechless."

The storm knocked out power to most of Okaloosa Island for several hours, and Santa Rosa Boulevard was closed to traffic from 4 to 8:30 a.m.

"The wind just snapped the telephone poles out there like toothpicks," McDaniel said. "There were lines laying all over the place."

Heavy rain entered both hotels, causing severe water damage and resulting in ceiling collapses inside several rooms.

"It would just saturate one level and then soak down to the floor below," McDaniel said.

Guests at both hotels, plus residents at nearby condominiums that were threatened by the damage, were evacuated into the Radisson Beach Resort and the Conquistador Suites.

Dianna Van Horn, a spokeswoman for the American Red Cross of Northwest Florida, said her staff responded with hot drinks and breakfast for the evacuees, which totaled about 100 people.

A mental health volunteer was also on the scene.

"At first everyone was okay, but after awhile, when they couldn't get back into their rooms, they started to panic a little bit," Van Horn said.

As the storm subsided, Gulf Power crews worked to restore power, and officials began to survey the damage.

"It's hard to say where we stand right now because we haven't gotten too much of a chance to go in and really look around," Berry said.

"We've got a lot of cleaning up to do in the next couple of days, and hopefully by the beginning of the week, we'll know a little more."

McDaniel said preliminary inspections did not bode well for the fate of the Blue Horizon's west wing.

"I don't believe that building is going to be able to be occupied," he said. "It appears to have moved from its foundation and there's a huge crack

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up the center of the building, so by all appearances, they're going to need to demolish it and rebuild."

Berry hopes that the hotel's main wing, which includes the office and 37 more rooms, may be able to reopen next week, or at least by the end of the month.

"The good thing is that nobody was hurt and nobody lost anything," Berry said. "But we've got a lot of work ahead of us."

Van Horn said, "We're relieved that this didn't occur in a week or two as peak season is beginning, because we would have nowhere to put all these guests."

Though Okaloosa Island suffered the brunt of the storm, residents across Choctawhatchee Bay saw some unusual damage.

Al Buford, who lives on Bayshore Drive between Choctaw Beach and Freeport, said he was about to start his coffee Saturday morning when he heard the wind suddenly pick up.

"I've been through a good number of hurricanes and tropical storms, and I'd guess that the wind velocity went from about 30 mph to 80 or 90 mph within about three seconds," Buford said.

Buford heard a sudden bang and then the rattle of hail outside. "It was 4:22 a.m.," Buford said. "I looked at the clock because I couldn't imagine what it was." The storm passed quickly and afterward Buford went outside with a flashlight to check the damage. He noticed that his children's 15-foot trampoline was missing. "I told my wife, 'I don't know where it went,'" Buford said. When the sun began to rise, Buford went back out for another look. He found pieces of his roof laying around the yard, one downed tree - and the crushed trampoline stuck in the branches of another tree.

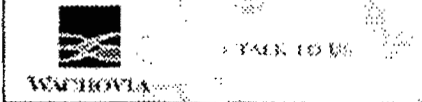
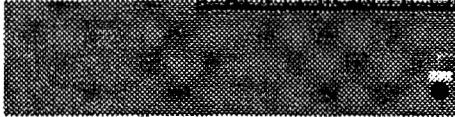
"It's got to be a good 25 feet in the air," he said.

"I don't even know how we're going to get it down."

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EXHIBIT A-2 GULF POWER COMPANY  
EXCLUSION REQUEST FRO 02-22-03



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PUBLISHED SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 2003

## Big gusts put coast on alert

### 3,500 lose power amid tornado threat, storms

**Brett Norman**  
[@PensacolaNewsJournal.com](#)

A power-packed weather system blew across the Panhandle early Saturday, bringing gale-force wind, lightning and rain that temporarily cut electricity to about 3,500 residents in Escambia and Santa Rosa counties.

Red flags flew over area beaches, and a gale warning was in effect in the evening, with winds expected to gust more than 35 mph, driving seas as high as 13 feet near shore, the National Weather Service reported.

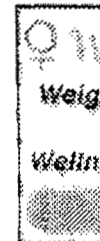
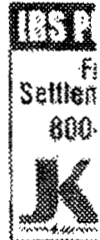
The worst lightning came about 4 a.m. Saturday when the power went out for thousands, but it was restored almost immediately, said Lynn Erickson, Gulf Power spokeswoman. Slightly more than an inch of rain fell on the Pensacola Bay Area on Friday and Saturday.

"We had a cool front - I guess you'd call it - that had quite a bit of energy and rainfall with it. But it's not going to get much colder," said Keith Williams with the Weather Service.

Wind gusts of 55 mph were recorded in Mobile early Saturday, and Pensacola was under a tornado watch. But the worst damage was inflicted on Okaloosa Island, where an apartment building was damaged by severe wind.

The Weather Service could not confirm that a tornado struck there.

Williams said residents can expect their weekend to end more nicely



than it began. Meteorologists were forecasting clear skies for today, with high temperatures in the mid-60s. The wind was expected to subside to 10 or 15 mph out, coming out of the south, and seas were to be calm to between 2 and 4 feet.



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EXHIBIT B-11 GULF POWER COMPANY  
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EXHIBIT B-10 GULF POWER COMPANY EXCLUSION  
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EXHIBIT B-9 GULF POWER COMPANY  
EXCLUSION REQUEST FOR 02-22-03



EXHIBIT B-9 GULF POWER COMPANY  
EXCLUSION REQUEST FOR 02-22-03



EXHIBIT B-8 GULF POWER COMPANY EXCLUSION  
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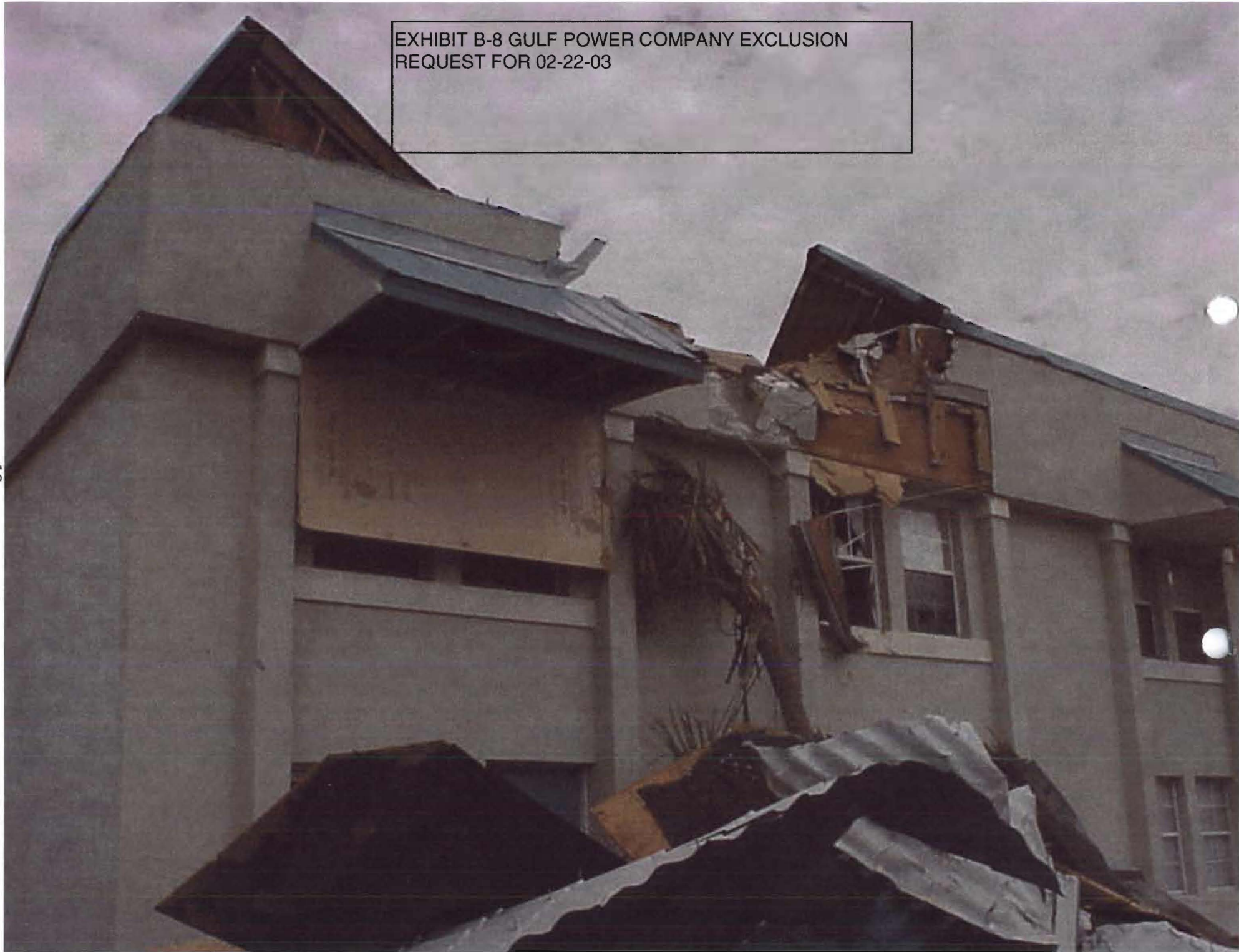


EXHIBIT B-7 GULF POWER COMPANY EXCLUSION  
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EXHIBIT B-6 GULF POWER COMPANY EXCLUSION  
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EXHIBIT B-5 GULF POWER COMPANY EXCLUSION  
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EXHIBIT B-4 GULF POWER COMPANY EXCLUSION  
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EXHIBIT B-3 GULF POWER COMPANY  
EXCLUSION REQUEST FOR 02-22-03





EXHIBIT B-2 GULF POWER COMPANY  
EXCLUSION REQUEST FOR 02-22-03



EXHIBIT B-1 GULF POWER  
COMPANY EXCLUSION REQUEST  
FOR 02-22-03



**EXHIBIT C  
GULF POWER COMPANY  
EXCLUSION REQUEST FOR 02-22-03**

Early morning February 22, 2003, a line of thunderstorms, oriented north to south and moving west to east, impacted Gulf Power Company's service territory and apparently caused extensive damage to the Blue Horizon Condominiums in Fort Walton Beach, FL.

As the line of storms approached, it began to bow. This simply means part of the line is beginning to move faster than the rest of storm. It is a good indication of strong thunderstorm winds. The leading edge of the bow moved over the condominiums near 5am EST and by 5:30am it was approximately 22 miles to the East, resulting in a forward speed of near 45mph. Winds accompanying this bow would likely match the forward speed. Surface weather observations around the area indicated an increase in winds as the line moved through. Eglin AFB to the north reported a gust to 43mph while Destin to the east reported a maximum gust to 25mph. By the time the line moved through Destin, the strongest winds had already occurred. Since the condominiums were at the leading edge of the bow when it formed, it would stand to reason winds of at least 50-60 mph were very possible.

Further analysis of Doppler Radar velocities from Mobile and Tallahassee show rotation, or a mesocyclone (a rapidly rotating air mass within a thunderstorm that often gives rise to a tornado) 4 miles to the south of Okaloosa Island near the time of the strongest winds.

It must be noted, the location of the condominium with respect to the radars at Mobile and Tallahassee is at the edge of their effective range. Resolution is diminished and at this range we are also viewing the storm several thousand feet above the ground. With this in mind, we can infer what may be happening at the surface, but confidence will be greatly reduced.

The Doppler Radar at Mobile shows winds of 35mph outbound and 45mph inbound centered 20 miles to the south of Okaloosa Island at 4:57am. At 5:04am the Tallahassee radar shows 35 mph outbound (with respect to Tallahassee) and only 10mph inbound centered 4 miles south of the condominiums. This in itself does not infer a rapid movement of the rotation to the north, but is more a result of the different elevations of the radar beams. Again, both radars show a mesocyclone with counter-clockwise rotation several thousand feet above the ground within striking distance of the condominiums. Although we cannot conclude from this data that a waterspout formed, this raises the likelihood tremendously. Another very strong possibility is that the mesocyclone itself rapidly descended, producing a rapid burst of very strong wind at the surface, resulting in the bowing of the line of storms.

Below are captured radar screens illustrating the described storm movement.

