

Antonia Hover

From: Ellen Plendl
Sent: Wednesday, September 23, 2020 1:20 PM
To: Consumer Correspondence
Subject: Docket No. 20200219-EI
Attachments: FW Stop Utilities from Disconnecting Customers During Pandemic; Consumer Inquiry - Docket 20200219-EI.

See attached customer correspondence and response for Docket No. 20200219-EI.

Antonia Hover

From: Consumer Contact
Sent: Tuesday, September 22, 2020 3:42 PM
To: Ellen Plendl
Subject: FW: Stop Utilities from Disconnecting Customers During Pandemic

Commissioner was cc'd.

Sincerely,

Diana Vizcarrondo
Regulatory Specialist II
Office of Consumer Assistance

Note: Florida has a very broad public records law. Most written communications to or from state officials regarding state business are considered to be public records and will be made available to the public and the media upon request. Therefore, your e-mail message may be subject to public disclosure.

-----Original Message-----

From: Robert E. Rutkowski <r_e_rutkowski@att.net>
Sent: Tuesday, September 22, 2020 3:32 PM
To: Consumer Contact <Contact@PSC.STATE.FL.US>; Office of Chairman Clark <Commissioner.Clark@psc.state.fl.us>
Cc: Keith Abouchar <keith.abouchar@mail.house.gov>
Subject: Stop Utilities from Disconnecting Customers During Pandemic

Chairman Gary F. Clark
Florida Public Service Commission
2540 Shumard Oak Blvd.
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0850
1-800-342-3552
contact@psc.state.fl.us, Commissioner.Clark@psc.state.fl.us

Re: Stop Utilities from Disconnecting Customers During Pandemic

Dear Chairman:

Earthjustice filed a petition today for emergency rulemaking. The petition asks the PSC to stop utilities from disconnecting customers during the COVID-19 pandemic. Under Florida law, the PSC will have 30 days to respond.

Earthjustice filed the legal action on behalf of the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) and Zoraida Santana, a member of LULAC.

Ms. Santana lost her source of income shortly after the pandemic started, and was only recently able to restart her job. Ms. Santana spent the last several months at home, caring for her disabled children, and her doctor warned her not to risk exposure to COVID since her disabled children could be vulnerable to complications if they were exposed. Financial necessity has forced her to return to work despite these warnings.

"If they cut off my power, I'll have no choice but to move with my four children in with my father – and he has no extra room for us, so it looks like we'll be living on his floor," Ms. Santana said.

Even though Ms. Santana is employed now, she and her partner, Mr. Jesse Moody, are over \$2,000 behind on their electric utility bill because they lost income during the COVID crisis. Duke Energy Florida has put them on a bill repayment plan, but they cannot afford the payments and are at risk of imminent disconnection now that Duke has resumed disconnecting customers.

They have applied for assistance with their utility bill everywhere they can, but all funds for customer assistance have been depleted.

Shortly after the onset of the COVID-19 crises, all utilities in Florida voluntarily suspended utility disconnections for nonpayment. Although the crisis has only worsened over the last couple of months as unemployment assistance has been cut off, utilities have begun again to disconnect customers. Like Ms. Santana, hundreds of thousands of Floridians are affected.

Under state law, the Florida Public Service Commission has a charge "to promote the convenience and welfare of the public."

It is a matter of public welfare to make sure Florida utilities don't cut people's electricity off during a public health and economic crisis.

We know how hot September and October can be, and if people aren't able to cool off in their homes, they will have to congregate elsewhere.

Given the ongoing COVID infection rate, that's not a wise idea. To protect public health, people need to be able to cool off in their own homes.

Duke and Tampa Electric Company (TECO) have restarted disconnections, and Florida Power & Light Co. and Gulf Power Co. have announced that they imminently plan to restart disconnections.

The Florida Public Service Commission should use its emergency rulemaking powers to grant relief to the hundreds of thousands of Floridians and save them from disconnection. The PSC has already granted Florida utilities economic relief by agreeing to make their shareholders whole from the current crisis. The Public Service Commission should also be looking out for customers.

Yours sincerely,
Robert E. Rutkowski

cc:
Legislative Correspondence Team
1705 Longworth House Office Building
Washington DC 20515
Office: (202) 225-4131
Fax: (202) 225-4300
keith.abouchar@mail.house.gov

2527 Faxon Court
Topeka, Kansas 66605-2086
P/F: 1 785 379-9671
E-mail: r_e_rutkowski@att.net

Re: Filing:
https://earthjustice.org/sites/default/files/files/petition_to_halt_electric_disconnections.pdf

Antonia Hover

From: Shonna McCray
Sent: Wednesday, September 23, 2020 1:17 PM
To: 'r_e_rutkowski@att.net'
Subject: Consumer Inquiry - Docket 20200219-EI.

Mr. Robert E. Rutkowski
r_e_rutkowski@att.net

RE: FPSC Inquiry 1348167C

Dear Mr. Rutkowski

This is in response to your September 22, 2020 E-mail to the Florida Public Service Commission (PSC).

You expressed a concern about the petition to initiate emergency rulemaking to prevent electric utility shutoffs, by League of United Latin American Citizens, Zoraida Santana, and Jesse Moody. We appreciate your comments regarding the petition and will add your correspondence to Docket 20200219-EI.

If you have any questions or concerns please contact Ms. Ellen Plendl at 1-800-342-3552 or by fax at 1-800-511-0809.

Sincerely,

Shonna McCray
Regulatory Program Administrator
Florida Public Service Commission