

State of Florida




## Public Service Commission

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TALLAHASSEE, FLORIDA 32399-0850

-M-E-M-O-R-A-N-D-U-M-

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**DATE:** May 26, 2010  
**TO:** Ann Cole, Commission Clerk  
**FROM:** Mark Long, Assistant to Commissioner Klement   
**RE:** Docket #090451-EM - Joint Petition to Determine Need for Gainesville Renewable Energy Center in Alachua County, by Gainesville Regional Utilities and Gainesville Renewable Energy Center, LLC.

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This office has received the attached letter from Monica Cooper regarding the above-noted docket.

The letter has not been viewed or considered in any way by Commissioner Klement and by virtue of that fact, the letter does not constitute an ex parte communication. Please place a copy of the correspondence in the record of the above-referenced docket.

ML/ba

Attachment

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FPSC-COMMISSION CLERK

May 20, 2010



Dear Commissioner Klement,

Thank you again for allowing me to speak at the biomass hearing on May 6th. I was honored to be able to speak and express the concern about the immensity of this project which many of my fellow ratepayers in Gainesville share. I would like to add a few comments to my testimony.

As I said, in discussion of current commission policy during the recent Gainesville election there was much talk about the biomass plant. 60% of voters supported a candidate who campaigned against the biomass plant. This was one of our major issues, along with issues of blatant disregard for taxpayer well-being. There has been a pattern with the 2009-2010 commission, who support the biomass plant, of voting for projects that will put an increasing burden on taxpayers, and this continues with another such vote this week. They seem to choose what seems politically correct not what is based in the reality of taxpayers pocketbooks. Even though strongly questioned, they often vote against the majority of citizens. I only mention this because I think it is pertinent to the discussion about their notion of widespread support for the 100 MW biomass plant, which I challenged.

To add to my presentation:

- 1) Prior to the vote, many citizens spoke up to oppose biomass and many ratepayers had thought the chosen contract would be for a much smaller plant with much less regional impact. Once the decision was made to pursue biomass, citizen involvement was reduced considerably;
- 2) There is no need to rush into this project-there are other future options which don't involve committing to a 30 year contract. This plant will reduce the focus on efficiency, conservation, and solar. In fact, with the pressure to sell or use the high priced 100MW, the incentive to reduce consumption is lessened;
- 3) Beyond the initial higher prices charged to GRU customers, there will undoubtedly be competition over the next 15 or 20 years for the 1 million tons of wood fuel needed annually to feed this plant, with other biomass plants proposed. This will put ratepayers in a risky position;
- 4) Legislation requiring carbon taxes has not passed. Without penalties, we lose potential buyers who can purchase cheaper power elsewhere, putting us at further risk;
- 5) Biomass burning is not carbon neutral and the fuel source is not sustainable at the 1 million tons needed annually for this proposed plant. The risk to taxpayers goes beyond our pockets and into our lungs, as medical professionals warn. This is not clean fuel. We need to focus on environmentally clean fuel, which we can do within the next 10-15 years of advancing technologies;
- 6) Gainesville ratepayers do not need this huge risk thrust upon them in these hard economic times. Please vote "No" to the proposed unneeded 100MW biomass plant.

Thank you, s/ Monica Cooper

