



June 21, 2021

VIA ELECTRONIC FILING

Adam J. Teitzman
Office of Commission Clerk
Florida Public Service Commission
2540 Shumard Oak Blvd.
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0850

Re: Docket No. 20210015-EI - Petition for rate increase by Florida Power Light & Company.

Dear Mr. Teitzman,

On behalf of Intervenor League of United Latin American Citizens of Florida. I have enclosed the testimony of Sarah Hernandez. Please file these documents in Docket No. 20210015-EI. Please contact me if there are any questions regarding this filing.

/s/ Bradley Marshall

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CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I HEREBY CERTIFY that a true copy and correct copy of the foregoing was served on this 21st day of June 2021, via electronic mail on:

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DATED this 21st day of June, 2021.

/s/ Bradley Marshall
Attorney

BEFORE THE FLORIDA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

In re: Petition for rate increase)
 by Florida Power & Light) **DOCKET NO. 20210015-EI**
 Company)

DIRECT TESTIMONY
OF SARAH HERNANDEZ
ON BEHALF OF
LEAGUE OF UNITED LATIN AMERICAN
CITIZENS OF FLORIDA

June 21, 2021

1 **Q. Please state your name.**

2 A. Sarah Hernandez.

3 **Q. Where do you live?**

4 A. 2239 Ixora Avenue, Sarasota, FL 34234.

5 **Q. What organization are you a member of?**

6 A. The League of United Latin American Citizens.

7 **Q. How long have you been a member?**

8 A. I have been a member of LULAC for about 3 years and was a founding member of the
9 Sarasota chapter of LULAC.

10 **Q. What is your source of income?**

11 A. I am a university professor.

12 **Q. Are you a customer of FPL? If so, for how long?**

13 A. Yes. I have been a customer since 1996.

14 **Q. What do you think of FPL?**

15 A. FPL is a monopoly, and I don't like that it's our only choice. FPL does not allow for
16 collaboration among customers to generate solar energy. I have explored the possibility to
17 reduce my rates by putting solar on my roof. Yet, because my roof is shaded by trees, I
18 cannot do so. I considered partnering with a neighbor, so as to put panels on their roof and to
19 have the energy go to my home. FPL, however, prohibits the transfer of energy from one
20 house to the next. That makes it impossible for community support systems to develop and
21 makes it so that people have no choice but to purchase electricity from FPL. I was
22 particularly angry when I learned that my city could save a lot of money and could contribute
23 to environmental improvements if they could use a photovoltaic system to produce energy
24 for our lift station. However, the panels needed to be placed in a next-door building. FPL
25 prohibited us from doing so! They were more interested in getting citizens to use our tax

1 dollars to line FPL's pockets than to use that tax money instead to benefit our low-income
2 citizens through improved social services. FPL leadership cared more about profits than
3 about the environment and community wellbeing. I don't understand why FPL doesn't
4 change its business model to incentivize its customers to use solar panels. If FPL doesn't
5 incentivize solar because of the comparatively smaller profit margin, that is just wrong
6 because all its customers would benefit from using solar by saving money.

7 **Q. How much does your FPL bill usually cost each month?**

8 **A.** My electric bills range between \$115 and \$140 dollars per month.

9 **Q. Based on information provided by FPL, the base rate for electricity is projected to**
10 **increase by about 20%. How would this rate increase impact you?**

11 **A.** If the rate increased by 20%, my family would have less income to spend on other
12 necessities. Because I own an electric car, which has been much cheaper to operate than a
13 gas-powered vehicle, the rate increase would make using my car much more expensive.
14 Every member of LULAC, every person I know in Florida would be negatively impacted by
15 a 20% rate increase. The most affected are the low-income individuals, particularly the
16 Hispanic, Black, and Indigenous populations—who have a higher proportion of people in
17 their racial/ethnic groups in poverty.

18 **Q. As a Floridian, are you concerned about climate change?**

19 **A.** Yes. Climate change's two biggest impacts in Florida will be sea level rise and the
20 changing weather. Sea level rise will lead to more flooding even outside of hurricane season.
21 Some parts of Miami are flooded almost every time there's a heavy rainstorm. Climate
22 change will cause more intense hurricanes, and the changing weather patterns will affect
23 agriculture and our state's capacity to produce food.

24 **Q. Based on information provided by FPL, part of this rate increase will pay for new or**
25 **upgraded methane gas power plants. Do you believe this will have an impact on the**

1 **climate?**

2 **A.** Yes. Gas extraction uses a tremendous amount of resources. Methane—a powerful
3 greenhouse gas—could leak into the atmosphere during its extraction, transportation, or
4 combustion. “Natural” gas is a much dirtier resource than renewable forms of energy, like
5 solar. Florida, the Sunshine State, can certainly make a great impact locally, statewide, and
6 nationally with the generation of electricity via solar panels; yet, FPL’s logic of cutting trees
7 to place these panels is not environmentally sound when a larger and less environmentally
8 impactful approach is to place the panels on the roof of every home. There is no reason why
9 FPL could not join the growing business of leasing solar panels, generating profit for FPL,
10 using renewable energy, reducing costs for consumers, and keeping land for forests, parks,
11 and agriculture. Solar panels offer a sustainable way to generate the energy we all need,
12 while the current, dirty sources of electric production should only serve as backup.

13 **Q: How do you feel about contributing your own money to those projects, through your**
14 **FPL bill?**

15 **A.** It is abusive on FPL’s part to use our money to invest in fossil fuel generation that will
16 end up harming us customers and the environment. In the Sunshine State, we should be
17 putting solar panels over every house, allowing these to feed into the shared electric grid so
18 as to support the needs of entities that cannot generate sufficient energy through their own
19 solar panels. I should not be forced to pay higher prices to invest in unsustainable fuels, nor
20 should I be forced to pay 20% more for investments that do not include the corresponding
21 stock ownership.

22 **Q. What is the mission of your organization?**

23 **A.** The mission of LULAC is to advance the economic condition, educational attainment,
24 political influence, housing, health, and civil rights of the Hispanic population of the United
25 States.

1 **Q. How is the purpose of your organization being served by participating in this**
2 **proceeding?**

3 **A.** The mission of LULAC is to improve the quality of life of the Latinx population in
4 Florida, which would be particularly financially impacted by the rate increase because,
5 compared to White people, a higher proportion of Latinx people live in poverty.
6 Additionally, Latinx people constitute a significant part of the service and tourism industry
7 workforce, many of whom lost their jobs during the pandemic. Considering the economic
8 instability that many LULAC members are experiencing, LULAC opposes the rate increase
9 because the organization aims to advance the economic condition of its members. Now is not
10 the time to charge more for a basic necessity. Moreover, Florida residents should not have to
11 pay extra so that FPL can emit more fossil fuels and further contribute to the climate crisis,
12 which disproportionately affects communities of color.

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