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PRESENTATION OF COMMEMORATIVE GAVEL

FOR SERVICE AS CHAIRMAN

TO

JULIE I. BROWN

January 9, 2018

1 P R O C E E D I N G S

2 COMMISSIONER BROWN: Good afternoon. Today is
3 January 9th. Happy New Year to all. This is our
4 agenda conference for January at the Public Service
5 Commission. And I want to welcome you all here
6 today.

7 At the pleasure of our new chairman, Graham, I
8 want to thank him for allowing me to preside over
9 this meeting again. I'm so happy to be still be
10 serving here.

11 With that, if you would like to join us before
12 we begin our business meeting for the invocation
13 and the Pledge of Allegiance, which will be given
14 by Chairman Graham.

15 Please rise. Thank you.

16 (Pledge of Allegiance and Invocation given.)

17 COMMISSIONER BROWN: Thank you so much,
18 Chairman Graham.

19 And I do want to recognize our wonderful,
20 esteemed colleague, who is in the room today,
21 Commissioner Ronald Brisé. Thank you so much for
22 being here. It's a pleasure to see you. We miss
23 you. It feels very weird without you right here
24 next to us, but thank you for blessing us with your
25 presence today.

1 Before we begin with the business meeting of
2 the day, I did want to just make a few comments.
3 So, if you will give me the indulgence for a little
4 bit, that would be great.

5 Over the holidays, I had the opportunity to
6 reflect over the past seven years as a
7 Commissioner, with a little focus on the past two
8 years as Chairman. And you know, being Chair is a
9 little bit different than being a Commissioner.

10 There's -- carries a lot more
11 responsibilities. You have a lot of folks that are
12 looking to you. You have to represent your
13 colleagues. You have to represent the Agency. And
14 the past two years have been very challenging. We
15 had a multitude of rate cases, multitude of
16 hurricanes, multitude of pressing issues that we
17 have faced.

18 And I know that there only four of us up here
19 today, and there are, you know, a room full of
20 people here, but being a Commissioner is quite a
21 unique experience that only -- that we share among
22 each other and we share among a few others around
23 the country. And it's one that is an amazing
24 experience. This -- being Chair has been one of
25 the greatest privileges of my life. You know, we

1 deal with challenging issues every day. And it's
2 so important of the work that we do for our state,
3 for the people here in Florida.

4 And one thing, though, that is common among
5 all regulators around the country is that -- the
6 temporary space that we hold. We serve. It's not
7 a life-long career. It's a -- you know, a
8 position -- sometimes it feels like a life-long
9 career, but it -- it is a role that tends to change
10 with time.

11 I will say that, with time, though, comes
12 wisdom. And we are blessed to have an incoming
13 Chairman here who has already been Chair of this
14 organization two other times. God bless him. He
15 wants to do a third -- third time.

16 He is a natural-born leader. I've said that
17 before. You really are. He has vision. He always
18 has vision. He always has direction. And during
19 this period of change and this time of change here
20 at the Commission, I know that we will benefit
21 100 percent by your steadfast leadership.

22 You've been a great friend, a great colleague.
23 And I know that you will lead this Agency and lead
24 this organization with grace, with insight, and
25 wisdom. We are very blessed to have him preside

1 over this organization over the next two years.

2 So, as I've completed my chairmanship during a
3 very busy time, and I'm near the end of my term as
4 a Commissioner -- of my second term -- I've
5 developed an immense appreciation for those that
6 serve in this arena. And I want to start out
7 with -- by thanking our staff.

8 I know we say this often, but it -- it comes
9 from the heart; helping us through customer
10 meetings, service hearings, everything -- I mean,
11 running a hearing for two weeks with a hurricane
12 that's looming on us. They served here, I mean,
13 until midnight. Most of you were very hungry, and
14 we just motored on. Thank you.

15 I don't want do this -- I'm very emotional.
16 As we get older, we develop emotions that we never
17 knew we had and we just start expressing them in
18 public forums. And it's wonderful.

19 (Laughter.)

20 COMMISSIONER BROWN: But anyway, so I've
21 gotten to know so many of you so much better than I
22 have during the past, during my -- as a
23 Commissioner. The employee appreciation program
24 really helped stem a lot of that. Y'all are great
25 people. Thank you for serving our state.

1 I'm not leaving. I'm staying here for another
2 year, at least, but it goes without saying, then --
3 I want to address the Office of Public Counsel,
4 J.R. Kelly, consumer groups -- thank you so much
5 for your participation. We've had so many
6 proceedings -- and then serving as Chair, watching
7 your advocacy. You are so vital to this process.

8 J.R., you know, Jon -- all of you here, thank
9 you very much for being a part of it. And of
10 course, the utilities, too, bringing us wonderful
11 ideas and things that we can consider. Thank you
12 so much for your innovation and your wisdom. We
13 appreciate that.

14 But the regulators that we serve with here,
15 Art, Don, Gary, and those that have preceded before
16 you, Ron, Jimmy, Lisa, Ed -- you have all been very
17 instrumental to the learning curve here as a
18 Commissioner.

19 So, I think asking those difficult questions,
20 asking sometimes the redundant, repetitive
21 questions that tend to be tedious -- they are so
22 important to our job. And I want to thank you all
23 for doing that. I'm grateful. Serving as Chair,
24 you -- you definitely develop an appreciation for
25 that process.

1 I think it's important that we always continue
2 to learn -- sorry over there, Gary -- it's
3 important that we always continue to learn. We
4 challenge ourselves here at the bench, in the
5 office, and in our lives.

6 Thank you for supporting me during a lot of
7 different proceedings -- especially Art -- through
8 various initiatives, workshops, IAs that were very
9 lengthy, different initiatives. I appreciate you
10 for supporting me.

11 I know we all have different styles. We all
12 have different opinions, but at the end of the day,
13 we all believe and care very much about our great
14 state and that -- the public that we serve. And
15 it's a pleasure to serve with you. Thank you for
16 supporting me, again.

17 I want to especially thank our executive
18 director, Braulio -- I feel like I'm, like, going
19 out. I feel like I'm leaving here, but I'm not.
20 Braulio, thank you so much for your leadership of
21 our organization.

22 Our general counsel, Keith; our PIO officer,
23 Cindy -- incredible woman -- and her entire staff;
24 my personal adviser, Katherine -- you have been the
25 most tremendous sounding board over the past few

1 years, but really the past two years.

2 Without the crew, the job here as Chairman
3 just doesn't happen. It's ineffective and very
4 difficult. They have been an incredible support
5 system, whether it's developing a website that is
6 more focused on providing a more-open public
7 forum -- thank you, Cindy -- or creating a round
8 table with CEOs to talk about hurricane
9 preparedness or having an EV workshop that took a
10 year to plan -- thank you so much for supporting
11 these endeavors and helping us become a better
12 organization.

13 Keith, you came to the organization at the
14 beginning of my chairmanship. We are blessed to
15 have such an intelligent, astute lawyer, but you're
16 even a better advisor. Thank you so much.

17 Katherine, you're the -- you're the rock here.
18 So, thank you for everything. You're awesome.
19 Thank you.

20 So, I would mention Shalonda Hopkins and Joann
21 Parsons, who have been very supportive of all the
22 work we do. We're a machine here. And we run
23 very, very smoothly only because of the employees
24 that are here. And you guys all do such hard work
25 and you're -- I'm very appreciative of it. And I

1 see it from a different angle as Chair at the end
2 of this period.

3 There's a reason that it's a two-year term,
4 though, because at the end of it, you're exhausted.
5 And everyone needs a little bit of a respite. And
6 again, we're blessed to have Art serve here. Lots
7 of rate cases, lots of hurricanes, and we're going
8 to have a great 2018. And I'm excited to -- to be
9 here still.

10 So, thank you so much for all of your support
11 and hope we ring in the new year wonderfully.
12 Thank you.

13 (Applause.)

14 COMMISSIONER BROWN: Commissioner Graham --
15 Chairman Graham.

16 CHAIRMAN GRAHAM: Thank you, Madam Chair.

17 Well, you took away half the things I was
18 going to say, so I'll just go ahead and put this
19 over here.

20 No, I -- I agree with you 300 percent -- not
21 150 percent -- inside joke, guys.

22 COMMISSIONER BROWN: Inside joke.

23 CHAIRMAN GRAHAM: We all have different
24 styles. I know, when we got here, I
25 specifically -- when Ron and I got here seven and a

1 half years ago, there was so much excitement on
2 this side of the bench. The last thing we were
3 looking for was to add more excitement. We were
4 looking to calm things down and be boring.

5 And -- but one of the questions that hit me
6 when we got here is why is it that the media is
7 always taking shots at us. You know, maybe they
8 just don't understand what we're doing.

9 So, you know, put together a meeting or two
10 with different editorial boards so we can go sit
11 down and explain to them. And come to find out,
12 they really don't want to listen to what the facts
13 were. They -- you know, they just want to report
14 that we're the ev- -- we're the evil dragons and
15 they're trying to slay us. And so, I did that to
16 kind of calm things down my -- my first term as
17 Chair.

18 I know, Ron, same sort of thing. He tried to
19 meet with the editorial boards. And Ron went a
20 little further. He started reaching out to the
21 communities, started reaching out to the colleges,
22 you know, and meeting with different, younger
23 groups to kind of educate them on utilities and
24 rate-making and everything that goes on within
25 these four walls, so at least they can start to

1 understand what's not in their -- in the newspaper
2 articles that were -- that would be written.

3 And I think, Julie, you took it even further
4 than that. I mean, it's amazing to me what you did
5 to the website. The website looks completely
6 different now than it did before. You and Cindy's
7 group -- you guys really reached out to the whole
8 Twitter thing.

9 Even during the hurricane, you know -- and
10 thank God we hadn't had hurricanes in the last ten
11 years or so, but it just so happened that the three
12 that we had came during your two years as Chair.
13 So, you did, I thought, a great job of reaching out
14 to the community through that way. It's amazing
15 the impact you had.

16 You talked about the -- the CEO round table.
17 I thought that that was fantastic. I mean, it was
18 just -- after that one hurricane that we had in the
19 last decade -- to have those guys sit down in front
20 of us and to explain the changes that they're
21 making, the things that they're trying to get done
22 and trying to move forward.

23 Now, it's going to be interesting -- and
24 you've set up this next web- -- workshop we have
25 coming down. Now, we get to hear from them --

1 well, at least some of them -- on some of the
2 things that didn't quite work the way that they
3 said they were going to work, but we can find out
4 why they did and why they didn't.

5 And we get to look at the stuff with a fresh
6 set of eyes. And we get to look at, well, is this
7 truly the thing that we need to do. Should we be
8 doing something different. And I -- I think you
9 brought all that to the table.

10 I -- I think you've even gone even further.
11 After the hurricane went through, you went out
12 there with some of the line crews. And I couldn't
13 imagine how you were looking with a pair of work
14 boots that matched -- that matched your hat to
15 match your outfit you were wearing --

16 COMMISSIONER BROWN: They were hunters.

17 (Laughter.)

18 CHAIRMAN GRAHAM: But it -- it was amazing to
19 me, you going that extra mile and reaching out.
20 And I think that's truly what you were saying
21 before about the differences. I mean, we're all
22 getting the job done, but we all have different
23 ways of looking at the job and how we need to go
24 about completing the job.

25 All the work you did with the electric

1 vehicles -- that's one of the things that wasn't
2 even on my radar, even though staff did a great
3 report back in 2012. And I think that we're
4 probably going to update that sometime soon.

5 You went that extra step, and you brought it
6 all here to the Commission and you know, we --
7 walked us all through that process. And it's
8 amazing to me how you have that energy and that
9 drive to continue to -- doing that sort of stuff.

10 And I think you're right and -- there's a
11 reason why we do this for a two-year period of
12 time -- time because you need some- -- somebody
13 else to come in and somebody else to grab hold of
14 the reins and somebody else to do something
15 different.

16 And I appreciate everything you've done, doing
17 that way. And one of the things that most people
18 don't realize, I wasn't probably the most-
19 supportive person at the beginning of this two
20 years. And Julie will tell you, you know, it took
21 some convincing, but when she's got that gavel in
22 her hand, she's a completely different person.

23 I mean, she -- she could have been crying over
24 here a minute ago -- she would pick up that gavel
25 right away and you would see nothing. She rules

1 with an iron fist. And you guys have seen it.

2 And -- and she does a fantastic, fantastic job.

3 I -- I think, you know -- I really don't know
4 what else to say about that, but if you would give
5 me the courtesy, I would like to pull Commissioner
6 Brisé here because he came. I think he's got a few
7 things he would like to say.

8 COMMISSIONER BROWN: Super sweet. Thank you.

9 Commissioner Brisé, welcome. Come wherever
10 you want to. We have an empty seat up here, by the
11 way, just so you know.

12 COMMISSIONER BRISÉ: No, I -- I think that
13 piece that Art talked about in terms of being in
14 the media -- I think this is probably the best
15 place for me to be.

16 (Laughter.)

17 COMMISSIONER BRISÉ: So, thank you for the
18 opportunity to address you and -- and the staff and
19 the team here. First of all, I want to say that
20 you are a fantastic person. And I appreciate the
21 fact that you have led with grace, competence, and
22 compassion over the last two years during your term
23 as Chairman and overall, throughout your tenure.

24 And your service is not only of value to
25 Florida, but is of value to our nation. So, I'm

1 grateful to you for the things that I've learned
2 from you, sitting next to you, sitting across from
3 you and -- and -- and all of that.

4 But what has touched me the most is the fact
5 that you value the people who work here. And to
6 me, that is the biggest role that a Commissioner
7 has outside of making the decisions is recognizing
8 the people that do the work every day.

9 And you have shown that you care and that you
10 are interested in every individual that is part of
11 this agency. And to me, that is a sign of a great
12 leader, a transformational leader. So, thank you
13 for being a transformational leader here at the
14 Commission.

15 And one last thing that I am passionate about
16 and I know that you are passionate about is making
17 sure that people understand what we do and how we
18 do it. And they may not agree with what we do --
19 what you do, now, and how -- and how it's done, but
20 providing them a glimpse into it and transforming
21 how the communication goes out is extremely
22 important.

23 So, I thank you for your service to not only
24 the Commission, but to the state. And I appreciate
25 your friendship and look forward to our continuing

1 friendship. So, God bless you as you continue to
2 serve.

3 And -- and Art, as you take on the reins for
4 the third time -- I don't know if everything is
5 okay up there, as you've decided to do this again.

6 (Laughter.)

7 COMMISSIONER BRISÉ: I trust that you will
8 provide continued, steady leadership to this great
9 organization.

10 And thank you, all of you, Don and Gary, for
11 your service, not only here, but what you do
12 outside of the state as well. So, thank you.

13 COMMISSIONER BROWN: Oh, thank you so much. I
14 really want --

15 (Applause.)

16 COMMISSIONER BROWN: Chairman Graham and then
17 Commissioner Polmann.

18 Thank you.

19 Commissioner Polmann.

20 COMMISSIONER POLMANN: Thank you, Madam
21 Chairman.

22 I -- I think a lot has been said here I
23 won't -- I won't repeat, other than to say what
24 they've said. They've served with you for -- for
25 many years.

1 I've been here briefly with you. And -- and
2 let me just say this: Having been here this year,
3 with you serving as Chairman, it simply has made
4 this year and this job the best job that I've ever
5 had, in my professional career.

6 COMMISSIONER BROWN: Wow.

7 COMMISSIONER POLMANN: It's -- it's a pure
8 pleasure having worked here with you serving as
9 Chairman. And -- and going forward, this year, I'm
10 really looking forward to continuing to serve with
11 you in -- in that different role. I think we're
12 going to do great things. I am -- I'm so happy to
13 be here with you as a colleague.

14 COMMISSIONER BROWN: Thank you. That's very
15 sweet.

16 COMMISSIONER POLMANN: Thank you for your
17 service.

18 COMMISSIONER BROWN: Thank you, Commissioner
19 Polmann.

20 Chairman Graham.

21 CHAIRMAN GRAHAM: Thank you, Madam Chair.

22 It was interesting, Commissioner Brisé -- he
23 always manages to use the right words: A person
24 who cares. When you go through the reappointment
25 process, it tends to be a very, very stressful

1 process.

2 COMMISSIONER BROWN: Are you going through it?

3 (Laughter.)

4 CHAIRMAN GRAHAM: And there's -- there's
5 always a bond that is formed there. Ron and I have
6 had that bond because we've gone through it. I
7 know Julie and Jimmy, and Julie and Ed have had
8 that bond. It's just -- poor Don went by himself.

9 (Laughter.)

10 COMMISSIONER BROWN: Gary, too.

11 CHAIRMAN GRAHAM: But it -- it's very
12 stressful. And I have to tell you guys, I remember
13 getting up at 8:00 in the morning and leaving
14 Jacksonville and driving down to Orlando for the
15 nominating council so I could go for my interview.

16 And mentally, you're going through your head
17 the speech that you're going to do and the
18 questions you're going to answer and the
19 preparation and everything, a couple of weeks
20 leading up to it.

21 And then you get a phone call and, believe it
22 or not, it's the Chairwoman. And she calls to wish
23 you good luck and, I'm thinking about you, I'm
24 encouraging you. And then at the same time, the
25 phone vibrates again. It's her husband. And he's

1 calling me. And they're independent -- don't know
2 the other one is calling.

3 And this just goes to show the person who
4 cares and -- and her entire family is back behind
5 it all. And it's amazing that -- that -- I can't
6 imagine what you guys go through and what you guys
7 deal with.

8 And so, this is not just a nine-to-five job.
9 This is something that we -- that we live day in
10 and day out, constantly. And I -- it -- that phone
11 call meant so much to me because it's just -- you
12 know, my friends at home don't -- they don't --
13 they don't know what we do. They can't -- they
14 don't pay attention. They don't understand the
15 stress of it all. They just know, if they can't
16 sleep in the middle of the night, they'll pull up
17 the Florida Channel and they'll watch us and
18 they'll go back to sleep again.

19 (Laughter.)

20 CHAIRMAN GRAHAM: But Julie is that person.
21 And Julie, we have a -- a little token here.
22 It's -- the thing that means more than the gavel
23 you get the first time is the ceremonial you get
24 when you're done.

25 COMMISSIONER BROWN: Oh, yeah.

1 CHAIRMAN GRAHAM: And so, Julie Brown, this is
2 in recognition of your -- your years as -- your
3 two-year service as Chairwoman.

4 Can I get a round of applause for Julie Brown.
5 (Applause.)

6 COMMISSIONER BROWN: Thank you. Thank you.
7 This has been an honor. Thank you all. And thank
8 you for the long indulgence, blubbering indulgence.

9 (Whereupon, the ceremony was concluded.)

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CERTIFICATE OF REPORTER

STATE OF FLORIDA)
COUNTY OF LEON)

I, ANDREA KOMARIDIS, Court Reporter, do hereby
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IT IS FURTHER CERTIFIED that I
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I FURTHER CERTIFY that I am not a relative,
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financially interested in the action.

DATED THIS 18th day of January, 2018.



ANDREA KOMARIDIS
NOTARY PUBLIC
COMMISSION #GG060963
EXPIRES February 9, 2021