

BEFORE THE
FLORIDA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

In the Matter of:

DOCKET NO. 160186-EI

PETITION FOR RATE INCREASE BY
GULF POWER COMPANY

_____ /

DOCKET NO. 160170-EI

PETITION FOR APPROVAL OF 2016
DEPRECIATION AND DISMANTLEMENT
STUDIES, APPROVAL OF PROPOSED
DEPRECIATION RATES AND ANNUAL
DISMANTLEMENT ACCRUALS AND
PLANT SMITH UNITS 1 AND 2
REGULATORY ASSET AMORTIZATION,
BY GULF POWER COMPANY.

_____ /

PROCEEDINGS: SERVICE HEARING

COMMISSIONERS
PARTICIPATING:

CHAIRMAN JULIE I. BROWN
COMMISSIONER ART GRAHAM
COMMISSIONER RONALD A. BRISÉ
COMMISSIONER JIMMY PATRONIS
COMMISSIONER DONALD POLMANN

DATE: Friday, January 27, 2017

TIME: Commenced at 10:00 a.m. CST
Concluded at 12:31 p.m. CST

PLACE: FSU Panama City Campus
Holley Lecture Hall
Panama City, Florida 32405

REPORTED BY: LINDA BOLES, CRR, RPR
Official FPSC Reporter
(850) 413-6734

1 APPEARANCES:

2 JEFFREY A. STONE, ESQUIRE, Beggs & Lane, P.O.
3 Box 12950, Pensacola, Florida 32591-2950, appearing on
4 behalf of Gulf Power Company.

5 J.R. KELLY, PUBLIC COUNSEL; and STEPHANIE
6 MORSE, ESQUIRE, Office of Public Counsel, c/o the
7 Florida Legislature, 111 W. Madison Street, Room 812,
8 Tallahassee, Florida 32399-1400, appearing on behalf of
9 the Citizens of the State of Florida.

10 ALISA COE and BRADLEY MARSHALL, ESQUIRES,
11 Earthjustice, 111 South Martin Luther King Boulevard,
12 Tallahassee, Florida 32301, appearing on behalf of
13 League of Women Voters of Florida, and Southern Alliance
14 for Clean Energy.

15 KEITH HETRICK, GENERAL COUNSEL, and KELLEY
16 CORBARI, ESQUIRE, FPSC General Counsel's Office, 2540
17 Shumard Oak Boulevard, Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0850,
18 appearing on behalf of the Florida Public Service
19 Commission Staff.

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NOTE: Exhibit 2 marked for identification at
Pensacola Service Hearing held 1/26/17

P R O C E E D I N G S

1
2 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** All right. Today is Friday,
3 January 27th, and I wanted to welcome you all to this
4 customer service hearing in the Gulf rate case
5 proceeding. My name is Julie Brown, and I have the
6 honor and privilege of being Chair of the Florida Public
7 Service Commission. And I have to tell you, I love
8 Panama City. It's the second time in my lifetime being
9 here, and it's just one of the most beautiful places
10 around the state. So thank you for having us, and I
11 want to thank the college for hosting us here.

12 With me today are all of the Commissioners,
13 although one Commissioner has stepped out, and I'd like
14 to give them an opportunity to introduce themselves,
15 starting with the native, Commissioner Jimmy Patronis,
16 from Panama City.

17 **COMMISSIONER PATRONIS:** Thank you, Chairman,
18 and thank y'all all for attending today. Your testimony
19 will be all listened to by the Commission. Any
20 questions that we might want to throw your way that
21 might be thought up by your facts you bring up or
22 concerns you bring up, we'll take note. But thank you
23 for taking time out of your busy schedules to be a part
24 of this. And thank you to Randy Hanna and the folks at
25 Florida State that allowed us to use their beautiful

1 facility.

2 **COMMISSIONER GRAHAM:** Good morning. My name
3 is Art Graham, and I'm actually very glad to see you all
4 here. I know you're taking this time out of your busy
5 day, and so it's very important for the facts that you
6 want to bring before us, to articulate those facts. I
7 know that three minutes is going to feel like a short
8 period of time, but we have a lot of people we need to
9 get through, and we don't want to drag you guys out here
10 to 2:00 or 3:00 in the afternoon. So we look forward to
11 hearing what you have to say. Thanks.

12 **COMMISSIONER BRISÉ:** Good morning. My name is
13 Ronald Brisé, and I'm glad to be here with you. We're
14 here simply to hear what's on your mind. So thank you.
15 This is your hearing, and we are so pleased to be up
16 here in nice, warm, sunny Panama City.

17 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** I don't know about warm.

18 (Laughter.)

19 Staff counsel, will you please read the
20 notice.

21 **MR. HETRICK:** Thank you, Chairman Brown. By
22 amended notice issued on December 22nd, 2016, this time
23 and place has been set for a customer service hearing in
24 Docket No. 160168-EI, petition for rate increase by Gulf
25 Power Company.

1 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Thank you. At this time,
2 we'll take appearances of counsel, starting with the
3 petitioning company, Gulf Power.

4 **MR. STONE:** Commissioner, I'm Jeffrey A. Stone
5 of the Law Firm Beggs & Lane, and I'm pleased to serve
6 as general counsel of Gulf Power Company.

7 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Thank you. Office of Public
8 Counsel.

9 **MR. KELLY:** Good morning. Hello. Is this on?
10 Good morning. My name is J.R. Kelly. I'm here with
11 Stephanie Morse, and we are with the Office of Public
12 Counsel, and we represent you, the customers of Gulf
13 Power.

14 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Thank you. Sierra Club. Is
15 Sierra Club here?

16 **COMMISSIONER GRAHAM:** No.

17 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** SACE, League of Women Voters.

18 **AUDIENCE SPEAKER:** Excuse me.

19 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** No sir.

20 **SPEKAER:** If nobody else speaks, I will be a
21 voice for them.

22 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Sierra Club -- I mean, pardon
23 me, SACE and League of Women Voters.

24 **MS. COE:** Good morning, Commissioners. My
25 name is Alisa Coe. I'm here with Bradley Marshall.

1 We're from the organization Earthjustice, and we
2 represent the League of Women Voters of Florida and the
3 Southern Alliance for Clean Energy.

4 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Thank you. Is there counsel
5 here for Sierra Club?

6 (No response.)

7 Seeing none, staff.

8 **MR. HETRICK:** Yes. General Counsel Keith
9 Hetrick with the PSC and Senior Attorney Kelley Corbari.

10 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Thank you so much. And as
11 Commissioners have indicated, this is your customer
12 service hearing. It's designed to hear from you
13 directly about your thoughts, comments, concerns about
14 service quality, any issues you may have about the
15 proposed rate case. And we're very excited to hear from
16 you. We just had one last night in Pensacola. We heard
17 from 59 customers. And this is a very integral part of
18 the overall rate case proceeding, so we appreciate you
19 taking the time out.

20 I'd like to note that there are customer
21 service representatives here today from Gulf Power -- I
22 believe Ms. Sandy Sims is here, if she could wave her
23 hand -- who are here to address any customer service
24 issues or billing issues you may have. We also have
25 Public Service Commission staff members who are here to

1 also address any issues you may have. And if you
2 have -- if you come up during the time that you have to
3 speak and you have a question, please feel free to
4 reserve those for after, and the staff will give you
5 ample time.

6 I do want to go over for the record the staff
7 members from the Commission who are here today. We have
8 from our accounting and finance department, Bart
9 Fletcher; from our economics department, Elisabeth
10 Draper; engineering, Tom Ballinger; legal, you heard our
11 General Counsel, Keith Hetrick, and Senior Attorney
12 Kelley Corbari; our PIO office, who helped signed you
13 in, Ms. Cindy Muir and Kelly Thompson; our court
14 reporter is here today, Linda Boles; Clerk's office,
15 Rachel Arnold; and our IT department, Chris Church, Mimi
16 Hearn, Conrad Howard.

17 This is an official hearing, which means that
18 we have a court reporter here who is transcribing it.
19 And as such, it will become part of the official record
20 in this proceeding. You will need to be sworn in, and
21 we'll do that in just a few moments. And by doing that,
22 that means that you are subject to cross-examination by
23 any of the Commissioners or the parties here today.

24 We appreciate the professional nature of these
25 proceedings and ask you to please be respectful and

1 courteous to your neighbors who took the time to come
2 out here. So please refrain from shouting, clapping,
3 all those, as it interferes with the transcription of
4 this proceeding.

5 At this time, I'd like to ask you to please
6 silence your electronic devices so as not to interfere
7 with the flow of this proceeding.

8 If you do plan on speaking today, you may have
9 noticed the sign-up sheets up front. Please make sure
10 that you've done that. Whether you would like to make
11 comments orally today or in writing -- you can go ahead
12 and submit written comments and you can leave them here
13 today with us or even mail them in. But whether they're
14 presented today here verbally or in writing, they will
15 be given equal weight and become part of the docket. So
16 we appreciate that.

17 If, during the course of the hearing, another
18 customer has said something that you absolutely agree
19 with, please feel free to say ditto, and we'll give that
20 equal consideration as well.

21 And now I'd like to invite the parties to the
22 proceeding to give brief opening statements. And before
23 that, I just want to give Commissioner Polmann an
24 opportunity to say hello.

25 **COMMISSIONER POLMANN:** Good morning. My name

1 is Don Polmann. I appreciate everyone being here, look
2 forward to your comments. And my apologies for being
3 confused about the road being closed. Sorry I'm late.

4 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Thank you. Welcome.

5 So at this time, we will invite the parties,
6 starting with Gulf Power, to give brief opening
7 statements. Gulf Power will have six minutes; Office of
8 Public Counsel will have six minutes; Sierra Club is not
9 here today, but we know we have customers in the
10 audience who represent them; and SACE and League of
11 Women Voters will have a combined five minutes. So with
12 that, we'll start with Gulf Power.

13 **MR. STONE:** Thank you, Chairman Brown. And I
14 have a few procedural matters to take care of before I
15 introduce Mr. Connally.

16 First, I'd like to thank you for advising the
17 audience that Ms. Sims and her staff and customer
18 service representatives are here. If any of our
19 customers have service-related issues, Ms. Sims will
20 help them get in touch with our customer service
21 representatives so they can address those issues
22 directly.

23 Next, I will remind the Commission and inform
24 the audience that last night I handed out an affidavit
25 addressing efforts that Gulf has undertaken pursuant to

1 the rules and pursuant to your order regarding notice to
2 our customers for the service hearings being held
3 yesterday in Pensacola and today here in Panama City, as
4 well as the technical hearing scheduled in March. That
5 is a composite exhibit, and it consists of the affidavit
6 and three attachments. Attachment A is the case
7 synopsis that was approved by the FPSC staff for
8 distribution, and the affidavit deals with what has been
9 done with that synopsis. Attachment B is the customer
10 notice also approved by the staff, and the affidavit
11 details how that notice was distributed through the
12 mail. And finally, Attachment C consists of affidavits
13 of publication from the various newspapers in which Gulf
14 published the staff-approved display ad noticing this
15 service hearing as well as the one in Pensacola last
16 night.

17 Now pursuant to the notice, the company is
18 required to give a brief summary of the case, and when
19 you're ready, Mr. Connally will be making that
20 presentation on behalf of the company.

21 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Thank you. And we are ready
22 at this time. And I do want to just note for the record
23 that that composite exhibit is numbered as Exhibit 2.

24 (Exhibit 2 previously marked in Pensacola
25 service hearing.)

1 Mr. Connally, welcome.

2 **MR. CONNALLY:** Commissioners, thank you.
3 Chairman, thank you. If it's okay with you, I would
4 like to face the crowd a little for my comments.

5 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Sure.

6 **MR. CONNALLY:** So, first of all, I'm Stan
7 Connally. I'm the President and CEO of Gulf Power
8 Company. Thank you for allowing me the chance to speak
9 here.

10 I want to speak directly to our customers
11 first. Thank you for being here. As the Commissioners
12 and my counsel has already indicated, this is a really
13 important and healthy part of the process, to hear from
14 you about what we're asking this Commission to consider
15 in terms of our rate review. And I sincerely want you
16 to know we're listening to your feedback too. This is
17 obviously for the Commissioners to hear from you, but my
18 Gulf Power teammates and I are listening as well and we
19 want to gather that feedback.

20 Commissioners, again, thank you for being
21 here. This is a great town, a great part of our service
22 area. You've given us the honor and privilege of
23 serving this community for close to 90 years now, and we
24 don't take that lightly. And your engagement with us
25 makes us better; we know that.

1 Look -- I do have a few teammates. Quickly, I
2 want to -- you've already met Sandy Sims, but I've got a
3 number of other teammates. I've got a couple of our
4 line workers here with us in the back. If they'll just
5 lift their hand. I'm proud to have them alongside me.
6 They represent the men and women on the front lines of
7 this company that get it done day in and day out. Also
8 honored to have a retiree right here in front of me. 47
9 years that he dedicated to this community and to Gulf
10 Power Company. I'm proud he's here as well.

11 We want to hear from you. We also have that
12 customer service room, as you mentioned, and I hope
13 you'll give us the opportunity to serve you there if
14 there's something specifically we can talk about.

15 But we are here to talk about this
16 Commission's review of our rates and our request for an
17 increase. And I want you to know we don't take anything
18 lightly about that request or the decision to make that
19 request. And, in fact, we're very proud that over the
20 last couple of years we've worked hard to deliver some
21 price decreases. Both in January of '16 and '17 we
22 delivered price decreases related to our fuel expense.
23 But we know this increase is not an easy conversation,
24 and we don't take that lightly.

25 There are a couple of really important areas

1 that relate to the increase request that we've made that
2 I do want to highlight for you real quickly. We take it
3 very seriously. Planning for the energy future of
4 northwest Florida, planning 20, 30, 40 years out, and in
5 doing so, we think there's a couple of critical
6 components.

7 A balanced energy mix, making sure that we
8 have a variety of fuels to fuel your future in our
9 generating plants and, as well, incorporating renewable
10 energy into that. As such, we are rededicating a very
11 reliable and economic around-the-clock, reliable
12 generation resource that is part of this conversation
13 that we're having with our Commission. When you couple
14 that with the renewable generation we've added over the
15 last few years, we think that creates a very balanced
16 energy mix of the future. And that provides you with
17 reliability and price stability as well.

18 We've also been investing in our electric
19 grid, our transmission lines, our distribution lines for
20 the long term, making sure that they're reliable and
21 producing for you fewer and shorter outages over that
22 long term. Those two things together we think produce a
23 secure energy future, and that is, in large part, what
24 our conversation with this Commission is about in terms
25 of the increase.

1 Separate from the increase but also part of
2 the conversation is an improved pricing structure. It's
3 improved because it better aligns our costs with our
4 price, but it also is improved because it delivers more
5 predictability and choices for you. It includes some
6 new rate options that are -- help customers that want to
7 be more aggressive with their energy management or
8 invest in things like rooftop solar. It has some energy
9 efficiency and conservation programs along with it, as
10 well as a low-income credit for those customers that
11 might qualify for that credit. So that is also a part
12 of this conversation.

13 But above and beyond all that, I just want to
14 say we're always looking for a way to serve you better.
15 We hope to hear some of those ideas today. We refer to
16 it as service that fits your life. Not necessarily the
17 way we think about doing business but the way you think
18 about doing business with us, and we want to find more
19 and more ways to do that.

20 So thank you for allowing me to speak.
21 Customers, thank you for being here. I'll be around all
22 day listening to your comments. And, again, we look
23 forward to hearing from this team. Thank you.

24 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Thank you, Mr. Connally.

25 And at this time, we will be hearing from

1 Office of Public Counsel, Mr. J.R. Kelly.

2 **MR. KELLY:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

3 Good morning, everybody. Again, my name is
4 J.R. Kelly. I'm with the Office of Public Counsel, and
5 my office has the privilege and honor of representing
6 you, the customers of Gulf Power. We represent
7 residential customers, commercial customers, as well as
8 the governmental customers, basically everybody that
9 takes service from Gulf Power.

10 We're here today because Gulf has filed a
11 petition to raise their base rates by \$107 million
12 annually. That represents about a 17.9 percent increase
13 for all ratepayers. For residential ratepayers, for an
14 average customer that uses a thousand kilowatt-hours a
15 month, that's a 25 percent increase over what you're
16 paying today.

17 Now to begin, Gulf is given a monopoly area in
18 which to provide service to its customers. In return,
19 they're required to provide safe, adequate, and reliable
20 service to you, its customers. In addition, they're
21 allowed to recover reasonable and prudent expenses as
22 well as earn a reasonable and fair return on their
23 investments. We've intervened in this case, we've hired
24 several nationally accepted experts, and we've
25 identified several areas, and we filed testimony a

1 couple of weeks ago -- excuse me -- identifying those
2 issues that we do not believe Gulf has met its burden to
3 prove they're entitled to any increase. And I'll
4 discuss just a few real quickly.

5 First is excess profit. Gulf is asking for an
6 11 percent return on equity. We believe that's
7 excessive, it's not warranted in today's economy, nor is
8 it on par with what other state commissions are awarding
9 around the United States, which is substantially below
10 10 percent. Our expert is a nationally and
11 internationally accepted expert from Penn State
12 University. He provided testimony, and he is
13 recommending an 8.875 return. To put it in perspective,
14 the difference between what we're recommending and what
15 Gulf is recommending would represent \$29 million less a
16 year that you would pay in rates.

17 Another issue is what is known as the Scherer
18 coal plant. That's a coal plant in which Gulf owns a
19 portion of, and it's located up in Georgia. This plant
20 was built in the '80s. And since it came on service, it
21 has been providing power to wholesale customers. Gulf
22 makes money on selling it to wholesale customers. Now
23 they want to include that plant in the rates that you
24 pay to retail customers even though the plant has not
25 provided any power to retail customers in over 30 years.

1 The bottom line is our analysis shows that
2 Gulf has not met its burden to show that there is a need
3 for this plant until the year 2023. That's six years
4 from now, yet they want to put it in today's rates that
5 you would pay for.

6 In addition, Gulf has admitted they did not do
7 any kind of an analysis that would confirm that this
8 would be the most cost-effective option for including
9 this in the rates that you pay. An additional -- excuse
10 me -- in addition, if it is allowed in the rates, you
11 will become responsible for any environmental costs and
12 cleanup charges that would come about as a result of any
13 governmental regulations. Obviously we're opposing this
14 request. And if the Commission agrees with our
15 position, your rates would be reduced or -- excuse me --
16 Gulf's request would be reduced by \$19 million, and your
17 overall rate you would pay would be reduced by another
18 \$14 million in environmental costs that they would ask
19 you to pay for annually.

20 In addition, just a few other highlighted
21 items that our accounting expert has identified, is we
22 believe Gulf has asked for \$23 million too much in
23 salaries and benefits. Since 2013, Gulf has
24 consistently reduced its workforce. As a matter of
25 fact, on their books they budgeted anywhere from 86 to

1 120 positions more than they've actually employed, yet
2 their own expert has testified in this proceeding that
3 their reliability has remained the same. Therefore,
4 what is the need for additional employees? We believe
5 that this is an excessive request and we are contesting
6 that.

7 In addition, there's \$8 million, we believe,
8 in excessive requests that are being paid from Gulf to
9 its parent company, Southern, which is located in
10 Georgia, and another \$2- or \$3 million that they're
11 asking you to pay for for vacant land and some other
12 expense items we do not feel are warranted.

13 The bottom line is our expert has testified
14 that Gulf should not receive any increase, but more
15 importantly, their rate should be reduced by \$2 million
16 a year.

17 The bottom line today, folks, this is your
18 meeting. It's not my meeting. It's not the Commission
19 meeting. It's not Gulf's meeting. This is the customer
20 meeting. I encourage each and every one of you to
21 please take the opportunity, come up here and speak and
22 give your comments to the Commission. This is extremely
23 important, as Chairman Brown said. It's a very, very
24 important part of our process. And it's important that
25 you share any concerns, any comments, good, bad, it

1 doesn't matter, but take the opportunity because this is
2 your meeting today.

3 I really appreciate you taking time out of
4 your busy schedules to come today. I know many of you
5 are missing work. But, again, it's important. And take
6 this opportunity seriously, and I look forward to
7 hearing your comments. Thank you.

8 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Thank you, Mr. Kelly.

9 And now we'll invite counsel for SACE and the
10 League of Women Voters to present some brief opening
11 comments.

12 **MS. COE:** Thank you.

13 Good morning. My name is Alisa Coe and, along
14 with Mr. Marshall, I represent the Southern Alliance for
15 Clean Energy, an organization that works to promote
16 clean energy and avoid building costly new power plants.
17 We also represent the League of Women Voters of Florida,
18 a non-partisan organization that has worked on
19 initiatives to make solar energy affordable for all.
20 They have three chapters here in Gulf's territory,
21 including the Pensacola Bay Area Chapter, the Okaloosa
22 County Chapter, and the Bay County Chapter, and we have
23 some of the members here with us today.

24 The vast majority of Duke's residential
25 customers have two parts to their bills. There's a

1 customer charge and there's an energy charge. The
2 customer charge is fixed. You pay it no matter what.
3 The energy charge is based on the amount of energy that
4 you're consuming. Gulf Power has the highest customer
5 charge in the state of Florida. It is the highest in
6 the state of Florida. So those of us here today who are
7 visiting from Tallahassee like myself, we pay \$7.41 a
8 month. Jacksonville is paying \$5.50 a month. The folks
9 down in Duke's territory, they're paying \$8.76 a month.
10 And the folks down south in FP&L's territory are at
11 \$7.87 a month. You folks already pay about \$18 a month.
12 They are asking to triple that, nearly triple it to
13 \$48 a month. That is a 155 percent increase and it's
14 unprecedented.

15 There is nothing customers can do to decrease
16 their usage, which means that for the vast majority of
17 people, their bills are going to go up. And the
18 exception is the highest energy users. And for folks
19 who have already taken measures to keep their energy
20 low, to keep their bills low by putting in place
21 measures like additional insulation or switching to new
22 lightbulbs, getting more efficient appliances, keeping
23 the house warm during the summer and cold during the
24 winter, they're going to be hit the hardest.

25 So, for example, if you are a customer using

1 500 kilowatt-hours a month, which is low, you're going
2 to see your bill go up \$20 a month. That's hundreds of
3 dollars a year, a 27 percent increase. And even if you
4 cut your energy use to nearly half, to 300
5 kilowatt-hours a month, you will still pay a higher
6 bill. You know, that's a heavy lift for people. And if
7 you're on a fixed income, like many of our seniors and
8 military, you know, that's too much of a burden. And at
9 the same time, we have Gulf asking to increase its
10 return on equity or profit margin from 10.5 percent to
11 11 percent. We just don't think that's acceptable.

12 This rate hike is unprecedented and it's
13 unfair. I look forward to hearing your comments, and I
14 thank you for all -- all for coming out today. Thank
15 you.

16 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Thank you, counsel.

17 A few things that I was remiss in not sharing
18 with you before. This proceeding is being live-streamed
19 and available on the Commission's website. It is -- we
20 also -- as mentioned earlier by counsel, there will be a
21 technical hearing in which the Commission takes the
22 substance and the evidence of the case, and that is
23 subject -- that is scheduled for March at a week-long
24 proceeding in Tallahassee, which will also be
25 live-streamed. The decision in this proceeding will

1 come sometime around May. Also I wanted to mention our
2 Executive Director, Mr. Braulio Baez, is also here. So
3 those three additional facts before we get into some
4 brief overview of how it works here.

5 We want to give every customer an opportunity
6 to speak. And with that, each customer will be given
7 three minutes to speak. We will be swearing you all in
8 together in just a moment. When -- the lights are up
9 here that kind of guide you right in front of me, and
10 you'll be able to see them when you come to the podium.
11 When they get to yellow, you have about 30 seconds.
12 When you get to red, we expect you to wrap up and stop.
13 And unfortunately I'm going to have to stop you at that
14 time because we want to have as many people speak as
15 possible here today.

16 And the Office of Public Counsel, Mr. J. R.
17 Kelly, will be calling your name up when it's your turn
18 to speak in the order in which you've signed up. He'll
19 be calling two names up at a time. And so please be
20 aware, if your name is called up, to be ready to come up
21 as soon as the next speaker.

22 And at this time, I'm going to ask those
23 customers who are here today who would like to present
24 testimony before us to stand with me and raise your
25 right hand.

1 Do you swear or affirm to provide the truth
2 in this proceeding?

3 (Chorus of affirmative responses.)

4 (Witnesses collectively sworn.)

5 Thank you. Please be seated.

6 All right. When you come to the microphone,
7 please be sure to state your name, your telephone
8 number, your address, and state whether you're a Gulf
9 customer. Again, your verbal comments are being
10 transcribed by -- our court reporter is here. So if
11 you'd please speak slowly and clearly, and please avoid
12 clapping, shouting, or interrupting. Again, appreciate
13 the professional nature of this proceeding.

14 Mr. Kelly, if you're ready to call your first
15 customer.

16 **MR. KELLY:** Yes, Madam Chair. The first
17 speaker is Mr. Patrick Altier, followed by Hiba Rahim.

18 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Good morning.

19 **MR. ALTIER:** Good morning, Commissioners. I
20 appreciate the opportunity to speak. My name is Patrick
21 Altier. My phone number is (352)351-1333, and I'm from
22 Ocala, Florida, President of the Florida Solar Energy
23 Industry Association.

24 And I have to admit the reason I get to speak
25 first is because I forgot there is a time change coming

1 across the Panhandle. So when I looked at my watch this
2 morning, it was a little earlier than it really was, but
3 the folks from the PSC were very accommodating. So up
4 early this morning.

5 I'm a small business owner, contractor, and
6 President of FlaSEIA, which is the Florida Solar Energy
7 Industry Association. And simply the request by Gulf
8 Power should not be allowed to pass. Our concern is
9 this aggressive rate request targets low income,
10 elderly, environmentally conscious, all in the name of
11 profits for Gulf Power's shareholders and executive
12 bonuses. If you don't use one kilowatt-hour, you'll
13 still pay \$48 per month directly into the coffers of
14 Gulf Power. Gulf Power is effectively saying, "Whether
15 you buy my product or not, you're still going to pay
16 me."

17 An increase to the base rate will negate any
18 energy efficiency investments or conservation efforts by
19 consumers. This proposed change is a clear attack on
20 the will of people who voted no on Amendment 1, which
21 was supported and funded by Gulf Power and uncovered
22 later as a -- an amendment intended to deceive the
23 Florida voters.

24 Gulf Power has tried to circumvent the will of
25 the Florida voter by imposing a higher base rate with an

1 increase of over 150 percent to protect their monopoly
2 and increase their profits. This proposed change will
3 hurt Florida citizens, businesses, with the only winner
4 being Gulf Power. We encourage you to stop this rate
5 increase. Thank you.

6 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Thank you for your testimony
7 and for taking time to drive up here.

8 Commissioners, any questions or comments?

9 **COMMISSIONER POLMANN:** Yes.

10 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Yes, Commissioner Polmann has
11 a question for you, sir. Right over here.

12 **MR. ALTIER:** Yes, sir.

13 **COMMISSIONER POLMANN:** How did you come upon
14 interest in this particular docket?

15 **MR. ALTIER:** As an industry professional and
16 President of FlaSEIA, we represent Florida contractors
17 across the state of Florida. A change to the base rate
18 would adversely affect contractors in this area who are
19 members of our organization.

20 **COMMISSIONER POLMANN:** Follow-up?

21 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Sure.

22 **COMMISSIONER POLMANN:** Is it a normal practice
23 of your organization to have interest or become involved
24 in electric utility hearings around the state for other
25 utilities?

1 **MR. ALTIER:** It is. If it would adversely
2 affect our membership, we certainly want to participate.
3 We've participated in four other rate hearings, and
4 we've had more favorable outcomes with, you know, the
5 municipals and the co-ops who had made some changes that
6 adversely affected membership.

7 **COMMISSIONER POLMANN:** Thank you.

8 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Thank you, Commissioner.
9 Commissioner Patronis.

10 **COMMISSIONER PATRONIS:** Thank you, Chairman.
11 I'm just -- how many members do you have in
12 the Gulf Power footprint?

13 **MR. ALTIER:** We have 13 members in the Gulf
14 Power footprint. And, of course, that number, it
15 increases when you look at other people in the solar
16 supply chain, the people who register permits and all
17 the different people who are involved that are not
18 direct members of our organization.

19 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Thank you. Thank you for
20 your testimony.

21 **MR. ALTIER:** Thank you.

22 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Next customer.

23 **MR. KELLY:** After Ms. Rahim will be Ella Sue
24 Polite.

25 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Good morning.

1 **MS. RAHIM:** Good morning. Good morning,
2 Chairman Brown, Commissioners, parties, ladies and
3 gentlemen. Thank you for the opportunity to speak to
4 you today. I -- my name Hiba Rahim, H-i-b-a R-a-h-i-m.
5 My telephone number is (850)890-2627. And my address is
6 2896 Tupelo Drive, Panama City, Florida 32405.

7 I am a Gulf Power customer. I've been in
8 Panama City since I was eight years old. I left for a
9 long time, and then I came back a few years ago. And,
10 of course, I've been a Gulf Power customer ever since
11 because that is my only option.

12 I also represent the League of Women Voters
13 here today, and I'm here to represent many voices, the
14 first is my own. I -- my family and I, of course, we
15 use electricity, we pay money. And we probably use just
16 a little bit slightly above average, but that's because
17 we conserve. You know, we could use a lot more. I have
18 a family of six. We could certainly use a lot more, but
19 we try to be environmentally conservative. I teach my
20 kids to turn off the lights; we turn down the
21 air-conditioning, you know, in the summertime; and we
22 down the heater in the winter. And what this policy
23 effectively would do is it would punish us for being
24 environmentally conscientious, and we find that grossly
25 unfair.

1 And, of course, you know, we also are
2 considering solar, we're considering installing solar
3 panels. And, of course, that wouldn't -- that wouldn't
4 encourage us to do so because, again, you know, it
5 doesn't give the advantages that we would hope for by
6 installing solar panels. So it's punishing us for being
7 environmentally responsible.

8 But I'm here also to represent another voice,
9 and that is the voice of many, many members of Bay
10 County. Out of the 450,000 people that Gulf Power
11 provides service to, there is a large percentage of
12 those families who are low income, and low-income
13 families generally use lower energy. And so those
14 people would be punished, and we find that unfair. You
15 know, how would you explain to those families that a
16 company with such a high profit margin is going to
17 increase our base rates with 155 percent? This
18 proposal, you know, it targets those who really would be
19 hurt the most by such a rate increase. And I feel like,
20 you know, as Public Service Commissioners, it's our
21 (sic) duty, and we certainly have a lot of hope and
22 trust in you to uphold that duty and think about the
23 people who are going to be most impacted by this. A lot
24 of things govern our decision-making and I understand
25 that. But, you know, when it comes to long-term

1 planning like the gentleman was discussing earlier, it's
2 unfair to take from that long-term planning and have it
3 come out of the people's pocket; whereas, you know, we
4 heard of a 10.5 percent return on equity.

5 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** You have ten seconds left.

6 **MS. RAHIM:** So, again, I hope that, you
7 know -- Commissioner Patronis, you're highly recognized
8 for your outstanding leadership here, and the rest of
9 you as well, we hope that you take the people into
10 consideration in making your decision. Thank you very
11 much.

12 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Thank you for your testimony.

13 Commissioner Patronis, any comments on that?

14 **COMMISSIONER PATRONIS:** No.

15 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Thank you.

16 **COMMISSIONER PATRONIS:** Ditto.

17 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Ditto? Thank you. Next
18 customer, please.

19 **MR. KELLY:** After Ms. Polite will be Keith
20 Russell.

21 **MS. POLITE:** I am Ella Sue Polite. My number
22 is 785-9294. And I am an 81-year-old lady, and I am
23 having a problem as it is already keeping -- paying
24 bills from one month to the other one. And I think
25 \$14.85 per month added to my light bill will be an extra

1 burden on me.

2 And on this paper, it says after the raise to
3 Gulf Power, the bill would run about \$158.86. I already
4 pay more than this for my light bill. And it will be an
5 extra burden to me, and I pray that you all would not
6 authorize Gulf Power to have a raise at this time.
7 Thank you.

8 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Thank you for your testimony.

9 Commissioners, any questions?

10 Seeing none -- thank you, Mr. West, too.

11 Next customer.

12 **MR. KELLY:** After Mr. Russell is Mary Thieme.

13 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Good morning.

14 **MR. RUSSELL:** Good morning. Thank you. My
15 name is Keith Russell. I live at 1106 Drake Avenue. My
16 phone number is (662)415-7005.

17 I just wanted to take the opportunity to tell
18 you, first of all, I've been -- since -- I've been here
19 since 2009. Gulf Power Company is a very good company.
20 They're very friendly. The staff is very knowledgeable.
21 The increase rate is pretty steep for me. I have five
22 different meters right now in my name, and that's a
23 pretty big blow with the taxes that we're paying from
24 Panama City anyhow.

25 And I didn't really realize the information

1 until I heard the counsel talk. I hope all that's not
2 true. But if that is, it's kind of a shameful thing to
3 try to pass off \$15 a month on everybody's bill. But I
4 just basically wanted to come up and say my piece, and
5 that was it. Thank you.

6 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Thank you, Mr. Russell. You
7 said that you have five different meters. Is that five
8 different properties or --

9 **MR. RUSSELL:** Yes, ma'am.

10 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Okay. Thank you.

11 Commissioners, any questions?

12 Thanks for your testimony.

13 **MR. RUSSELL:** Thank you.

14 **MR. KELLY:** After Ms. Thieme is Fred
15 Beauchemin.

16 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Good morning.

17 **MS. THIEME:** Does that work? Okay. My name
18 is Mary Thieme. I live 220 Allen Avenue, Panama City
19 32401. I'm a Gulf Power Company customer and a member
20 of the Bay County League of Women Voters.

21 I moved here when I retired in 1999, 2000.
22 You can do the arithmetic. I live in a small house with
23 a tree-shaded yard. When I moved here, I added
24 insulation in my attic, and I use energy-saving
25 lightbulbs, turn the lights off when not in a room,

1 power off for TV when not in a room, and the same with
2 computers. I use all energy-saving lightbulbs. In the
3 winter, I lower my thermostat to 65 to 68 at night,
4 70 to 74 during the day. In the summer, I use ceiling
5 fans. Air-conditioning is usually only on in the
6 afternoon and off at night, and I set it back when I'm
7 going out of town. I set the thermostat back when I'm
8 going out of town.

9 I looked at the energy charges on my past
10 year's bill, and there's only one month in 2016, which
11 was March, when I used enough to benefit from the change
12 in the rates. Eleven months it would have cost me more
13 with the rate change.

14 And I'm concerned -- I suppose I represent a
15 lot of elderly retired people, and I'm concerned too
16 that Gulf Power is wanting to make us pay for things
17 that are not going to go in until we're probably long
18 gone, and I don't think that's appropriate.

19 And I'm also concerned about the fact that
20 low-income people will be targeted particularly. And
21 that's really all I have to say.

22 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Thank you, Ms. Thieme.

23 Commissioners, any questions?

24 Thank you, again. The next customer.

25 **MR. KELLY:** After Mr. -- is it Beauchemin or

1 Beauchemin?

2 **MR. BEAUCHEMIN:** Beauchemin.

3 **MR. KELLY:** Beauchemin, I apologize, is
4 Ms. Arlene Cook.

5 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Good morning, Mr. Beauchemin.

6 **MR. BEAUCHEMIN:** Good morning, Commissioner,
7 Commissioners, and parties. I -- I'm Fred Beauchemin.
8 I'm sorry. I just got out of the hospital, so I'm not
9 going to be able to do very well on speed or clarity,
10 but I'll try.

11 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** We'll work with you.

12 **MR. BEAUCHEMIN:** Okay. I'm a registered
13 professional engineer in the state of Florida, retired.
14 I'm an infra -- a retired infrastructure expert. I live
15 across North Bay from the Smith Power Plant at
16 705 Beachcomber Drive, Lynn Haven. It's not Lynn Haven,
17 it's Bay County, but the postal is Lynn Haven. My
18 telephone number is (850)265-3225. Is there any other
19 information you asked me to -- no.

20 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** You can keep going.

21 **MR. BEAUCHEMIN:** I've been a Gulf Power
22 customer for 35 years in this location, and it's been
23 mostly a good relationship. Gulf Power has supplied
24 generally cleaner -- thank you -- and more reliable
25 energy. Again, thank you again.

1 For my part, I pay more than I used to and
2 still do. Thank me. I've done my part to conserve and
3 continue to do so. I have more insulation, low
4 efficient -- low-energy lightbulbs, 76 to 83 in the
5 summer, 68 to 74 in the winter. With the exception of
6 one period of time two years ago when -- we disagreed
7 with the reason -- I ended up paying another whole
8 year's worth of rates in one short period. It's not the
9 subject of today. I can go into it some other time.

10 We have more insulation, better roofing,
11 better doors, more efficient heating, air-conditioning,
12 water heater, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera. Gulf
13 Power helped with information surveys and incentives. I
14 appreciate that. Thank you. Please thank me again too.

15 Gulf Power's job is to produce and deliver
16 power. To do that, Gulf Power needs to invest in
17 capacity, reliability, and efficiency, and I recognize
18 that. My job is to use power efficiently and with
19 little waste. To do that, I need to invest in
20 technology, and I do. I'm saving right now to replace
21 windows for higher efficiency. It's a big price tag.
22 That will take investment on my part. Gulf Power wants
23 me to tap my savings to pay for investing in Gulf
24 Power's capacity, reliability, and efficiency. Their
25 responsibility.

1 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Mr. Beauchemin, your time has
2 expired, but I'll give you 30 seconds to wrap up.

3 **MR. BEAUCHEMIN:** I'll try fast. And they ask
4 you to give them a basic rate hike to get the investment
5 funds to do their part. Rates typically do not pay for
6 capacity, reliability, and delivery capacity. Capacity
7 is built by borrowing money from investors and paying it
8 back over time. Typically that is a function of the
9 commercial bond markets.

10 I have sometimes invested in utilities via the
11 bond market where I buy bonds, the utility spends my
12 money, and it pays me back over time with interest or
13 higher value, but my participation in this transaction
14 is voluntary, not mandated by rate hikes.

15 Further, if I invest in a Gulf Power bond, I
16 am free to resell it in the marketplace and I have done
17 so before.

18 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Mr. Beauchemin, I appreciate
19 your comments, and would suggest that you provide us
20 more comments in writing, and we will take those into
21 consideration.

22 Commissioners, any questions of
23 Mr. Beauchemin?

24 **MR. BEAUCHEMIN:** If I may say the final line.

25 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Wrap it up, please.

1 **MR. BEAUCHEMIN:** I'm not proposing a reduced
2 rate hike versus Gulf Power's proposal; I want you to
3 reject it outright. Thank you.

4 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Thank you. Thank you for
5 your testimony.

6 Next customer, please.

7 **MR. KELLY:** After Ms. Cook is Ronald Shaner.

8 **MS. COOK:** I'll be short because much of what
9 I want to say has already been said. Arlene Cook, 318
10 South MacArthur, Panama City, (850)769-2683.

11 I'm very conservative, and we've got to start
12 taking care of our planet. And with what's going on
13 politically, we need to be more aware of that. And what
14 this is doing is it's punishing the people that are
15 conservative and it's hurting alternative energy and
16 clean energy. And the profits with -- right now there
17 are so many people in Bay County that are below the
18 poverty level, that are underemployed or unemployed, and
19 to have the butt of the rate hurt the less income and
20 the people that are conservative I think is completely
21 wrong. The profit margin is way too high for -- most
22 people can't invest and get that kind of money.

23 So I just am not for it at all. And much of
24 what I've said -- much of what other people have said I
25 agree with, and there's no use to, you know, continue to

1 repeat that.

2 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Thank you.

3 **MS. COOK:** So somebody can -- you can have the
4 rest of my time.

5 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Thank you, Ms. Cook.

6 Commissioners, any questions?

7 Seeing none, I appreciate your testimony.

8 Next customer.

9 **MR. KELLY:** After Mr. Shaner is Rich Walker.

10 **MR. SHANER:** I'm Ron Shaner, 5711 Kevin
11 Circle, Callaway, Florida. My phone number is 850-8794
12 (verbatim). From what I've heard here today, I'm beyond
13 disgusted. I don't even know where to start.

14 **AUDIENCE SPEAKER:** Ditto.

15 **MR. SHANER:** I thought it was going to be on
16 those -- if you use more electricity, you was going to
17 pay more for it, but I find it's on my base rate. When
18 I moved here in 2004, there was a \$5 -- it was in the
19 neighborhood of \$5 charge on there. I called it just
20 for the meter sitting on the house. I mean, that was my
21 simple thinking on that. But I checked, and that \$5,
22 you know, it found its way up and it was a little over
23 20. I just looked at a bill this morning and it went
24 from 5 to 20 here in about 12 years. And now you're
25 telling me that this same base rate is going to go to 40

1 to 50. I mean, this -- there's nothing I can do to cut
2 that. I mean, I thought, well, you know, I could use a
3 little bit less electricity or whatever, you know. I'm
4 using about as little as I can, about 750 per month, you
5 know, and there's only so much cutting you can do. I
6 live on social security and, you know, they told me that
7 the cost of living wasn't going up only three-tenths of
8 1 percent, and then Medicaid come by and took more than
9 that. So I get no raise this year at all. And if they
10 took out for Medicaid, I'd go way back.

11 And, I mean, if this -- these companies
12 looking for rate increases -- my car insurance goes up,
13 you call them about it, and they can paint a pretty
14 picture for why they need that, you know. Somebody on
15 the other end is -- you know, that's their job to paint
16 you a pretty picture. And homeowner's insurance goes
17 up. And when I checked this morning -- you know, I've
18 got a little rainy day account. The bank pays me
19 one-twentieth of 1 percent on that. And, you know,
20 they're requesting a 10 to 11 percent increase. I don't
21 get that at all. I live within my means. I have no
22 other choice.

23 And on my tiny income, I help another family
24 member that's got a lot of medical expenses. I help
25 them put food on the table too. And, I mean, this is --

1 this rate increase is just ridiculous. If you're going
2 to have a rate increase, let them that use more pay
3 more, not just a base rate increase for everybody. This
4 really puts a hurt on. And I'm so disgusted, I just --
5 you know, I'm having difficulty here standing here and
6 facing you people.

7 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** You have about ten seconds,
8 sir.

9 **MR. SHANER:** Okay. Thank you very much.

10 **AUDIENCE SPEAKER:** Ditto.

11 **MR. SHANER:** And, I mean, just consider this.
12 No rate increase. If they get one, give them
13 three-tenths of a percent like the social security folks
14 got.

15 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Thank you, sir. Thank you
16 for your testimony.

17 I would like to remind the audience to please
18 refrain from outbursts and shouting. It will not be
19 tolerated.

20 Thank you, sir.

21 Next customer.

22 (Inaudible comments from audience.)

23 **MR. KELLY:** After Mr. Walker is --

24 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** If you are signed up -- if
25 you'd like to speak, there's a sign-up sheet outside.

1 Please feel free to sign up if you'd like to speak.

2 Sorry, sir.

3 **MR. WALKER:** Good morning.

4 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Good morning.

5 **MR. WALKER:** Thank you for having us. Rich
6 Walker, 1106 Michigan Avenue, Lynn Haven, Florida. I'm
7 not a Gulf Power consumer. My wife is. She has the
8 budget, so I'm representing her. (Laughter.) That's a
9 hard act to follow right there.

10 My concern and my concern a couple of years
11 ago with the same group that was here a couple of years
12 ago when we sat here and discussed the same thing, a
13 rate increase, is the following. You invited the
14 elected officials of our town and municipalities to
15 come. I do not see any of them here. I did not see any
16 of them the last time. That shows you how much concern
17 they have for their own citizens.

18 So I say this: We are facing a rate increase
19 from Gulf Power. We are facing a rate increase from
20 TECO Gas. We are facing a rate increase from the
21 services from the City of Lynn Haven. By the way, the
22 City of Lynn Haven marches to its own drummer. It cares
23 less about its citizens. It cares less about your rate
24 increase too. They pass that on to the consumer.

25 The City of Lynn Haven and Gulf Power

1 increase, an example. The property that Lynn Haven lets
2 you use to run your power lines, that belongs to the
3 citizens. They gave that to the city. Then Gulf Power,
4 of course, is charged for the use of that property, and
5 that's passed on to the consumer. So these are things
6 that you don't see that happen.

7 There's a disparity between the commercial use
8 of power and residential use. I represent presently the
9 Masonic Lodge in Lynn Haven. I'm the secretary and I'm
10 in charge of the finances and the bills. And I'm also
11 the project officer for the only and oldest library
12 renovation in Lynn Haven, who just established
13 electricity where -- in an area that it has never been
14 there. We have impact fees. These you don't see. We
15 have to pay those to the city. Okay? These are
16 charges. You don't see it, but you got an increase
17 that's going to be given to Gulf Power. The increase is
18 just a little bit too much to bear. I echo exactly what
19 that gentleman said. Yes, I know they want to shoot for
20 the moon and maybe they'll get a little less. That's
21 normal business. However, 11 percent over what I have
22 to supervise and take care of in Lynn Haven is just a
23 little too much, especially on some of the people with
24 fixed incomes. Thank you for your time.

25 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Thank you for your testimony.

1 Commissioners, any questions?

2 Thank you, again.

3 **MS. WALKER:** Thank you.

4 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Next customer.

5 **MR. KELLY:** The next speaker is Mary Concklin,
6 followed by Kimberly Ackerman.

7 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Good morning.

8 **MS. CONCKLIN:** Thank you, Commissioners. My
9 name is Mary Concklin. I live at 21411 Hilltop Avenue
10 in Panama City Beach, Florida 32413.

11 And I would like to say that this rate
12 increase is ridiculous when those of us who are on
13 social security got a .03 percent increase, which was
14 taken up by the increase in Part B Medicare.

15 I am one of those that probably use more power
16 than some of the other people here, and I was thinking
17 about really trying to conserve. Well, from what I
18 hear, it wouldn't behoove me to do that because it
19 sounds like people who are trying to conserve are being
20 penalized for it.

21 But, anyway, I think the total sum of
22 25 percent increase, because it's going to be passed
23 down to us from people who -- like Publix Supermarket,
24 who's going to be charged an increase in their rate.
25 Guess what? They're not going to pay for it. We're

1 going to pay for it.

2 Also I see where *Securing Our Customers'*
3 *Energy Future*, a little brochure that Gulf Power gave
4 me, "This request will benefit customers through greater
5 reliability and price stability through a balanced
6 energy mix that includes renewables and 24/7 energy
7 sources." What the heck does that mean?

8 "Peace of mind that power -- Gulf Power is
9 prepared to meet your energy needs now and into the
10 future." Don't charge me for my peace of mind.

11 "Fulfilling your desire for more
12 predictability in your bills and more pricing choices."
13 What the heck does that mean? You are going to charge
14 your rates based on that? I don't get it.

15 And I would also like for the Office of the
16 Public Counsel to correct me or help me to understand.
17 The revenue operating income from Gulf Power for the
18 year 2016 as recorded was in excess of \$89 million.
19 Their return on investment is 4.38 percent. They also,
20 in 2016, had over \$2,030,000,000 in profits. Now if I'm
21 wrong, please let me know. But explain all of this to
22 me.

23 And I would suggest that the public
24 Commissioners reject this proposal in its entirety. We
25 are in a time when people are not getting increases in

1 cost of living, and yet they want to increase
2 everything. My power -- my water bill has already gone
3 up 5 percent.

4 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Thank you, Ms. Concklin.

5 **MS. CONCKLIN:** Thank you.

6 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Your time has expired.

7 And, Commissioners, any questions?

8 And I'm sure Mr. Kelly will meet with you
9 after to dissect those questions with you.

10 **MS. CONCKLIN:** Thank you.

11 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Next customer.

12 **MR. KELLY:** After Ms. Ackerman is John
13 Robbins.

14 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Good morning.

15 **MS. ACKERMAN:** Good morning. My name is
16 Kimberly Ackerman. My number is (334)300-2551. I live
17 at 8630 Preservation Drive, Panama City Beach, and we
18 are Gulf Power customers.

19 And my comments have already been kind of
20 said, but I feel if this is approved, Gulf Power's rate
21 changes will harm low-income and low-usage customers.
22 It will reduce customers' incentives to increase energy
23 efficiency and install solar panels on their homes, and
24 it will reduce customers' ability to control their power
25 bills by reducing energy consumption. And that's just

1 my two cents' worth.

2 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Thank you, Ms. Ackerman, for
3 your testimony.

4 Next customer, please.

5 **MR. KELLY:** After Mr. Robbins is Arlene
6 Devereaux.

7 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Good morning.

8 **MR. ROBBINS:** Good morning. My name is John
9 Robbins. I live at 2332 Foxworth Drive, Panama City,
10 Florida. Telephone number is 784-0732.

11 Let me preface my remarks by saying I spent
12 over 30 years with a public utility, telephone company,
13 and I may have a little different thought process than a
14 of my friends and neighbors that are standing here
15 today.

16 None of us really like to see rate increases,
17 no matter if it's at a gas pump, grocery store, or
18 wherever it is, but it's inevitable. There's some
19 things we are going to have to pay for.

20 One of the things that Gulf Power has been a
21 leader throughout northwest Florida has been economic
22 development. They have teamed with many of us
23 throughout the region to make ready some of the
24 properties, shovel ready, so that we can bring industry
25 into our communities. We're poised right now today to

1 bring -- to make some announcements to bring some really
2 significant additional jobs to our community.

3 Folks, we can't do that if we don't have the
4 infrastructure to be able to provide those jobs. You're
5 sitting in a unique position. Gulf Power is sitting in
6 a unique position. They're going to have to make sure
7 that they have the availability of electricity to
8 provide these jobs. The industry -- some of these
9 industries are going to consume an awful lot of
10 electricity. Where is that going to come from? Perhaps
11 we all will be involved to some degree in helping to pay
12 for that infrastructure, but the return on that
13 investment, in my opinion, is going to be overwhelming.
14 We're going to have people that will have jobs that
15 don't have jobs today but will have real paying jobs.
16 And perhaps some of these folks that have a very limited
17 income will be elevated in the positions that they will
18 receive as a result of these new industries.

19 I think that there's a fair -- there's a fair
20 place somewhere here. The power companies deserve to
21 have the means to build for the future. Thank you.

22 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Thank you. Just a second,
23 sir. Thank you for your testimony. You worked for a
24 company for 30 years, a utility?

25 **MR. ROBBINS:** Thirty-five years.

1 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Thirty-five years? What --
2 do you mind me asking what company?

3 **MR. ROBBINS:** BellSouth.

4 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Okay. Telecom.

5 **MR. ROBBINS:** Many people refer to me as the
6 "Old Ding-a-ling."

7 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** That's cute. That's a -- and
8 you're a county commissioner?

9 **MR. ROBBINS:** I'm a past county commissioner.

10 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Past county commissioner.

11 **MR. ROBBINS:** How did you know that?

12 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** A little birdie. A little
13 birdie. Thank you for your testimony and your service
14 too.

15 Oh, sir, we have a -- Commissioner, we have a
16 question from Commissioner Polmann over here for you,
17 sir.

18 **MR. ROBBINS:** Yes.

19 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Just a moment, ma'am. Thank
20 you.

21 **COMMISSIONER POLMANN:** Was there a particular
22 inspiration that brought you here today, sir?

23 **MR. ROBBINS:** Yes.

24 **COMMISSIONER POLMANN:** Would you care to
25 share? Was there a comment that you --

1 **MR. ROBBINS:** The economic development is the
2 whole thing. I've been involved in it from Pensacola to
3 Jacksonville for years, and I've been very involved in
4 it in our community.

5 **COMMISSIONER POLMANN:** Thank you, sir. I
6 appreciate that.

7 **MR. ROBBINS:** You're welcome.

8 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Commissioners, any other
9 questions?

10 Thank you, again.

11 **MR. KELLY:** After Ms. Devereaux is Mattie
12 Gammon.

13 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Good morning.

14 **MS. DEVEREAUX:** Arlene Devereaux, 901 West
15 19th Street, Apartment 3107, Panama City, Florida.

16 I am one of those senior citizens. I'm making
17 my 90th orbit of the sun right now.

18 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Ninety.

19 **MS. DEVEREAUX:** I am on very limited income.
20 I didn't expect to live this long. If this rate goes
21 into effect, it will practically -- I don't know how I'm
22 going to pay it. And I know a lot of people in the same
23 condition that I am and some in worse shape than I am.
24 I do have some money in the bank, but it only draws
25 1 percent. I'm very lucky to get 1 percent. Why should

1 we give 11 percent to Gulf Power? And really that's all
2 I want to add to what's already been said.

3 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Thank you, Ms. Devereaux, for
4 your testimony, and you look great. Thank you for
5 coming out here.

6 Next customer.

7 **MR. KELLY:** After Ms. Gammon is Estoria Clark.

8 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Good morning.

9 **MS. GAMMON:** Good morning. My name is Mattie
10 Gammon. I live at 922 East 10th Court, Panama City,
11 Florida 32401. My phone number is (850)785-0183.

12 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** A little technical help
13 there. You can proceed, if you want.

14 (Microphone adjusted.)

15 **MS. GAMMON:** My comment is and complaint is
16 like most I've heard. I'm a widow and 83-year-old lady
17 and live off of social security, and this increase in
18 our energy bill is going to be astronomical. It's going
19 to -- I already cannot -- I have to think about what --
20 what to pay in order to get the meds that I need to
21 continue to live. And I pray that you all would
22 reconsider the amount that you plan to increase in Gulf
23 Power, or if not you, who you are representing. If you
24 don't cut it out for sure or for all, maybe you can cut
25 it down.

1 But right now I need help in paying my energy
2 bills, along with my life insurance and other bills that
3 I have to go -- that we all have to live by. I have a
4 meager place to live. I don't have all this excessive
5 stuff. My energy that I use is very, very limited. I
6 can't stand a whole lot of cold, so I use a lot of heat,
7 but I have gas heat and I have a little plug-in heater
8 to help supplement that. So it will be a blessing if
9 you would not add that increase to our light bill. And
10 I thank you so much.

11 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Thank you for your testimony.

12 Commissioners, any comments or questions?

13 Thank you.

14 **MS. GAMMON:** Thank you.

15 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Next customer.

16 **MR. KELLY:** After Ms. Clark is -- is it Dean
17 McDonald?

18 **MR. McDONALD:** Yes, sir.

19 **MS. CLARK:** Good morning, Commissioners. My
20 name is Estoria Clark, and I live at 914 Massalina
21 Drive. I represent the League of Women Voters and the
22 NAACP. And I agree with all that has been shared here,
23 and I rise to oppose the rate increase. It would be a
24 tremendous burden on all of us. I, like many of those
25 who have spoken before me, am a mature senior citizen.

1 I used to say old, and since I am old, I don't say old
2 anymore. I say mature. (Laughter.) So I want to you
3 carefully consider not raising our rate as much. Thank
4 you.

5 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Ms. Clark, a quick question
6 from Commissioner Brisé.

7 **COMMISSIONER BRISÉ:** Thank you, and thank you
8 for being here today. Just -- you mentioned that you
9 are here on behalf of the League of Women Voters and the
10 NAACP. Are you here on their official behalf or are you
11 here as a member?

12 **MS. CLARK:** As a member.

13 **COMMISSIONER BRISÉ:** Okay. Perfect. Thank
14 you.

15 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Thank you for your testimony.
16 Next customer, please.

17 **MR. KELLY:** After Mr. McDonald is Barbara
18 Gudgel.

19 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Good morning, Mr. McDonald.

20 **MR. McDONALD:** Good morning, everybody. My
21 name is Dean McDonald. I live at 6415 Big Daddy Drive,
22 Panama City Beach, Florida. My father loves that
23 address.

24 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** That's a real address?

25 **MR. McDONALD:** Big Daddy Drive, yes. It's

1 right across the lagoon. My phone number is
2 (850)588-7256. Ditto on just about everything that's
3 been said today.

4 I'm looking for clarification on things.
5 Okay? In a letter sent to our house a month ago --

6 (Telephone ringing.)

7 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Could you please silence that
8 phone, sir, so we can hear him?

9 **MR. McDONALD:** Gulf Power said that we had
10 cheaper rates because oil prices dropped, and they're
11 right. Oil is half the price it was two years ago when
12 they say, "Oh, well, we haven't had a high price since
13 2015."

14 And then they also said that they're using
15 low-cost clean coal. So if you're saving money there,
16 why do you need more money here? Why don't you invest
17 your savings into your infrastructure? I mean,
18 honestly, I'm very proud of how good you guys are. The
19 other night, for the first time in the 15 months I've
20 been living here -- I'm from Jacksonville where we have
21 very good utilities -- was the first time the power went
22 out, and the power was back on within ten minutes.
23 Bravo, you guys. You're doing a good job, but it
24 doesn't mean you deserve 11 percent on your equity.
25 Nobody anywhere is guaranteed, you know, that kind of

1 return on anything. There's -- you invest in the stock
2 market and tomorrow it crashes, you're out of your
3 money. But Gulf Power says, "No, we want to make sure
4 we have that money."

5 The next question I have is what is the
6 kilowatt-hour rate for Gulf Power, because I can't find
7 it anywhere? The state average is 11.6 cents per
8 kilowatt-hour. The national average is 12.06 cents.
9 According to my bill, by dividing my -- how much it cost
10 into my kilowatt-hours, we're paying 13.7 cents per
11 kilowatt-hour. Okay? That is 2 percent higher than the
12 state average and a percent higher than the national
13 average.

14 Also three different claims in three different
15 documents. The letter you guys sent out said that it
16 was going to increase our bills by about \$10.22. The
17 article that Ms. Sims wrote for the Gulf Coast Power in
18 the paper says, "No, it's about 14.85." And then your
19 own document here shows it as a \$17 increase for a
20 thousand kilowatt-hours, which is what most people
21 average.

22 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** You've got about ten seconds,
23 sir.

24 **MR. McDONALD:** Huh?

25 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** You have got about ten

1 seconds.

2 **MR. McDONALD:** Okay. So I would like the
3 clarification, what is the actual increase? Because
4 that's three different sources. And where you have
5 smoke, you have trickery. And where you have trickery,
6 you know.

7 So, anyway, and then the rate option. You
8 said it was separate from this? Because it keeps
9 sounding like you guys are linking it.

10 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Mr. McDonald, your time has
11 expired. But I'm going to have our staff, Mr. Tom
12 Ballinger -- could you waive your hand, Mr. Tom? He's
13 going to get with you and go over some of those
14 questions that you had. Thank you.

15 **MR. McDONALD:** Okay. Thank you.

16 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Thank you.

17 Next customer, please.

18 **MR. KELLY:** After Ms. -- and I apologize if I
19 mis --

20 **MS. GUDGEL:** Gudgel.

21 **MR. KELLY:** Gudgel -- will be Ivie Burch.

22 **MS. GUDGEL:** Barbara Gudgel, 6507 West Sundew
23 Marsh Trail, Panama City Beach, Florida, (850)867-7386.
24 And, yes, unfortunately I'm a Gulf Power customer.

25 Commissioners, so you have been given the task

1 to decide if the rate increase is fair and reasonable.
2 Based on what Mr. Kelly said, based on what this woman
3 said -- I'm sorry, I forgot her name -- and based on
4 what FPL charges, what Duke Energy charges,
5 Jacksonville, Tallahassee, I can't imagine or comprehend
6 how you could come up with anything but no. And I think
7 what you need, in my opinion, to consider is that they
8 no longer deserve a monopoly on the area. They do not
9 deserve it.

10 Look at the company that you are dealing with
11 here. This is the company that they say they listen to
12 the feedback of their customers. That's a joke. If
13 they were listening to the feedback of their customers,
14 they would not be doing what they're doing now. This is
15 a company that poured over \$2 million into a misleading
16 anti-solar amendment. The residents of the great state
17 of Florida are pro solar, but you don't listen to that.

18 This is a company, if you read their
19 propaganda -- and that's what it is, it's propaganda.
20 This is -- a marketing person put this together, and it
21 is smoke and mirrors, just like the last gentleman said.

22 They -- Gulf Power is a public utility company
23 that has to serve the public interest. That's what
24 everything says. That's what they're supposed to do.
25 They obviously have forgotten that, and the people of

1 this great state are fed up with it. Americans went to
2 the polls in the state of Florida and across the country
3 and said, "Enough is enough." They don't want to be
4 dealing with companies like this. Thank God that the
5 people of this state went to the polls and voted no on
6 Amendment 1. The commercials you did on Amendment 1
7 were shameful. What you did, you tried to pull the wool
8 over the people's eyes of Florida. And thankfully
9 enough organizations and enough people went to the polls
10 and said, "No, we know what the truth is about that
11 amendment."

12 You are a company that are -- is full of lies
13 and deception. As far as I'm concerned, if you're
14 looking for infrastructure money, look no further than
15 the \$11 million the CEO gets in salary and stock awards.
16 I think it's shameful they are asking for an increase.
17 And they -- and on top of that, why don't you try to
18 figure out ways to get --

19 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Ma'am, you have about ten
20 seconds left.

21 **MS. GUDGEL:** Uh-huh -- do some -- again, let's
22 go back to you say you are listening to the feedback of
23 your customers and you want service that fits your life,
24 quote, unquote.

25 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Ma'am, I'm so sorry. I have

1 to cut you off, but encourage --

2 **MS. GUDGEL:** That's fine. You are not doing
3 that. Shameful company.

4 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Ma'am, ma'am. Thank you.
5 And I encourage you to file written comments as well and
6 appreciate your comments today.

7 Next customer.

8 **MR. KELLY:** After Mr. Burch is Barbara Day.

9 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Good morning.

10 **MR. BURCH:** I'm Ivie Burch. I live at 1002
11 Maple Avenue, and my phone number is (850)763-1626.

12 I have been a member of St. John Missionary
13 Baptist Church for over 50 years. I served on the
14 Benevolent Ministry for over 40 years, and invariably
15 there were people who came to us needing help with their
16 power bills. And they didn't come just from our church.
17 They came from all over the county.

18 And when I looked at this increase that was
19 being proposed, then I said, "What parallel is there
20 that's going to help these people improve economically
21 so that they won't be coming back because the bill is
22 even higher now than it was previously?"

23 And then I raised the question that, yes, Gulf
24 Power deserves to make a profit. I'm telling them so.
25 That's why we invest. But why should you do this in

1 such a way that you even push the ratio between where
2 your profit and what is actually being earned by those
3 people in the lower echelon of the economic system?
4 It's incredible what they are saying to us. Because
5 certainly we would like to know that all of our people
6 in the county have the opportunity to enjoy all of the
7 benefits of the economic system, all of the benefits of
8 living a comfortable and full life, and this will not
9 help them to do this one iota. And I commend the
10 customer counsel for the research that they've done.

11 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Thank you, sir, for your
12 testimony.

13 Commissioners, any comments or questions? No.

14 Thank you.

15 Next customer.

16 **MR. KELLY:** After Ms. Day is -- I apologize.
17 I can't read it. Is it -- it's Mr. -- excuse me --
18 Smith. And I apologize. George Smith. I'm sorry.
19 George Smith.

20 (Microphone being adjusted.)

21 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Good morning, Ms. Day.

22 **MS. DAY:** I'm not electronically -- a
23 convenience here.

24 My name is Barbara Day, and I live in Lynn
25 Haven. And my telephone number is (850)265-9176. I am

1 a residential consumer customer of Gulf Power.

2 I agree that many of Gulf Power's endeavors
3 have been commendable, but there are a few reasons that
4 I find this increase is not justified.

5 First, the rate increase may not sound like
6 too much to some customers, but those who are working
7 two and three and there are some that maybe work four
8 jobs just to make their ends meet, this rate increase
9 would make a choice of electricity or food on their
10 table. I'm here to speak for those customers that are
11 unable to attend due to their extreme difficulties who
12 cannot be here to testify.

13 You should deny this Gulf Power rate increase.
14 This rate is not justified. Gulf Power already has the
15 highest fixed rate of the major utilities in the state.
16 What is the reason for taking more from your customers?
17 For those maybe that can afford to pay for the increase
18 would pay less, and the energy savers would get hit the
19 hardest by paying higher costs due to the fixed rate.
20 So a customer that pays \$148.64 to a Gulf Power bill per
21 month will go to \$158.86 per month. Well, you can only
22 say that's approximately 7 percent, maybe just \$10.22.
23 What's wrong with that per month? Well, this year your
24 social security recipients only received that
25 .03 percent increase, and many of those recipients

1 around make approximately 10,000 -- less than \$10,000 a
2 year. And now Gulf Power is requesting approximately
3 just \$122 more per year, that rate increase from that
4 little old customer that is having to work two to four
5 jobs a day. I ask you to please take in
6 consideration -- since Gulf Power has the highest fixed
7 rate charges in the state, you should just question why
8 can't they lower their rates? Just think how many
9 customers will be hurt with this increase.

10 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** You have ten seconds, ma'am.

11 **MS. DAY:** Most customers continue to be on the
12 survival list. As we continue to age, the quality of
13 life is so important to everyone. I hope you will
14 consider people should not be worried about where their
15 meal might come from, maybe purchase their medication.
16 Therefore, the Gulf Power rate increase is not
17 justified.

18 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Thank you.

19 **MS. DAY:** And \$122 per year rate is hurting
20 the aging generation.

21 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Thank you, ma'am.

22 **MS. DAY:** Thank you.

23 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Thank you for your testimony.

24 Next customer, please.

25 **MR. KELLY:** After Mr. Smith, and I apologize

1 for getting your first name wrong, Paul Hunt.

2 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Good morning.

3 **MR. SMITH:** Good morning. Good morning.

4 George Smith. I live at 8009 Highway 22 in Callaway.
5 That's the house where the sewage truck turned over in
6 my yard last week.

7 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Ooh, really?

8 **MR. SMITH:** Anyway, I've been a Gulf Power
9 customer here since 1974. Right now I have five meters
10 in my name, and it's killing me. But -- and when I say
11 small business, I mean small business. I know
12 Mr. Patronis has a semi-small business. They do very
13 good. But every time we have an increase, we've got to
14 suck it up. We have to make an adjustment in our
15 business.

16 There's a saying that where there's no vision,
17 the people perish. Because of Gulf Power's lack of
18 vision coming up today, we are the people that's going
19 to perish. So I just urge you -- they had a lot of time
20 to forecast what's going to happen and make some
21 adjustments in their business plan to accommodate for
22 the increases. Technology today dictates that we can
23 streamline a lot of things, a lot of things, including
24 salaries, including personnel. So I would -- if -- I
25 think you would have had more people here if they knew

1 R. Kelly was going to be here today.

2 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** J.R. It's not R. Kelly.

3 **MR. SMITH:** Wrong R. Kelly; right?

4 (Laughter.)

5 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Wrong R. Kelly.

6 **MR. SMITH:** But, anyway, I would just really,
7 really implore you guys to totally reject this increase
8 based on the fact that they didn't plan for it. And now
9 because they had no vision, we, the people, will perish.
10 Thank you.

11 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Sir, a question from
12 Commissioner Patronis. And thank you for coming out
13 here.

14 **MR. SMITH:** Uh-huh.

15 **COMMISSIONER PATRONIS:** Thank you. I'm just
16 curious, when that accident happened in your yard last
17 week, is your yard greener?

18 **MR. SMITH:** They said the grass will be
19 greener, Jimmy.

20 (Audience laughter.)

21 **COMMISSIONER PATRONIS:** Just curious.

22 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** That's great. Thank you
23 again, sir.

24 **MR. SMITH:** Thank you.

25 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Next customer.

1 **MS. MORSE:** Paul Hunt. After him will be
2 Sammy Day.

3 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Good morning.

4 **MR. HUNT:** Yes, good morning. My name is Paul
5 Hunt, 830 Brandeis Avenue, Panama City, Florida
6 (850)769-1801. I've been a customer for Gulf Power for
7 about 52 years. I was employed with Gulf Power for 47
8 years. I've met plenty of customers that have shared
9 with me down through the years, and I've always been
10 able to give them an answer to their question. And
11 they've always been very positive answers because I was
12 well briefed on what I needed to say and I believed in
13 what I was saying to the customer.

14 I heard one of the speakers say that our
15 low-income customers will use more electricity -- less
16 electricity, but I beg to differ. Our low-income
17 customers use more electricity because their homes are
18 not well insulated, their windows -- you know, just
19 point blank, just not well insulated. So when the meter
20 reads -- when they've used electricity and they're using
21 3,000 kilowatts in a 750-square-foot house and then I go
22 to a 3,500-square-foot house where they're only using,
23 you know, 1,500 kilowatts, I feel for those customers
24 that are using that electricity. And I just believe
25 that they are going to suffer even more. I don't want

1 to say too much because I'm afraid my pension might be
2 cut. (Laughter.) No, I know that's not so. I know
3 that's not so.

4 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Yeah, the CEO was smiling in
5 the back.

6 **MR. HUNT:** Yeah. But I've been trying to
7 convince myself to totally agree with what was going on
8 because I've spent so much time with Gulf Power, but I
9 just can't -- I'm just not convinced that this is the
10 right move for Gulf Power. Thank you.

11 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Thank you. Mr. Hunt,
12 question. You worked with Gulf Power for 47 years.
13 What was your position there?

14 **MR. HUNT:** I was a field service rep.

15 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Field service rep.

16 **MR. HUNT:** Uh-huh. So --

17 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** That's a long time to be
18 working for one company.

19 **MR. HUNT:** Yeah, that's a long time to do
20 anything. Yes.

21 (Laughter.)

22 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Yes, that's true.

23 Commissioners, any questions or comments?

24 Thank you for coming out.

25 **MR. HUNT:** Thank you.

1 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Next customer, Mr. Kelly.

2 **MR. KELLY:** After Mr. Day is William Swift.

3 **MR. DAY:** My name is Sammy Day, and I live in
4 Lynn Haven. I've been a Gulf Power customer for almost
5 60 years, and that's the only choice I had. You know,
6 when you serve on boards, some people get compensated
7 for it. A lot of boards, you don't get compensated for
8 it. Can you tell me what your salary is, what you're
9 paid, if you get paid?

10 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** We do get paid. It's a
11 full-time position here at the Commission. And we'll go
12 over all those details, but we're here to hear from you,
13 sir.

14 **MR. DAY:** I know, but I'm going to a point.
15 I'd like to know how much you get salary for.

16 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Our salaries are set by
17 statute, and they're codified in statute at 131.

18 **MR. DAY:** \$131,000?

19 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Yes, sir.

20 **MR. DAY:** Okay. Is that the same for all of
21 y'all, each one?

22 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Sir, yes. Again, we're here
23 to hear from you.

24 **MR. DAY:** Okay. Well, what I'm trying to lead
25 up to, if you can get 131,000 serving on a board, in my

1 opinion, I don't see where you ought to get paid
2 anything. Because if Gulf Power is paying you that, I
3 don't know -- I don't think you want to answer it -- we
4 don't have a chance out here anyway.

5 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** No, sir.

6 **MR. DAY:** If the state is paying you, I
7 don't -- I think it's unfair. Y'all ought to be --
8 y'all should be on a board with no salary, the way I see
9 it, to make it fair for the customer out here. To get a
10 salary like that on a board like that, that's unreal.
11 Now do y'all have any questions for me?

12 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Sir, yeah, we do have just a
13 comment.

14 **MR. DAY:** Go ahead.

15 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** This is a full-time position
16 here. We're not considered a board in the way that
17 you're describing it. We have a staff of almost
18 300 technical staff, a very highly technical group, and
19 we govern over that. It's a very active position. We
20 act in a quasi-judicial capacity, and we're appointed by
21 the governor, confirmed by the senate, and a great deal
22 of time and energy is spent on a full-time basis. And,
23 again, we respectfully request you to submit any
24 concerns or -- in writing, and we'd be happy to consider
25 them.

1 Commissioners, any comments or questions?

2 **MR. DAY:** No, ma'am.

3 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Thank you for your time.

4 **MR. DAY:** You're welcome.

5 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Next customer.

6 **MR. KELLY:** After Mr. Swift is Peter Elvin.

7 **MR. SWIFT:** My name is William Swift. I live
8 at 1505 Daunett Court, Lynn Haven, Florida. I am --
9 32444. I am -- oh, my phone number is (410)499-5908. I
10 am also the chair of the Glenwood Working Partnership,
11 which represents the Glenwood community. Actually we
12 represent -- well, I'll say the Glenwood community,
13 which is 86th on the bottom 100 poorest neighborhoods in
14 the United States. An increase in rates will impact the
15 Glenwood community very, very negatively.

16 We -- I'll be a little -- I'll start a
17 little personal -- I'll get a little personal at first.
18 I moved here in 2007 as a result of a -- of a taking,
19 eminent domain taking. My first bill -- at that time I
20 paid a bill of 209 -- 200 -- well, that's 309. Well,
21 actually 209. This is a double bill. I had a \$165
22 bill. The bill I got last month on the -- on a budget,
23 my budget bill is \$335. That's from 2007,
24 September 2007 to now. We've had increases over the
25 period of time, which has -- as you can see, from 165 to

1 335 on a budget billing. I had to go to budget billing.

2 My wife and I retired. She retired after
3 having a stroke. And as I said, our house was taken in
4 an eminent domain taking and we found -- we moved here
5 to Florida. Come January 1st, her -- her Medicare --
6 Medicare deduction from her social security went up and
7 that brought our take home down. And so we're looking
8 at an increase in this, you know. This increase is just
9 unsustainable on a personal level. Now I go back to the
10 --

11 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** You have about ten seconds,
12 sir.

13 **MR. SWIFT:** Okay. Back to what Paul was
14 saying, you know, these -- there are people in the
15 Glenwood community who are using excess capacity because
16 their houses are leaking. Take Ms. Gammon that just
17 came up here. We've been working for three years to get
18 the -- to get the CRA to do some things to make her
19 house more energy efficient.

20 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Thank you, sir.

21 **MR. SWIFT:** It just isn't happening.

22 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Sir, I appreciate the
23 comments. Again, we encourage you to file written
24 comments if you have more to share with us.

25 We are getting at the halfway part of how many

1 customers are here to speak, and we'd like to take a --
2 about a ten-minute break for our court reporter to rest
3 her fingers. We will reconvene. The time is 11:26. We
4 will reconvene around 11:35. I encourage you all to
5 take bathroom breaks and rest your legs and things.

6 (Recess taken.)

7 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** All right. We are going to
8 go back on the record. If I could ask staff to please
9 close the doors. Mr. Kelly, can you please close the
10 doors? Thank you. And if you could kindly take your
11 seats. Thank you.

12 Mr. Kelly is here and he is assembling his
13 customer list. My understanding is we have about 25
14 more customers who wish to speak. I want to make sure
15 that everyone has been sworn in who's here who would
16 like to address the Commission. Is there anybody that
17 has not been sworn in that would like to address the
18 Commission here? Please raise your hand. All right.
19 Great.

20 Will you raise your hand with me and repeat
21 after me? Do you swear or affirm to provide the truth
22 in this proceeding?

23 **AUDIENCE SPEAKER:** I do.

24 (Witness sworn.)

25 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Thank you very much.

1 All right. Mr. Kelly, please call your next
2 customer.

3 **MR. KELLY:** The next speaker is Peter Elvin,
4 followed by Sherlene McClary.

5 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Good morning.

6 **MR. ELVIN:** Yeah. Good morning, Chairman and
7 Commissioners. My name is Peter Elvin. I live at 2519
8 West 33rd Street, Panama City, and my phone number is
9 (954)654-0809.

10 My wife, unknown to me, made me a member of
11 the League of Women, so -- that was about three days
12 ago -- so I'm here as one of their many voices.

13 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Good.

14 **MR. ELVIN:** Anyway, just to -- right off the
15 bat, I'm absolutely against this increase. Make that
16 quite simple. And I just want to remind you of the Gulf
17 Power mission statement, which goes, da-da-dee-
18 da-da-dee-da, customer satisfaction is what they're
19 striving for. And if this rate goes through, I can
20 assure you there will be very little customer
21 satisfaction.

22 Now it just seems to me that the -- this
23 increase does not give the customers much of a choice.
24 Now had they reduced with this base increase and
25 increased the kilowatt rate, then that would encourage

1 some savings. You know, people can either, you know,
2 reduce their AC and heat, et cetera. It's pretty
3 obvious.

4 Now we've already heard from the low-income
5 folks, and I just want to -- you know, I don't want to
6 go over all this. But there's another concern, and
7 that's the snowbirds and people that have properties
8 here and have to leave the state and go back to their
9 other properties because they're penalized now with
10 these tremendous rate increases.

11 I just want -- I just did a little bit of
12 investigation yesterday online. I was flabbergasted at
13 the power of the Southern Company, which, of course, you
14 know, includes Gulf Power. And I just want everyone to
15 know, which I didn't know -- I knew this was a monopoly,
16 but -- oh, I've got to speed up a bit. But, anyway,
17 part of Southern Company, they have Alabama Power,
18 Mississippi Power, Georgia Power that I'm very familiar
19 with, and, of course, Gulf Power. And already we can
20 see greed. In two of these states, Mississippi and
21 Alabama, their outstanding -- one, I believe in
22 Mississippi, is 281 million that they -- that that
23 company owes. Again, part of Southern Company. And
24 Alabama owes 100 million. Now with this proposed
25 increase, you know, an outsider could say, "Okay" --

1 Southern Company, looking at losses, could say, "Okay.
2 Well, let's hike up the rates in -- you know, for Gulf
3 Power and start paying some of these lawsuits." So
4 that's basically, you know, everything in a nutshell.

5 And I just in closing would like to offer my
6 services. If a job opening comes up on your commission,
7 please consider me. Otherwise, thank you very much.

8 (Laughter.)

9 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Commissioner Brisé -- oh, my
10 gosh -- Graham has a question for you. Pardon me.

11 **COMMISSIONER GRAHAM:** Yes, sir. You were
12 talking about snowbirds.

13 **MR. ELVIN:** Yes.

14 **COMMISSIONER GRAHAM:** Let's just say they're
15 here for six months of the year and they're gone for six
16 months of the year.

17 **MR. ELVIN:** Well, not necessarily snowbirds.
18 Now, for example --

19 **COMMISSIONER GRAHAM:** No, but I was just going
20 back to you said, "Snowbirds."

21 **MR. ELVIN:** Yeah, right. Okay. Yes, exactly.

22 **COMMISSIONER GRAHAM:** So why couldn't that
23 snowbird just get his power turned off for six months?

24 **MR. ELVIN:** Because he has to -- you know,
25 it's a tremendous cost, you know, to turn it back on

1 again.

2 **COMMISSIONER GRAHAM:** What is -- what's a
3 tremendous cost? \$25?

4 **MR. ELVIN:** I believe it's more than that.
5 But, anyway, we have -- there are other people --

6 **COMMISSIONER GRAHAM:** But you said a
7 tremendous cost. I mean, do you know it to be \$200,
8 \$25, \$10?

9 **MR. ELVIN:** Oh, I don't have those details,
10 but I would certainly be happy to look into it, and I
11 hope you look into it.

12 **COMMISSIONER GRAHAM:** Well, I know my power
13 bill, because I have more than one unit, and when I live
14 in Jacksonville, I've had it abandoned for eight months,
15 I shut the power off. It's, like, 25 to turn it back
16 on.

17 **MR. ELVIN:** Okay. Well, anyway, there are
18 other people, for example, that have second homes closer
19 by, for example. I'm very familiar with a building that
20 I'm involved in. There must be at least ten --

21 **COMMISSIONER GRAHAM:** But, sir, I just wanted
22 to go back to what you said during your testimony.

23 **MR. ELVIN:** Okay. Uh-huh.

24 **COMMISSIONER GRAHAM:** You were talking about
25 snowbirds.

1 **MR. ELVIN:** Yes.

2 **COMMISSIONER GRAHAM:** So I was just trying to
3 dig down to get the answer to that.

4 **MR. ELVIN:** Right.

5 **COMMISSIONER GRAHAM:** But you don't know what
6 it costs to turn it back on.

7 **MR. ELVIN:** No, I have no idea. It is a cost.
8 So they would prefer --

9 **COMMISSIONER GRAHAM:** Okay. Thank you.
10 That's all.

11 **MR. ELVIN:** Can I just ask --

12 **COMMISSIONER GRAHAM:** No. I asked you a
13 question. Thank you, sir.

14 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Thank you.

15 **MR. ELVIN:** Thank you.

16 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** And thank you for your
17 testimony. We'll definitely look into that.

18 Next customer.

19 **MR. KELLY:** After Ms. McClary is Jamie
20 Shepard.

21 **MS. McCLARY:** Hello, and good morning,
22 everyone.

23 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Good morning.

24 **MS. McCLARY:** My name is Sherlene McClary. My
25 address is 2507 Envious (phonetic) Drive in Lynn Haven,

1 and my phone number is (850)532-4163.

2 I'm here to talk about -- and I represent my
3 church, which is Greater Deliverance in Millville, and
4 my organization, which is a non-profit organization.
5 It's Youth In Action. And we've been in business for
6 about 20 years, really 20 years, and we're in the
7 Millville area.

8 My concern is that my kilowatts per hour is
9 \$36 per hour because we're only in one of the church
10 buildings 22 hours per month. The maximum is about 36.
11 So lately I just found out that I could get a budget
12 plan for that. But we own four buildings on the block,
13 and I ended up closing two of them because our bill ran
14 us, for the last 20 years, almost \$3000 a month. And I
15 was overly concerned about that. And every time I would
16 go down there, there would always be a reason. Even
17 when the electricity was struck by the pole and our
18 light bill was off for about a month, or maybe 15 days
19 in one month, that bill never decreased and it stayed
20 the same. So I realized that something was wrong. I
21 realized then that something was wrong, and so I
22 realized that something is going on that is beyond my
23 ability to do anything about.

24 I like the fact -- and my home is in Lynn
25 Haven. I live in a pretty large home. And I know the

1 people in Glenwood and other areas that have small homes
2 pay less -- I pay less for my electric bill than they
3 do, and I know that because of my income I probably
4 could afford it. So I don't really speak for myself
5 and -- but I do speak for the people who I serve in this
6 community.

7 I like the fact that the gentleman said about
8 economic development. And I remember years ago when San
9 Francisco was trying to get some of the businesspeople
10 out of the area, that's what they did. They were able
11 to raise their electricity and they were able to move
12 these people out of their businesses and then bring in
13 what we call economic development. And I'm all for
14 economic development. I moved here by way of the
15 military. I can see that there's growth. But I believe
16 that we should come to some kind of consensus to work
17 together if you want to target a certain area. I
18 believe my area is targeted. I talked to my banker last
19 week. I said, "I'm not going to be able to fight this,"
20 because I realize that they're coming for this area that
21 we are in. So I'm not against that, but I think that if
22 we are going to work together and not undermine our
23 constituents, it's better if we can openly say we want
24 this area to do economic development, and how can we
25 work together with the community to keep the community

1 where it's at?

2 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Ten seconds.

3 **MS. McCLARY:** I realize that Panama City --
4 our people who are underprivileged and they don't make a
5 lot of money here in Panama City, whether you be white
6 or black, it's going to affect all of us. But if we're
7 going to come together and if we're going to rebuild and
8 if we're going to use economic development to rebuild,
9 include the community in it --

10 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Thank you.

11 **MS. McCLARY:** -- so that everybody will be
12 successful in what we're doing. So I thank you for your
13 time and thank you for your day.

14 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Thank you, Ms. McClary, for
15 your comments.

16 Commissioners, any questions?

17 Thank you.

18 Next customer.

19 **MR. KELLY:** After Jamie Shepard is Maurice --
20 Hargor (phonetic), is it Hayver (phonetic)?

21 **MR. HARGROVE:** Hargrove.

22 **MR. KELLY:** Hargrove.

23 **MS. SHEPARD:** Good morning. Thank you all for
24 coming, and thank you to Gulf Power for helping with
25 this event.

1 I represent the League of Women Voters of Bay
2 County with 50 -- well, now 51, including men, members.
3 We, like everyone else here, really appreciate the
4 dedication of Gulf Power's employees and the role it
5 plays in economic development in our community. All of
6 us in here and my members included are your customers,
7 but we're also Gulf Power's partners in energy
8 conservation. Not just because we think it's a good
9 thing to do for the planet, but because it benefits our
10 pocketbooks.

11 So I was kind of, frankly, surprised and all
12 of us at the League were sort of surprised when Gulf
13 Power invested some \$2 million in that flawed Amendment
14 1, when we really would hope that they would be
15 embracing solar with the expansion of this industry. It
16 would be a job creator in our local community. It would
17 work to lessen the power of consumption in our
18 communities. But we also want it to see that it's a job
19 creator for us.

20 My son lives in California and has a solar
21 situation in his house, and their utility rates are
22 astronomical. He pays a \$9-a-month connection fee and
23 is reimbursed 2 cents per kilowatt-hour for power that
24 he sells back in excess of the expenses that he uses in
25 his own home. We'd like to see, and the League is

1 wholeheartedly behind, the expansion of solar power and
2 wants the utility companies overall to be our partners
3 in this, and we don't see why here in the Sunshine State
4 we can't make that possible.

5 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Thank you. Can you please
6 state your name, address, and phone number?

7 **MS. SHEPARD:** I'm sorry. I'm sorry. I got
8 inspired here. Jamie, J-a-m-i-e, Shepard,
9 S-h-e-p-a-r-d. I live at 3106 Preserve Rookery
10 Boulevard, Panama City Beach 32408. My number is
11 (850)235-3781.

12 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Thank you, Ms. Shepard, for
13 your testimony today.

14 **MS. SHEPARD:** Thank you.

15 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Next customer, please.

16 **MR. KELLY:** After Mr. Hargrove is W.R. Bowman.

17 **MR. HARGROVE:** Good morning.

18 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Good morning.

19 **MR. HARGROVE:** Thank you for being able to
20 speak. I'm from Washington County.

21 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Pull this a little closer,
22 please. That's okay. You can hold it, if you want.

23 **MR. HARGROVE:** I'm from the Washington County
24 area, and I'm glad to be a part of trying to talk about
25 the issues I'm having with the utility company. And I'm

1 on a fixed income, and I've got health issues going on.
2 But if the people in Washington County and all these
3 surrounding areas knew about, you know, the issues going
4 on, I'm quite sure there would have been more people in
5 here concerned about the propose of what's happening on
6 the increases on the power bill. Because it's really
7 unfair when you have a billion-dollar corporation, maybe
8 even trillion -- this company -- like Southern Company
9 -- I am from Alabama originally. I've been down here
10 four years. And I just noticed that Alabama charges are
11 different from Florida charges. And it's really unfair
12 for these people to gain revenue. I wish I had some
13 stock, \$500,000 worth of stock from them, you know,
14 invested in this company, and then maybe, you know, it
15 wouldn't bother me. But by me being on one very low
16 income, it really would be a burden to my family.

17 And I'm 48 years old, like I said. I have
18 health issues. I got -- had a lot of surgeries and, you
19 know, God has given me strength to keep going on, but
20 I'm trying to be a family man and support my kids until
21 they get grown up and get on their own. But I hope --
22 and I have done several complaints with you all, with
23 the Public Service Commission. I've called y'all
24 several times. My name is Maurice Hargrove. I've got a
25 couple of complaints.

1 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Could you state your name
2 again -- I'm sorry -- for the record.

3 **MR. HARGROVE:** Maurice G. Hargrove at
4 1672 Sunny Hills Boulevard, Chipley, Florida. You know,
5 I even tried to ask the power company how to, you know,
6 be conservative, how to lower my bill because of my
7 income. And it's a lot of programs out there that were
8 never told to me that I had really to opt into a budget
9 billing that I thought was going to help me. But
10 they're trying -- I ain't been on it six months and they
11 trying to raise it up, and that's unfair. And, you
12 know, by going and trying to do this, boy -- you know, I
13 even asked them, "I wish I had some vouchers or
14 something y'all could offer me to even purchase a solar
15 system," because I think that would benefit me a lot.
16 And I think, you know, hope that one day I get enough
17 money to put some solar panels on my house so I can try
18 to cut back.

19 And I hope that you all consider the people
20 that are less fortunate. If you're going to raise, let
21 them raise, make them go back and look at the people
22 that are on set income, low income before y'all do that.

23 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Thank you, sir, for your
24 testimony. Mr. Hargrove, did you say that you have
25 complaints with the -- registered with the Public

1 Service Commission?

2 **MR. HARGROVE:** Yes, ma'am.

3 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** You did? Okay. Well, we
4 will absolutely look at those and take those into
5 consideration.

6 **MR. HARGROVE:** Okay. Thank you.

7 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Thank you for your testimony.
8 Next customer, please.

9 **MR. KELLY:** Did Mr. Bowman have to leave?

10 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Okay.

11 **MR. KELLY:** Okay. He indicated he may have
12 to.

13 The next speaker is Cynthia -- is it Kuntz?

14 **MS. KUNTZ:** Yes.

15 **MR. KELLY:** Followed by Lorraine Lechner.

16 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Welcome.

17 **MS. KUNTZ:** Hi. My name is Cynthia Kuntz. I
18 live at 7571 Coleridge Road, Panama City, Florida. My
19 phone number is (850)257-5779. I come to you today not
20 just because of myself, but in 1994 -- well, I lived in
21 Bay County my whole life up until 1994. When I left
22 Panama City, I was making minimum wage and paying \$35 a
23 month for electricity. And my brother lived with me,
24 and he ran it astronomically. Whenever I came back to
25 Panama City in 2008, my light bill was about \$175 a

1 month on the average. I'm no longer a single parent,
2 I'm no longer uneducated, but on my way to work every
3 day I pass other people who are like me, and they're
4 wearing -- who are like what I was, and they're wearing
5 their Burger King outfits and their McDonald's outfits.
6 And you're making a darn good salary, one that's pretty
7 darn shameful at that, even if you can justify it. It
8 doesn't help those who are less fortunate. And I'm sure
9 many of them people can't be here today because they're
10 working two or three jobs, and every dime counts. And
11 these are the people that you're hurting so that you can
12 have a nicer sports car and take a nicer vacation, and
13 it's unfair and it's a shame. These people don't need
14 an increase. You ought to help them out. Maybe even
15 not just a low-income credit, because there are people
16 who are truly disadvantaged and have problems and there
17 are others who are cheating the system. So I'm sure
18 that people like me who can now afford to pay -- and
19 provide a low-income credit for them. By what we're
20 paying in, we don't want to, not that we don't want to
21 help those that who are less fortunate, but we don't
22 want to help those who are deceiving the system.

23 So that's basically all that I've got to say.
24 I am very much against this increase. Be a good
25 American. Help out, lower your income, and help others.

1 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Thank you, Ms. Kuntz. Just a
2 follow-up. Any -- Commissioners, questions?

3 Just a clarification. We are not Gulf Power.
4 We are the Public Service Commission, just to -- I think
5 there was some confusion with the other speaker. We do
6 not represent Gulf Power. Thank you.

7 **MS. KUNTZ:** Okay.

8 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Next customer.

9 **MR. KELLY:** After Ms. Lechner is Thomas Hardy.

10 **MS. LECHNER:** Hi. My name is Lorraine
11 Lechner, and I live at 127 Biltmore Place, Panama City
12 Beach, 32413. My phone number is 588-6808, and I'm also
13 a small business owner. And I think the rate should,
14 rate increase should not only be denied, but I think you
15 folks respectfully really need to go back and lower the
16 base. This is a serious issue.

17 When I moved here from Venice, Florida, I was
18 absolutely astounded to get my first bill. And I've
19 kept my mouth shut for a number of years, okay, but this
20 is really excessive here. You've really got to go back
21 and look at the base of what's happening. And not only
22 that -- and I see the CEO has left here.

23 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Nope. He's still there.

24 **MS. LECHNER:** Where? Right here?

25 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** But, ma'am, you need to be

1 addressing us, please. Thank you.

2 **MS. LECHNER:** Well, the letter that they sent
3 out announcing the rate increase was absolutely -- I was
4 astounded to receive it. They said -- it states that
5 the local -- "The total residential price is lower than
6 it was in 2015, and it will be even lower in two
7 thousand -- January 2017, mainly due to decreased fuel
8 prices. The residential customer rate, therefore, will
9 increase by 6.9 percent." I mean, ding. Who could put
10 something like that out? And how can you folks -- well,
11 anyway -- stand by and watch this kind of abuse going
12 on? It is really amazing to me. And I don't understand
13 even why there's a difference in the cost for a
14 kilowatt-hour between a business and a residential
15 customer. I don't understand why a large power user
16 gets a lower rate than a small power user, commercial
17 and residential. I don't understand that either. And,
18 please, do something about this.

19 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Thank you for your testimony.
20 And I will direct you to a Public Service Commission
21 staffer. Ms. Draper will help explain that question for
22 you directly. Thank you. And she will approach you.

23 Next customer.

24 **MR. KELLY:** Thomas Hardy.

25 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Thomas Hardy.

1 (No response.)

2 No Thomas Hardy, next one.

3 **MR. KELLY:** Gregory Dossie, followed by Mary
4 Pat Zebroski.

5 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Good morning, almost
6 afternoon.

7 **MR. DOSSIE:** Yeah. Good morning. My name is
8 Gregory Dossie. My address is P.O. Box 35894, Panama
9 City, Florida 32412. My phone number is (850) 832-2377.

10 First, I'd like to point out the differences
11 in the proposed rate increases. For 1,000 kilowatts,
12 the rate increase will be \$16.77. For 1,200
13 kilowatt-hours will be \$14.14. For 2,000
14 kilowatt-hours, \$3.57. 3,000 kilowatt-hours, there will
15 be a decrease of \$9.63. What's wrong with that picture?

16 I am on a fixed income. In 2016, we had no
17 COLA, cost of living increase. In 2017, I have a
18 \$4-a-month COLA increase. That's \$48 annually. The
19 projected rate increase for Gulf Power is \$201.24.
20 That's about \$150 more than my increase.

21 My wattage usage for my last bill was 498.
22 Last year this time it was 633 watts. I became more
23 efficient as a financial necessity, decreased my usage
24 by 135 watts; however, this rate increase will negate my
25 efforts.

1 I was considering switching over to an
2 electric water heater. With this rate increase, I'm
3 probably not going to make that change. I would like to
4 look into solar, but I'm sure that even with tax credits
5 I won't be able to afford the upfront cost to get solar
6 energy.

7 No one, except perhaps CEOs and other
8 high-level management, get a 25 percent increase
9 annually. The economic development in this area bears
10 no pay increase for those of us on fixed incomes. Those
11 companies coming through the economic development, based
12 on this proposed rate increase, will -- would have
13 received a decrease. Please reject the increase. If a
14 rate increase is necessitated, let it be more in line
15 with the average citizens and fixed income pay
16 increases. And why are the users that use 3,000 watts
17 getting a decrease, when those of us -- those of us that
18 are on fixed incomes are getting an increase?

19 Why are the larger municipalities like
20 Jacksonville now paying a lot less than we already are?
21 Perhaps the cost divided by more people equal lower
22 costs. If a rate increase is needed, have it based on
23 usage. Thank you.

24 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Thank you, Mr. Dossie, for
25 your testimony.

1 **MR. DOSSIE:** That's Dossie.

2 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Dossie. Dossie.

3 **MR. DOSSIE:** All right. Thank you.

4 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Thank you.

5 Next customer.

6 **MR. KELLY:** After Ms. Zebroski is Michele
7 Devereaux.

8 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Thank you.

9 **MS. ZEBROSKI:** Hi.

10 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Hi.

11 **MS. ZEBROSKI:** I'm Mary Pat Zebroski. I live
12 at 114 Grand Heron Drive in Panama City Beach -- too
13 close, okay -- Panama City Beach, Florida. My phone
14 number is (850)238-9155. I am here representing the
15 students of Chautauqua Charter School, which is located
16 at 1118 Magnolia Avenue here in Panama City. I am here
17 with these students here in the front row. If you guys
18 want to stand or raise your hand -- probably raising
19 your hands is a better option.

20 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Thank you. We see you.

21 **MS. ZEBROSKI:** Okay. We are here today for
22 two reasons: We wanted to learn how this public process
23 works, how these hearings are conducted and to be part
24 of this process, but also, of course, to learn more
25 about this rate hike.

1 Having listened to all the other people
2 speaking here today, we all have agreed, during the
3 break, that we say ditto to what everyone else has said.
4 We are all opposed to this rate hike.

5 Many of these young people and the other young
6 people at my school will be supporting themselves on SSI
7 in the years to come, which right now maximum is about
8 \$700 a month. So they -- we teach them -- we spend a
9 great deal of time every day teaching these young people
10 how to live within their budget. I, myself, am a widow
11 who -- I'm supporting myself and my disabled son. I
12 have to live within my budget, I -- they will have to
13 live within their budgets, and I think that Gulf Power
14 should have to learn to live within its budget as well.
15 So not only am I opposed, and this is me speaking
16 personally, I am not only opposed to this rate increase,
17 I resent it. I resent that it's being asked of us.
18 So -- ooh, my green light is still on, so I have a
19 couple more seconds.

20 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** You've got a minute.

21 **MS. ZEBROSKI:** Yes. Oh, a whole minute.
22 Well, I think I've done what I -- my ditto covered
23 everything we had to say, but I will take a couple of
24 seconds to apologize because I'm going to cause a little
25 disruption. We have to go back to lunch.

1 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Oh.

2 **MS. ZEBROSKI:** So my guys are going to be
3 leaving in just a second. And I thank you for giving us
4 the opportunity to be here and to watch this process and
5 be part of it.

6 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Thank you so much. And we do
7 have a Commissioner who has a question. But I just want
8 to personally thank you and thank your folks here for
9 coming out here. This is a great process, and it's very
10 impacting, your statements do impact and make a
11 difference. So we appreciate you taking the time to
12 come out here.

13 Commissioner Brisé? No?

14 Any other comments or questions?

15 Thank you again.

16 **MS. ZEBROSKI:** Okay. Thank you.

17 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Thanks.

18 Next customer.

19 **MR. KELLY:** After Ms. Devereaux is Pam
20 Dorwarth.

21 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Good afternoon.

22 **MS. DEVEREAUX:** Good afternoon. My name is
23 Michele Devereaux. Telephone, (850)215-3595. Address,
24 3938 West 21st Place, Panama City. So I am a Gulf Power
25 customer. And I apologize for speaking so quickly, but

1 I don't know how long this will take.

2 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** No, you're doing a good job.

3 **MS. DEVEREAUX:** I want to thank, first, the
4 Public Service Commission for allowing -- holding this
5 hearing local for us. Thank you very much for
6 listening.

7 I would like to address the effects of this
8 base rate hike on local charities. I called 211 and
9 spoke to the United Way about what help is there for
10 Panama City for paying an electric bill, and they had
11 four charities on record: Salvation Army, Catholic
12 Charities, Council on Aging, and Grace Presbyterian
13 Church. I called these. I was able to reach
14 representatives of three of them.

15 I found out Salvation Army, the requirements,
16 you must have a disconnect order, you must prove that
17 you have income, child support doesn't count but you
18 have to have income to get this, and they will pay it
19 one month in 13 months and twice in a lifetime. And I
20 asked where this funding comes from, and it's -- they
21 said Gulf Power. And I've often wondered where that
22 donation went, and apparently Salvation Army distributes
23 it. But that's two months in a lifetime.

24 I called Catholic Charities, and they have to
25 have just a past due notice. You have to prove your

1 emergency. So I'm assuming most are going to be
2 medical. That's what I would have had when I had to
3 stay with my mom for two months and had an empty house
4 and my bill would have been \$60 more just from this rate
5 increase of having that empty, no-use house. And prove
6 your emergency and they will do this. You have to prove
7 your income, that you have an income, and that they will
8 do it once in two years.

9 And Council on Aging, they're funded -- oh,
10 Catholic Charities' funding comes from Saint Dominic's
11 and a government grant. And Council on Aging, theirs is
12 a federal grant, and you have to be low income,
13 150 percent of poverty. That's -- the poverty level is
14 11,770 for a single person, but 150 of that.

15 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** You have 20 seconds.

16 **MS. DEVEREAUX:** They will pay that -- okay.
17 And they will pay that once in 12 months, once a year.
18 And I asked Karen how many average per year, how many
19 clients do they pay the electricity bill for, and she
20 said, "1,500 to 1,800 per year." That is -- that is
21 just going to increase. I just did the figures for
22 1,500.

23 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Ma'am, your time has expired,
24 but I'll ask you a question to get you where you're at.

25 **MS. DEVEREAUX:** Okay.

1 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Do you have any other issues
2 with the rate increase being requested?

3 **MS. DEVEREAUX:** It's -- it's -- well, I think
4 it's -- I ditto everything, including the absurdity that
5 this company thinks that their profits are more
6 important than the welfare of the public, the public
7 service. It's just -- it can't even be -- I cannot
8 express my disgust with that also.

9 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Two questions from
10 Commissioners. Commissioner Brisé, then Commissioner
11 Graham.

12 **COMMISSIONER BRISÉ:** Thank you. You were just
13 about to mention something about the 1,500 to
14 1,800 people. If you could finish that line.

15 **MS. DEVEREAUX:** Yes. Just the -- just for
16 1,500 people for a year of Council on Aging's cost, that
17 would be a difference between \$28,305 of a base rate to
18 \$72,135. Just for the 1,500, not 1,800, not more, not
19 all of the other costs.

20 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Okay. Commissioner Graham.

21 **COMMISSIONER GRAHAM:** Thank you. I just want
22 to thank you for coming with the facts that you have.

23 **MS. DEVEREAUX:** Thank you.

24 **COMMISSIONER GRAHAM:** This all goes into the
25 record. And the hard facts, you know, that you just --

1 you did the research, and those are things that we can
2 go back to when we're going through the technical
3 hearing of it all. So the effort that you put into this
4 before you came here today is -- it's definitely
5 appreciated.

6 **MS. DEVEREAUX:** Thank you.

7 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Ahh, that's nice.

8 Any -- Commissioners, any other comments or
9 questions?

10 Thanks for coming out.

11 **MS. DEVEREAUX:** You're welcome.

12 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Next customer.

13 **MR. KELLY:** Ms. Dorwarth, Pam Dorwarth.
14 She'll be followed by Mary Sheesley.

15 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Hold on one sec.

16 **MS. DORWARTH:** Hi.

17 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Hi. He's got a mic for you.
18 Just one sec. If we could get the mike. Do you mind
19 holding the mike?

20 **MS. DORWARTH:** Wait a minute. Oh, okay.
21 First of all, I'm a federal ADA liaison, and I've been
22 for the state for almost 25 years. I'm a lip reader, so
23 this has been very, very interesting. I'm not deaf.
24 I'm a lip reader. So thank God I've been doing it since
25 I was 17 and I'm 70. So reading from the side is a

1 little difficult. Sometimes I miss out.

2 I want to also explain, as I did to counsel, I
3 wish I had had all of these statistics. Do you know how
4 many disabled people live in this community, how many do
5 not know you exist? I live in a complex for physically
6 disabled, low-income people. There's 45 in my complex,
7 and they have two more additional with 14. We each have
8 an individual pay our electric bill. But it's not
9 owned. We rent. Think about all the people that are
10 disabled. And I'm sorry that nobody behind me, I don't
11 think, can hear me. Can they?

12 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Yes, they can.

13 **MS. DORWARTH:** Oh, they can.

14 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Yeah. You're speaking in the
15 mike.

16 **MS. DORWARTH:** I don't know if you can lip
17 read from the back or not. But, anyway --

18 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Could you state your name,
19 please, for the record, and your address?

20 **MS. DORWARTH:** Oh, I'm sorry. I had my card I
21 was going to give you, but it's Pam Dorwarth.

22 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Okay.

23 **MS. DORWARTH:** I live in Panama City Beach at
24 a disability complex. My telephone number is
25 (850)230-8222. First of all, as I said, we're talking

1 about at least 70, but I understand from the voters'
2 registration we have over 30,000 disabled people in this
3 community. Low income, and I mean low income, less than
4 \$7,000 a year, and some have less than that. You're
5 raising their rates that is more than their food bill,
6 their medical bill. I mean, it doesn't make any sense,
7 and we'll discuss this later.

8 Some complexes, which we are renting, and you
9 have those criteria, you must be low income and
10 physically disabled, they don't even come out and tell
11 you that you're going to have a rate increase, whether
12 it be -- and I'm familiar with your Commission, and I
13 try to explain to them that people sometimes that are
14 managing won't even let you come out and talk to us.
15 Because I'm involved with so many organizations and
16 whatever, I knew about -- I found out about this last
17 week actually.

18 But when you lose your electricity and you are
19 on life-sustaining equipment that is run by
20 electricity -- I met with Tina, I believe her name is,
21 with the power company here in Panama City --

22 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** You have about ten seconds
23 left.

24 **MS. DORWARTH:** Okay -- some time ago and made
25 sure our facilities -- as soon as you lose your

1 electricity, which happens a lot, then we're the first
2 ones turned on. If somebody doesn't renew that, as this
3 lady was saying, we -- we have no recourse.

4 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Ma'am, thank you so much for
5 your testimony, and encourage you to provide written
6 comments, if you have other comments.

7 **MS. DORWARTH:** Yes, I'm going to discuss with
8 them. Thank you.

9 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Thank you for coming out
10 today.

11 **MS. DORWARTH:** But I just wanted to let the
12 rest of the Commission know there is a large amount of
13 people that are going to be harmed by this. Thank you.

14 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Thank you. Commissioners,
15 any questions or comments?

16 Again, thank you for coming out.

17 Next customer, Mr. Kelly.

18 **MR. KELLY:** Ms. Mary -- is it Sheesley?

19 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Mary Sheesley.

20 (No response.)

21 Nope, next customer.

22 **MR. KELLY:** Brenda -- is it Mirade (phonetic)?

23 **MS. MIRACLE:** Miracle.

24 **MR. KELLY:** Miracle. I'm sorry. She will be
25 followed by Linda MacBeth.

1 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Ms. Miracle.

2 **MS. MIRACLE:** Yes, it's hard to live up to,
3 but I try.

4 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Good afternoon. That's a
5 great name.

6 **MS. MIRACLE:** Thank you. My name is Brenda
7 Miracle. I live at 3507 Treasure Circle, Panama City
8 Beach. And my phone number is (850)896-9149. And I am
9 a member of the Bay County League of Women Voters.

10 I have lived in Bay County since 1999. I am a
11 self-employed single woman. I am a real estate broker.
12 I have a small real estate office that I own, and my two
13 sons work with me as realtors. But I'm here today
14 mainly because I'm also a landlord. I own 16 rentals in
15 the Panama City Beach area, and I pay the electric bill
16 on all 16 of my properties, and that's why I'm here to
17 talk to you today. I'm not only speaking for myself,
18 but for my tenants. My properties are not vacation
19 rentals, and my tenants are not tourists.

20 This increase in electric bills cannot be
21 passed on to a tourist who is in Panama City Beach for a
22 short time. It will have an affect not only on me, but
23 for the families that rent from me. Many of my tenants
24 work in the service industry on the beach, and I can
25 guarantee you they're all considered lower income. But

1 I am not a slumlord. They are wonderful tenants. I
2 have been doing this since 1999, and some of them have
3 been with me for years.

4 I have one tenant, her first name is Jackie.
5 She works at a restaurant. She's been with me for 15
6 years. She works closely with me to make sure that we
7 keep the electric bill down because they know that
8 that's one reason that they can continue to rent from
9 me, that I can keep my rent low, even though I am paying
10 the utilities.

11 Chris and Street, they also -- Chris works at
12 a local bar, Street works at some of the restaurants,
13 they've been with me for nine years. Ashley and her
14 husband, her three children, one of them has a
15 disability, they've been with me for five years. I'm
16 telling you about my tenants so that you don't think, as
17 Sandy Sims said in her article today, I don't know if
18 she's here or not, but she said that these lower rates
19 were a benefit to vacation homeowners and condo owners
20 that don't live here all the time. But she --

21 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** You have about 20 seconds,
22 ma'am.

23 **MS. MIRACLE:** She needs to realize that it
24 also affects her local people. My tenants are doing our
25 part to keep the usage down. As I said, I have a close

1 relationship with them. The filters are changed on a
2 regular basis. I've replaced -- within the last two
3 years, I replaced a few of the heating and cooling
4 units.

5 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Five seconds, ma'am.

6 **MS. MIRACLE:** I'm sorry?

7 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Five seconds. If you could
8 wrap it up.

9 **MS. MIRACLE:** Okay. I'm asking you, not just
10 for me but for my tenants, to say no to an increase.

11 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Thank you for your testimony
12 today. I have to ask you, Ms. Miracle, as a real estate
13 broker, have you seen the Panama City area real estate
14 market pick up over the past year or two?

15 **MS. MIRACLE:** Yes, thank goodness. It is.

16 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** That's great. Nice to hear.
17 Commissioners, any questions, comments?

18 Thank you.

19 **MS. MIRACLE:** All right. Thank you.

20 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Next customer.

21 **MR. KELLY:** After Ms. MacBeth is -- is it
22 Sahara Peters?

23 **MS. PETERS:** Yes.

24 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Good afternoon.

25 **MS. MacBETH:** Good afternoon. I am Linda

1 MacBeth, and my heart is broken from these testimonies.
2 But I have a story. I live at 126 Northeast Avenue. I
3 live in Millville, and I live in a 1934 mill house.
4 We've talked about the insulation. I am a bit of an
5 environmental nut, several of you know me in the room,
6 and I, on purpose, keep my energy rock bottom. My
7 energy bill -- well, let me just read my little thing
8 because I'm going to get all -- I live in a tiny house.
9 I like to call it not restored but reused. I also have
10 a tiny carbon footprint on purpose. I hang my laundry
11 out to dry on a line. I don't have a dryer on purpose.
12 Tiny carbon footprint. I pay roughly \$27 to \$32 a
13 month, except in August where I broke down. John Robert
14 and I have a contest on who's going to turn the air
15 conditioner on first, and I broke down. And I have a
16 tiny window unit so that I can sleep at a night, once --
17 one month when it's too hot to sleep. So I'm a nut;
18 right?

19 I do this on purpose. I live in Millville.
20 I'm going to cry. My neighbors also dry their clothes
21 on a line, but not on purpose. They don't own dryers.
22 With this rate hike, you will be punishing the poor and
23 less advantaged. These are hard workers, my neighbors.
24 They're clinicians, they're painters, they're engine
25 repair, they're grandmothers. And I'm going to be that,

1 you know. They're retired veterans. You're increasing
2 our rates. I mean, my rate is going to be increased
3 double; right? Is that -- I mean, I can afford that. I
4 do this on purpose, and it's -- anyway. That's not --
5 okay. That's my now.

6 I have a future. From what I understand, this
7 money is building new gas -- this hike is building for
8 new gas-related infrastructures, plants and pipelines.
9 I realize that you guys are very into -- I'm not
10 talking -- I'm speaking to Gulf Power now. I realize
11 that Gulf Power is very tied into this investment. This
12 is a backwards investment. I want you to think big,
13 Gulf Power. I want you -- I want you to think beyond, I
14 want you to think of our planet, and I want you to think
15 of the people that you serve. We will be behind you and
16 excited to be part of the cure in the future.

17 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Ten seconds.

18 **MS. MacBETH:** Right now we, the people, and I
19 think -- I think we've proved this, we, the people, are
20 not behind you, and, in fact, we will be very actively
21 against you.

22 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Thank you, Ms. MacBeth, for
23 your testimony.

24 **MS. MacBETH:** I have one last thing. I
25 also -- locally I love these guys. I know them. Our

1 children -- my son went to school with them. They were
2 best friends.

3 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Thank you. Thank you,
4 Ms. MacBeth, for your testimony. Again, if you'd like
5 to provide things in writing --

6 **MS. MacBETH:** They're locally great.

7 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** -- we accept written comments
8 as well. Thank you.

9 **MS. MacBETH:** On paper.

10 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Thank you.

11 All right. Next customer, please.

12 **MR. KELLY:** After Ms. Peters is Vivian Mike.

13 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Good afternoon.

14 **MS. PETERS:** Hi. My name is Sahara Peters.
15 I'm Alvin Peters' and Cecile Scoon's daughter. They are
16 Gulf Power customers. I'm just a Gulf Power user. We
17 live at 512 Bunkers Cove Road, Panama City, Florida.
18 Our phone number is (850)872-1717.

19 I have a few notes from my father. I'm going
20 to be speaking on his behalf today. He's out of town.
21 And then as myself, and then maybe there's a third hat.
22 I'm going to try that one on. So he sent me here with
23 some notes. He just wanted me to say that he's been a
24 giant advocate for solar panels and solar power in
25 Florida. He worked really hard with League of Women

1 Voters, which I'm also a member. My mother is the local
2 president. We worked very hard to oppose Amendment 1,
3 and we're very happy about that. And we've also worked
4 very hard to have a -- the U.S. Solar Panel Investment
5 Group to do a -- so I want to talk about that a little
6 bit.

7 So the initial solar power investment is about
8 \$10,000 on a private homeowner, and this power -- this
9 rate hike is going to do a little bit of damage to that.
10 It's going to be a disincentive for that initial
11 investment. And that investment is not just for the
12 homeowner and for having clean energy in your own home,
13 it's for the entire community. Florida is an ecotourism
14 destination, and I think by disincentivizing solar power
15 and clean energy, we're going to be doing a lot of
16 damage to our environment, which is an environment that
17 I will be living in for hopefully quite some time and my
18 children will live in, and I hope that they can enjoy
19 it.

20 So he sent me here with a little bit of stats.
21 Our house uses about 1,500 to 2,000 kilowatts per hour a
22 month, and that's because my father -- we have a big
23 house, but my father always demanded that you put on a
24 pair of socks and a hat before you turn on the heater.
25 And with our -- our solar panels most likely would

1 generate that amount of money -- that amount of
2 kilowatts, which would put us in the lowest -- the
3 lowest bracket of users. So it would cause, he said, a
4 double -- it would double our rate. So I think that
5 sounds like quite the wrong direction.

6 Let me go ahead and speed up to just talk
7 about what I personally feel like.

8 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** You've got about 30 seconds.

9 **MS. PETERS:** Yeah. I think that this makes
10 absolutely no sense. I think that it is important to
11 remember that our -- the current impacts or the amount
12 of money that we're going to be drawing out of people's
13 pockets today, but I also think it's important to
14 consider the future impact. So when I talk about my
15 future, I talk about enjoying my environment, enjoying
16 my time on this Earth. I talk about having my children
17 grow at that time, and I think that we are ruining that
18 opportunity. And in a time of uncertainty and confusion
19 about how our environment is going to last, I think that
20 this is, you know -- having people be able to pay less
21 for using more, I think that bulk buying energy is not
22 the -- is not the way to go. All right? Conserving
23 energy is the way to go. And I want to preserve, you
24 know. So I think that we need to seriously consider
25 this.

1 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Thank you, Ms. Peters, for
2 your testimony and your father's notes too.

3 Commissioners, any questions or comments?

4 Thank you.

5 Next customer, please.

6 **MR. KELLY:** After Vivian Mike, after Ms. Mike
7 is Rhonda Lynch.

8 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Good afternoon.

9 **MS. MIKE:** Good afternoon. Thank you for
10 giving me this opportunity to speak. You know that
11 corporations don't have feelings, but people do. And
12 when people squeeze out the last few dimes that they
13 have to pay their power bill, then that is degrading to
14 them. I represent my community. The meeting is held at
15 10:00. My people are at work.

16 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Could you state your name,
17 please, and address?

18 **MS. MIKE:** Oh, I am so sorry. I'm Vivian
19 Mike. I live at 1010 East 13th Court, and my phone
20 number is 763-4985.

21 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Thank you.

22 **MS. MIKE:** And I live very close to Gulf
23 Power, and they have some great workers there. But if
24 you haven't been in a struggle, you don't know what the
25 struggle is. And when you're on a fixed income and

1 you're paying the max, it seems, that you can pay for
2 your power bill, then you're in trouble. And even those
3 people who are working are still having struggles trying
4 to pay their light bill. And so if you're on a fixed
5 income, if you're a senior citizen, like I am, and I'm
6 proud to say that, but then the struggle is real. So I
7 ask you to please say no to the increase. And if you
8 say -- if the increase happens, then don't let it be as
9 much as they are asking for because people need their
10 electricity. Thank you.

11 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Thank you, Ms. Mike, for your
12 testimony.

13 Next customer, please.

14 **MR. KELLY:** Rhonda Lynch.

15 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Rhonda Lynch.

16 **MR. KELLY:** After Ms. Lynch is Francis
17 Rogaski.

18 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Hello.

19 **MS. LYNCH:** Good afternoon. Hi. Nice to meet
20 you. My name is Rhonda Lynch. I live at 924 Florida
21 Avenue, Unit No. 53, Panama City, Florida 32401. Phone
22 number is (850)532-9737. I am founder and president of
23 the nonprofit Homeless Identification Program, and I'm a
24 member of the Doorways Northwest Florida, formerly known
25 as the Hunger and Homeless Coalition of Northwest

1 Florida. And I'm also a fixed income individual that
2 just got notice that the Medicare increase is actually
3 going to eat up, and my check that's coming in next year
4 will be lower than the one I got last year. I am
5 continually on a payment arrangement with Gulf Power
6 every month. I have to go into a payment arrangement.
7 I can't pay it on time. And I am picking up a part-time
8 job in the meantime.

9 What I'm concerned about is, from hearing
10 everyone here -- at first I did not sign up to speak and
11 then I later decided to because there are -- and I
12 encourage anyone that would like to come every second
13 Tuesday at the coalition meetings that we have over at
14 the Episcopal church that is up on Lindsey Avenue there.

15 Anyway, we are fighting, struggling, trying to
16 get people off the streets. We are fighting and
17 struggling trying to get these people funded for the
18 utilities, for their rent assistance, for their food
19 assistance, for them to find jobs. We're trying to
20 compete with barriers so they have both mental and
21 physical. And in the meantime, you know, this sort of
22 feels like maybe a tantrum reaction, although I'm not
23 finger pointing, please, a tantrum reaction to the, you
24 know, voter outcome. We don't -- it feels that way.
25 I'm just speaking personally. But what this could

1 possibly feasibly turn into is many more homeless
2 individuals. And most of our homeless individuals are
3 not transients that have just come here. Most of them
4 have been here ten years or more. We will be doing a
5 point-in-time count to determine a ballpark figure of
6 what our homeless individual numbers are, and they are
7 considerably lower than what the actual number is when
8 we get the count. As of January 27th, we will find out
9 where -- any individual we can find homeless, where they
10 spent that night.

11 I'm just concerned. I oppose the rent -- the
12 utility hike. And I mean, you know, everybody, every
13 business does have to go up a little bit. So, I mean,
14 if they, you know -- but I just -- I lived most of my
15 life over in California and lived a couple of decades in
16 Jacksonville, and I've never seen a utility hike like
17 this. So thank you very much.

18 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Thank you, Ms. Lynch.
19 Ms. Lynch, just a question. Could you restate that
20 you're founder and president of --

21 **MS. LYNCH:** It's the Homeless Identification
22 Program, Incorporated. We assist the homeless
23 individuals get their documents, birth certificates, and
24 their certificates and stuff so we can get them an ID to
25 find work.

1 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Thank you. Thank you for
2 your work.

3 Commissioners, any comments, questions?

4 Thanks again.

5 **MR. KELLY:** After Francis Rogaski is Charlotte
6 Elsner.

7 **MR. ROGASKI:** My name is Francis Rogaski. I
8 live at 8832 Tower Road. My phone number is
9 (850)722-9799. I've seen these rate rates, and the
10 biggest thing I can think of right now is that you
11 gentleman and lady should take a ride down 231. Right
12 next to the railroad track you'll see a massive
13 substation that Gulf Power just put in. You take a look
14 on Star Avenue, you find another one they put in.

15 Right now this, to me, smells like the same
16 problem they had down in South Florida where they said
17 they were going to build for the future but never gave
18 no date. We don't know how long we're going to be here;
19 they don't know how long they're going to be here. And
20 all this is going to do is put money in their accounts.
21 Okay?

22 The interest and the 11 percent that they
23 already get right now is too damn high. Where in this
24 country can you invest your money and get 11 percent?
25 This is a scam. I think it's unfair, and I think they

1 need to be cut. That's all I have to say.

2 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Thank you, Mr. Rogaski.

3 **MR. ROGASKI:** Thank you.

4 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Next customer, please.

5 **MR. KELLY:** Ms. Charlotte Elsner is the last
6 one signed up.

7 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Thank you. Good afternoon.

8 **MS. ELSNER:** Good afternoon. I would like to
9 thank you, you know, for picking Panama City to come to
10 have the hearing here. Usually Panama City gets kind
11 of -- is down on the bottom.

12 I personally object for the -- to the severe
13 proposed price increase.

14 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Could you state your name and
15 address for the record? My apologies.

16 **MS. ELSNER:** Oh, yeah. Okay. My name is
17 Charlotte Elsner. I live at 218 Lake Ridge Drive,
18 Panama City. And my telephone number is 522-8208.

19 And I would like to state that most elderly
20 and disadvantaged people in the area also cannot afford
21 this tremendous price increase. I think it really
22 should be lowered to what we have now. It's really
23 excessive. And I would like to tell Gulf Power, what
24 have you done since the last price increase to bring up
25 your -- the power supply to your customers? I have

1 noticed that every time we have an inch of rain, the
2 power goes out. And sometimes it's just a few minutes,
3 but on other times, like from last Saturday -- not this
4 last Saturday but on one Saturday, it was out from
5 10:00 until 5:00 in the afternoon. And, you know -- you
6 know, there are families with children. There are
7 people that have medical equipment that they need to
8 survive. What are they supposed to do if the power is
9 gone?

10 So you haven't done anything that -- you are
11 not even cutting your grass under your trans-country
12 (phonetic) power lines. I mean, I live in an area where
13 I see your lines every day, and I think you are a
14 company who has no regard for the small person that
15 lives in this area and we should not be paying. And you
16 are the power commission. You should recognize how --
17 how severely this would hurt the people here. And so I
18 thank you.

19 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** Thank you for your testimony.

20 Commissioners, any questions or comments?

21 None.

22 And, Mr. Kelly, that is the last customer who
23 has signed up?

24 **MR. KELLY:** Yes, ma'am.

25 **CHAIRMAN BROWN:** All right. Is there anybody

1 here today that has not spoken that would like to
2 address the Commission?

3 (No response.)

4 Seeing none, going once, twice.

5 I want to thank you, again, for assisting us
6 in this process. This will be concluding our service
7 hearings. Our technical hearing will be starting the
8 second week in March, again, go for a week. Please feel
9 free to check it out online or come visit and watch in
10 Tallahassee, but it will be a technical hearing.

11 And I want to thank you again for helping us
12 out. Commissioners, if there are no closing comments,
13 this service hearing is officially adjourned. Thank
14 you.

15 (Service hearing adjourned at 12:31 p.m. CST)

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1 STATE OF FLORIDA)
 :
2 COUNTY OF LEON) CERTIFICATE OF REPORTER

3
4 I, LINDA BOLES, CRR, RPR, Official Commission
5 Reporter, do hereby certify that the foregoing
6 proceeding was heard at the time and place herein
7 stated.

8 IT IS FURTHER CERTIFIED that I
9 stenographically reported the said proceedings; that the
10 same has been transcribed under my direct supervision;
11 and that this transcript constitutes a true
12 transcription of my notes of said proceedings.

13 I FURTHER CERTIFY that I am not a relative,
14 employee, attorney, or counsel of any of the parties,
15 nor am I a relative or employee of any of the parties'
16 attorney or counsel connected with the action, nor am I
17 financially interested in the action.

18 DATED THIS 10th day of February, 2017.

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25


LINDA BOLES, CRR, RPR
Official FPSC Hearings Reporter
Office of Commission Clerk
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