

Antonia Hover

From: Veronica Washington
Sent: Thursday, January 09, 2020 11:06 AM
To: Commissioner Correspondence
Subject: SolarTogether Program
Attachments: Solar Letter.docx

Please place the attached letter in Docket No. 20190061

Thanks

Veronica D. Washington

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From: Timmons, Brooks [<mailto:Timmons.Brooks@flsenate.gov>]
Sent: Thursday, January 09, 2020 9:03 AM
To: Office Of Commissioner Clark
Cc: Kopelousos, Stephanie; Galvano, Bill; Oliva, Jose; Sprowls, Chris; Powell, Bobby; Mariano, Amber; Office of Commissioner Polmann; Office Of Commissioner Graham; Office of Commissioner Brown; Office of Commissioner Fay
Subject: SolarTogether Program

Chairman Clark,

Please see the attached letter from Senator Simpson and Representative La Rosa regarding FPL's proposed SolarTogether program. Thank you for your consideration!

Brooks Timmons
Legislative Assistant
President-Designate Wilton Simpson, 10th District



Wilton Simpson
Senate President-Designate
Chair, Senate Committee on
Innovation, Industry, and Technology



Mike La Rosa
House Representative, 42nd District
Chair, House Committee on
Commerce

Chairman Clark,

Most Floridians agree that Florida should strive to live up to its Sunshine State moniker when it comes to utilizing solar energy. And while we certainly have been making progress, the new community solar program that FPL has proposed is a game changer.

According to PV Magazine's Oct. 11 report about FPL's proposed SolarTogether program:

"This is bigger than ALL of the community solar projects in the United States... According to SEIA's most recent data, the United States as a whole has a total installed community solar capacity of 1,298 MW. What's even more impressive, is that, depending on how much solar goes on-line in North Carolina by the time of the last project in SolarTogether's completion in 2021, Florida will almost surely take the claim for the second largest state solar energy market in the entire country. The program is projected to generate an estimated \$139 million in net savings for all FPL customers, not just subscribers, which is extra impressive given the company's low utility rates."

Approval of this program would represent a huge step forward for Florida and for the United States as a whole. Importantly, a program such as this, which expands customer choice and options for solar energy while retaining Commission regulatory oversight, strikes the right balance for consumers. Indeed, this type of forward-thinking initiative is a logical, constructive evolution of Florida's regulatory policy in the face of global changes. Your leadership will help solidify Florida as a leader in solar energy.

Our staff has reviewed the Commission docket, and it is no surprise that the program has garnered interest and support from so many. Here's just a small sampling of major organizations that have publicly voiced their support:

- 7-Eleven
- Broward College
- Broward County
- CarMax
- City of Coral Springs
- City of Sarasota
- Costco
- Florida Atlantic University
- McDonald's
- Miami-Dade County

- Nordstrom
- Ross Stores
- Southern Alliance for Clean Energy
- Staples
- Sustainable Florida
- Target
- Vote Solar
- Walmart

Even individual residential customers have taken the time to write the PSC in support of the program. What other program has garnered support as widespread as this?

No less important, the program provides access and a vehicle for low-income customers to participate in the solar evolution in the state of Florida – perhaps for the first time ever. That is reflective of our belief that Florida’s regulatory policies should be mindful of the interests of all customers, including those that lack the economic resources to install solar panels on their roof. An estimated 10,000 low-income Floridians will be able to participate in SolarTogether – that truly levels the economic playing field for solar.¹

Ironically, the principal opponent in this docket, based on the testimony filed in the case, is the legislatively appointed representative of utility ratepayers, the Public Counsel. There is little doubt in our mind that the Public Counsel has a direct conflict in opposing the customers who wish to subscribe to this program. Moreover, the evidence filed in the docket and reviewed by our staff clearly indicates that this voluntary, customer-driven community solar program will also provide long-term benefits for those ratepayers who do not wish to subscribe to the program.

While we are mindful of the role and value of regulatory precedent, such precedent should not serve as a fortress to block innovative programs such as this, which represent the next generation in solar programs. Indeed, Commissioner Brown recently highlighted the need to advance innovation in the context of conservation, calling for utilities to develop “NextGen” programs for customers.

We’ve been lagging behind other states, and solar has been out of reach for the average Floridian for too long. You have the power and the responsibility to change that. We urge you to approve the SolarTogether program as soon as possible.

Regards,

Wilton Simpson
Senate President-Designate
Chair, Senate Committee on Innovation,
Industry, and Technology



Mike La Rosa
House Representative, 42nd District
Chair, House Committee on Commerce



¹ Media reports indicate that low-income participants in SolarTogether will save about \$1,300 over the life of the program.

cc: The Honorable Ron DeSantis, Governor of Florida
The Honorable Bill Galvano, Senate President
The Honorable Jose Oliva, House Speaker
The Honorable Chris Sprowls, House Speaker-Designate
The Honorable Bobby Powell, State Senator
The Honorable Amber Mariano, House Representative
Public Service Commissioner Graham
Public Service Commissioner Brown
Public Service Commissioner Fay
Public Service Commissioner Polmann
Braulio Baez, Executive Director, Florida Public Service Commission