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BEFORE THE  
FLORIDA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

In the Matter of:

DOCKET NO. 20210015-EI

Petition for rate increase  
by Florida Power & Light  
Company.

\_\_\_\_\_ /

PROCEEDINGS: SERVICE HEARING

COMMISSIONERS  
PARTICIPATING: CHAIRMAN GARY F. CLARK  
COMMISSIONER ANDREW GILES FAY  
COMMISSIONER MIKE LA ROSA

DATE: Tuesday, June 29, 2021

TIME: Commenced: 11:00 a.m.  
Concluded: 1:10 p.m.

PLACE: Betty Easley Conference Center  
Room 148  
4075 Esplanade Way  
Tallahassee, Florida

REPORTED BY: DEBRA R. KRICK  
Court Reporter

PREMIER REPORTING  
112 W. 5TH AVENUE  
TALLAHASSEE, FLORIDA  
(850) 894-0828

1 APPEARANCES:

2 WADE LITCHFIELD, JOHN BURNETT, MARIA MONCADA  
3 ESQUIRES, Florida Power & Light Company, 700 Universe  
4 Boulevard, Juno Beach, Florida 33408; KENNETH A.  
5 HOFFMAN, ESQUIRE, 134 W. Jefferson Street, Tallahassee,  
6 Florida 32301; RUSSELL A. BADDERS, ESQUIRE, Gulf Power  
7 Company, One Energy Place, Bin 100, Pensacola, Florida,  
8 32520, appearing on behalf of Florida Power & Light  
9 Company (FPL).

10 BRADLEY MARSHALL and JORDAN LUEBKEMANN,  
11 ESQUIRES, Earthjustice, 111 S. Martin Luther King Jr.  
12 Boulevard, Tallahassee, Florida 32301; CHRISTINA I.  
13 REICHERT, ESQUIRE, Earthjustice, 4500 Biscayne  
14 Boulevard, Suite 201, Miami, Florida 33137, appearing on  
15 behalf of Florida Rising, Inc., League of Latin American  
16 Citizens of Florida, and Environmental Confederation of  
17 Southwest Florida.

18 THOMAS JERNIGAN, MAJOR HOLLY BUCHANAN, CAPTAIN  
19 ROBERT FRIEDMAN, SERGEANT ARNOLD BRAXTON, EBONY PAYTON  
20 and SCOTT KIRK, Federal Executive Agencies, 139 Barnes  
21 Drive, Suite 1, Tyndall AFB, Florida 32403; appearing on  
22 behalf of the Federal Executive Agencies.

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1 APPEARANCES CONTINUED:

2 JON C. MOYLE, JR. and KAREN A. PUTNAL,  
3 ESQUIRES, Moyle Law Firm, 118 North Gadsden Street,  
4 Tallahassee, FL 32301; appearing on behalf of Florida  
5 Industrial Users Group (FIPUG).

6 JAMES W. BREW and LAURA W. BAKER, Stone Law  
7 Firm, 1025 Thomas Jefferson Street NW, Suite 800 West  
8 Washington, DC 20007; appearing on behalf of Florida  
9 Retail Federation (FRF).

10 WILLIAM C. GARNER, ESQUIRE, Law Office of  
11 William C. Garner, 3425 Bannerman Road Unit 105, #414,  
12 Tallahassee, Florida 32312, appearing on behalf of The  
13 CLEO Institute Inc.

14 GEORGE CAVROS, ESQUIRE, 120 E. Oakland Park  
15 Boulevard, Suite 105, Fort Lauderdale, Florida 33334;  
16 appearing on behalf of Southern Alliance for Clean  
17 Energy (SACE).

18 KATIE CHILES OTTENWELLER, ESQUIRE, 838 Barton  
19 Woods Road, Atlanta, Georgia 30307, appearing on behalf  
20 of Vote Solar.

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25

1 APPEARANCES CONTINUED:

2 RICHARD GENTRY, PUBLIC COUNSEL; CHARLES  
3 REHWINKEL, DEPUTY PUBLIC COUNSEL; PATRICIA A.  
4 CHRISTENSEN and ANASTACIA PIRRELLO, ESQUIRES, OFFICE OF  
5 PUBLIC COUNSEL, c/o The Florida Legislature, 111 West  
6 Madison Street, Room 812, Tallahassee, Florida  
7 32399-1400, appearing on behalf of the Citizens of the  
8 State of Florida (OPC.).

9 SUZANNE BROWNLESS, BIANCA LHERISSON, SHAW  
10 STILLER and JENNIFER CRAWFORD, ESQUIRES, FPSC General  
11 Counsel's Office, 2540 Shumard Oak Boulevard,  
12 Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0850, appearing on behalf of  
13 the Florida Public Service Commission (Staff).

14 KEITH HETRICK, GENERAL COUNSEL; MARY ANNE  
15 HELTON, DEPUTY GENERAL COUNSEL, Florida Public Service  
16 Commission, 2540 Shumard Oak Boulevard, Tallahassee,  
17 Florida 32399-0850, Advisor to the Florida Public  
18 Service Commission.

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17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25

I N D E X

WITNESS:	PAGE
IKE CRUMPLER	25
MARGARET MARKER	27
ALFRED BREWTON	28
ANN LEONARD	30
PAUL BLACKWELL	35
PAUL SCHOOLAR	37
PATTI SUNDAY	38
TIM ZOOK	40
JAN WILSON	41
JUAN ANDRADA	43
ALLEN LASSITER	44
STANDLEY RODGERS	45
DANIEL ZIMMERN	47
TOM LLOYD	49
SCOTT LUTH	51
RAY PALMER	55
CARMEN SMITH	57
TED EVERETT	62
BROOKE MCLEAN	64
LEONARD BLOUNT	67
DAVID PEADEN	70
GEORGE CARD	72
BILL IMFELD	73
ORLANDO RODRIGUEZ	75
NAN FOSTER	76
PAT BYRNE	77
NICOLE BAREFIELD	78
THOMAS LEE	80
JOSE MIR	82
OLIVE MCNAUGHTON	83
MARIA MEDINA	85
COLLIER MERRILL	86
LAUREL DALTON	89
CATHERINE CHRISTOFIS	91
RICHARD BARRETT	94
BRIYANA JOSEPH	98
JOE WADE	100
CHANDA RYAN	104

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

2 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Good morning. I would like  
3 to welcome everyone to this customer service  
4 hearing in the Florida Power & Light and Gulf Power  
5 Company rate case. Today's service hearing is an  
6 important part of the rate case process, and is  
7 dedicated to hearing from you, the consumers.

8 My name is Gary Clark. I have the privilege  
9 of serving as Chairman of the Florida Public  
10 Service Commission. We have a panel of  
11 Commissioners today, Commissioner La Rosa and  
12 Commissioner Fay are joining me. We are all very  
13 interested in hearing your comments regarding the  
14 quality of service that you receive from both Gulf  
15 Power Company and Florida Power & Light.

16 At this time, I am going to ask staff counsel,  
17 if they would, to please read the notice of the  
18 meeting.

19 MS. LHERISSON: By notice issued on June 3rd  
20 and 4th 2021, this time and place has been set for  
21 a customer service hearing in Docket No.  
22 20210015-EI.

23 CHAIRMAN CLARK: All right. Thank you, Ms.  
24 Lherisson.

25 At this time, we are going to begin taking

1 appearances of counsel. Just as a note, if you are  
2 a customer on the line, we will be getting to you  
3 pretty shortly. We are going to go through some  
4 preliminary activities first. At the point in time  
5 where we have set side for customer testimony, I  
6 will give you some pretty specific instructions and  
7 we will pick up from there.

8 So let's take appearances this morning,  
9 beginning with Florida Power & Light.

10 MR. BADDERS: Good morning, Commissioners.  
11 Russell Badders appearing on behalf of Florida  
12 Power & Light Company. I would also like to enter  
13 an appearance for Wade Litchfield.

14 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Thank you, Mr. Badders.  
15 OPC.

16 MS. CHRISTENSEN: Good morning, Commissioners.  
17 Patricia Christensen for OPC. I would like to put  
18 in an experience for Richard Gentry, the Public  
19 Counsel, Charles Rehwinkel and Anastacia Pirrello.  
20 Thank you.

21 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Thank you, Ms. Christensen.  
22 Florida Rising.

23 MR. MARSHALL: Good morning, Commissioners.  
24 Bradley Marshall on behalf of Florida Rising, the  
25 League of United Latin American Citizens of Florida

1 and the Environmental Confederation of Southwest  
2 Florida. I would also like to enter an appearance  
3 for my colleague Jordan Luebkekmann.

4 Thank you.

5 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Thank you, Mr. Marshall.  
6 Federal Executive Agencies.

7 FIPUG.

8 SACE.

9 FRF.

10 Vote Solar.

11 MS. OTTENWELLER: Good morning, Mr. Chairman.

12 Katie Chiles Ottenweller with Vote Solar. And I  
13 would also like to enter an appearance for Bill  
14 Garner on behalf of the CLEO Institute.

15 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Thank you, Ms. Ottenweller.

16 Walmart.

17 Larsons.

18 FAIR.

19 MR. WRIGHT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good  
20 morning. Robert Scheffel Wright, appearing on  
21 behoove of Floridians Against Increased Rates,  
22 Incorporated. I would also like to enter an  
23 appearance for my law partner John Thomas Lavia,  
24 III.

25 Thank you.



1 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Thank you, Mr. Wright.  
2 Staff counsel.

3 MS. LHERISSON: Bianca Lherisson on behalf of  
4 Commission staff. I would also like to enter an  
5 appearance for Suzanne Brownless and Shaw Stiller.

6 MS. HELTON: And finally, Mr. Chairman, Mary  
7 Anne Helton is here as your Advisor. I would also  
8 like to enter an appearance for your General  
9 Counsel, Keith Hetrick.

10 CHAIRMAN CLARK: All right. Thank you,  
11 counsels.

12 Did we get everyone?

13 All right. Let me begin by thanking each of  
14 you for taking time out of your schedules to call  
15 in to this customer service hearing this morning.  
16 We appreciate your interest in the petition that  
17 has been filed.

18 As I mentioned, this hearing is designed so  
19 that we can hear directly from you, the customer.  
20 This is your opportunity to express your thoughts,  
21 concerns and comments related to the utility's  
22 request. In August, there will be a technical  
23 hearing, where the Commission will take in the  
24 substance and the evidence of this case.

25 If you would like to speak with an FPL or Gulf

1 Power customer service representative, we have one  
2 standing by on the line, and they can be reached by  
3 dialing (833)407-2007. They are available 8:00 to  
4 5:00 Monday through Friday, and of course are  
5 available during this hearing today.

6 We would request that if you have a technical  
7 issue or a problem, that you give this number a  
8 call and see if they can resolve it. We would  
9 certainly love to hear your comments as well, but  
10 they would be able to help resolve problems of this  
11 nature.

12 PSC staff also has an individual standing by  
13 as well. Mr. Curt Mouring from our Accounting &  
14 Finance Division is our representative in this  
15 docket. He can be reached by emailing  
16 [cmouring@psc.state.fl.us](mailto:cmouring@psc.state.fl.us), or by calling  
17 (850)413-6427.

18 This is an official hearing that will be  
19 transcribed and become part of the official record.  
20 As such, I will swear you in over the phone before  
21 you share your comments. If you checked the  
22 swear-in box on the website when you were  
23 registering, that will suffice. I will only swear  
24 you in if you have not already agreed to be sworn  
25 in via the internet.

1           Please note your comments are subject to  
2           cross-examination. That is, questions may be asked  
3           by any of the parties that are intervenors in this  
4           case, or by one of the Commissioners. Questions  
5           are not allowed from customers to other customers  
6           at this time.

7           For those customers that are calling in, we  
8           ask that you please keep -- excuse me -- please  
9           keep your phone on mute until you are called upon  
10          to speak. This is very important. If your line  
11          goes unmute, we will disconnect you from this end.  
12          You will have to dial back in if you take your  
13          phone off mute. It does cause background noise and  
14          distractions on our end.

15          We also ask that you please use the telephone  
16          receiver and not a speaker to talk. Please do not  
17          use the microphone on your computer. This causes a  
18          lot of feedback and issues as well. Please speak  
19          directly into your phone.

20          Each party will be given three minutes to  
21          speak. We will be adhering to this timeline in a  
22          very strict manner. We have 50 customers on the  
23          line. We want to give full respect to customer  
24          number 50 as well, make sure they have an adequate  
25          amount of time to address their concerns. So we

1 will be adhering to a very strict three-minute  
2 timeline.

3 At the three-minute mark, we will ring a bell.  
4 We understand that sometimes you can't hear this  
5 bell if you are talking. We will ring it again at  
6 3 minutes and 15 seconds, at which point I will  
7 also interrupt you and give you about five seconds  
8 to wrap up your comments.

9 We appreciate the professional nature of these  
10 proceedings, and ask that you be courteous to  
11 others who have taken the time to call in today.

12 In addition to sharing your comments with us  
13 life today, you may also submit your comments via  
14 postcard or via email. To contact the PSC by mail,  
15 you can find a pre-addressed comment card for  
16 download on our website. If you would like to  
17 email, please send email to the Commission Clerk at  
18 [clerk@psc.state.fl.us](mailto:clerk@psc.state.fl.us). Please reference Docket No.  
19 20210015-EI.

20 If during the course of this hearing another  
21 customer has said something that you wanted to say  
22 or that you absolutely agree with, please feel free  
23 to just say ditto. We want to make sure you are as  
24 comfortable as possible when providing testimony.  
25 Whether your comments are made verbally today or

1           they are received in writing, be assured that your  
2           comments will be reviewed and taken into during the  
3           course of these proceedings.

4           Now I am going to invite Florida Power & Light  
5           and Gulf Power Company to present a brief opening  
6           statement. Going -- this is going to be followed  
7           by a statement from the Office of Public Counsel,  
8           and then a brief moment for the intervenors in the  
9           case to make opening remarks as well.

10           We will begin with you, Mr. Badders.

11           MR. BADDERS: Thank you, Chairman Clark.

12           Mr. Silagy, President and CEO of FPL will be  
13           giving our opening remarks today.

14           MR. SILAGY: Thank you, Russell. And thank  
15           you, Mr. Chairman and Commissioners. And thank you  
16           to all of our customers who have taken the time to  
17           be with us today.

18           Before we begin today, we continue to keep in  
19           our thoughts and prayers those affected by the  
20           strategic building collapse in Surfside. Over the  
21           weekend, we sent a portion of our disaster response  
22           fleet, including eight mobile sleeper units to  
23           allow first responders to get some much needed  
24           rest. We also sent generators and a mobile command  
25           center which is being used as a meeting space for

1 the response team. As fellow first responders, we  
2 understand that every man counts, and we are  
3 committed to helping our communities in this time  
4 of need.

5 My name is Eric Silagy, and I am the President  
6 and CEO of Florida Power & Light Company. As you  
7 know Gulf Power and FPL have merged into a single  
8 company, now serving more than 5.6 million customer  
9 accounts across more than half of Florida, from  
10 Pensacola all the way to Miami.

11 I am proud to be part of the team that now has  
12 the privilege and mission of providing you with  
13 electricity that is cleaner, more reliable, and  
14 increasingly affordable.

15 We are a regulated energy company, and this  
16 means that the Public Service Commission oversees  
17 our rates and operations to ensure that we deliver  
18 safe and reliable service at a fair price. To that  
19 end, we are requesting new base rates phased in  
20 over four years. Beginning in January of 2022. If  
21 approved, our four-year rate plan would begin to  
22 transition Gulf Power customers' rates into  
23 alignment with FPL customers' rates, which today,  
24 in most instances, are considerably lower.

25 To accommodate the initial difference in the

1 cost of serving the existing FPL and Gulf Power  
2 service areas, we are proposing a surcharge for  
3 Gulf Power customers that would decrease each year,  
4 and ultimately decline to zero in five years.

5 Importantly, under our proposal, Gulf Power's  
6 typical residential customer bill would be lower at  
7 the end of the four-year plan than it currently is  
8 today, and, like FPL's, well below the national  
9 average.

10 In addition to lowering costs, our proposal  
11 supports investments in clean generation,  
12 infrastructure and innovative technologies that  
13 will further improve your service.

14 For example, we recently converted Gulf  
15 Power's former coal plant to run on 100 percent  
16 cleaner natural gas, drastically reducing the  
17 carbon dioxide emissions rate. And we just built a  
18 state-of-the-art solar energy center in Northwest  
19 Florida, with two more that are currently in  
20 development. All total, the new solar plants would  
21 power 45,000 homes with emissions free electricity  
22 that also uses no water.

23 Gulf Power is more reliable than ever before.  
24 By investing in the energy grid to make it  
25 stronger, smarter and more storm resilient, we have

1 improved reliability 50 percent since 2018. This  
2 means that our customers today are experiencing  
3 fewer outages, and shorter outages when they do  
4 occur.

5 We have been able to deliver you this value by  
6 adopting FPL's proven practices and our track  
7 record. And this really is the heart of our rate  
8 plan. We are standing by FPL's proven track record  
9 and promising an even better tomorrow, a more  
10 resilient and sustainable energy future that all of  
11 us can depend on.

12 While we are working hard to lower your bill,  
13 we also recognize that some of our customers face  
14 challenges and are struggling to pay their bill  
15 today. During the COVID pandemic, we helped  
16 customers secure financial assistance by connecting  
17 them with third-party programs, providing funding  
18 to small businesses and the United Way and through  
19 Project Share. We are here to help customers and  
20 have employees available right now to assist. The  
21 number to call if you need help is (833)407-2007.

22 So in closing, we are committed to serving you  
23 today while always looking over the horizon so we  
24 are ready to meet your energy needs tomorrow. We  
25 are looking forward to hearing from you. This is



1 your opportunity. We want to hear what we do well.  
2 And to that end, we've asked customers who have  
3 said that they value our service to share their  
4 thoughts with us today. But more importantly, we  
5 want to know where we can also improve.

6 So thank you for participating today. We  
7 appreciate that you have taken the time to join us  
8 and offer your feedback. And thank you for the  
9 opportunity to serve you.

10 Mr. Chairman, that concludes my remarks.

11 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Thank you, Mr. Silagy.

12 Next we will move to OPC. Ms. Christensen.

13 MS. CHRISTENSEN: Good morning. Good morning.

14 My name is Patricia Christensen. I am with the  
15 Office of Public Counsel. We are an office with  
16 the Legislature set up to represent you, the  
17 ratepayers of Florida Power & Light and Gulf Power.

18 We are investigating FPL and Gulf Power's rate  
19 request in this matter. To help us, we have hired  
20 experts in accounting, depreciation, cost of  
21 capital and other regulatory matters. We will try  
22 to get the best results for you, the customer, that  
23 we can.

24 Today, we are here to hear from you, the  
25 customers, about your experience with Gulf and with

1 FPL, good or bad. We thank you for taking your  
2 time to attend this hearing and to give us your  
3 continue input.

4 Thank you, and we look forward to listening to  
5 you.

6 CHAIRMAN CLARK: All right. Thank you, Ms.  
7 Christensen.

8 Okay. Other parties, beginning with Florida  
9 Rising.

10 MR. MARSHALL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

11 Good morning. My name is Bradley Marshall,  
12 and I represent Florida Rising, the League of  
13 United Latin American Citizens of Florida and the  
14 Environmental Confederation of Southwest Florida in  
15 this proceeding.

16 We oppose this combined FPL 20 percent rate  
17 hike because, simply put, it isn't needed. We have  
18 been listening during these service hearings, and  
19 know that many of you are very pleased with Gulf's  
20 and FPL's customer service and reliability, but the  
21 extra six-and-a-half billion dollars FPL plans to  
22 collect over the next four years isn't needed for  
23 that. They want to use it, instead, to increase  
24 their profits and to continue building out more  
25 stuff that they don't need, such as new gas power

1 plants. Power plants they don't need and that  
2 aren't good for the environment.

3 We understand that FPL has been spending a lot  
4 in Gulf's service area. We know this because if  
5 separate rates for Gulf's service area are  
6 maintained, FPL is asking that those Gulf Power  
7 rates be increased by over 40 percent over the next  
8 two years. It's also important to know that FPL  
9 can continue to build out solar without raising  
10 rates.

11 We oppose this rate increase because too many  
12 are already unable to afford their electric bill.  
13 FPL has cut off electricity for over a  
14 half-a-million customers during the pandemic for  
15 failing to keep up with their FPL payments.  
16 Reliability doesn't help those FPL customers when  
17 they can't afford their electric bill. 20 percent  
18 increase for current FPL customers, or even 40  
19 percent increase if rates remain separate will push  
20 even more over the brink.

21 Thank you, and thank you for being here today.

22 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Thank you very much, Mr.  
23 Marshall.

24 Anyone else in the intervenor's list wish to  
25 make an opening comment?

1 Ms. Ottenweller.

2 MS. OTTENWELLER: Yes, Chairman. Thank you.

3 Good morning, Commissioners, staff, parties  
4 and customers. I am here on behalf of the CLEO  
5 Institute and Vote Solar. Two nonprofit  
6 organizations working toward an affordable, clean,  
7 equitable and resilient energy system that works  
8 for all Floridians, especially those who are most  
9 vulnerable.

10 In the past year, Floridian's faced a global  
11 pandemic, economic recession and record-breaking  
12 hurricanes worsened by climate change. One of the  
13 things that we've learned in our intervention thus  
14 far is that FPL's profits increased by 10 percent  
15 last year, but FPL and Gulf decided to disconnect  
16 558,691 homes from power due to late payment during  
17 the pandemic at a higher rate than any other  
18 Florida utility.

19 While the vast majority of utilities have set  
20 goals to be carbon emissions freely by mid-century,  
21 FPL proposals new gas investments in this case that  
22 it wants to run for the next 50 years.

23 We know you have a lot going on, and to all  
24 the customers calling in, we want to say thank you  
25 for joining, and we look forward to hearing your

1 perspectives as we continue advocating on your  
2 behalf.

3 Thank you.

4 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Thank you, Ms. Ottenweller.  
5 Mr. Wright.

6 MR. WRIGHT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

7 Good morning. My name is Robert Scheffel  
8 Wright, and I go by Schef. As a native south  
9 Floridian, I was born at Jackson Memorial in Miami.  
10 I join my colleague and friend, Mr. Silagy in  
11 prayers for the people at Surfside.

12 I have been working on energy matters here in  
13 Florida for more than 40 years, including service  
14 in Governor Bob Graham's Energy Office and seven  
15 years on the Public Service Commission's staff as  
16 an economist before I became an attorney.

17 This morning, I have the privilege of  
18 representing Floridians Against Increased Rates,  
19 Incorporated, a Florida nonprofit corporation, and  
20 our more than 500 FPL customers among our  
21 membership. On behalf of FAIR and our members, I  
22 thank all of you for coming out.

23 I want to be clear about this from the outset.  
24 From the viewpoint of customers, FAIR wants a  
25 healthy FPL, but our position is very simple, FPL

1           should have enough money, but not too much. It's  
2           FPL's duty and responsibility, it is FPL's job to  
3           provide safe and reliable service at the lowest  
4           possible costs.

5                     FPL is well served by thousands of  
6           hard-working employees who keep the lights on, and  
7           we are not talking about paying them one cent less  
8           than what has FPL asked for.

9                     The evidence in this case will show that FPL's  
10          request, which by the way, is by far the largest in  
11          Florida history, would give it way more money than  
12          it needs to do its job. Politely, FPL's request is  
13          unreasonable, and the resulting rates would be  
14          unfair. They would be unfair because FPL does not  
15          need an extra \$1.1 billion customer money next year  
16          to do its job, and they don't need what they've  
17          asked for in 2023, 4 and 5 either.

18                    Even if FPL got no increase at all next year,  
19          FPL could cover all of its projected expenses, all  
20          of its projected payments to its employees,  
21          according to what they've represented in this case,  
22          pay all their interest, pay all the costs  
23          associated with their existing and projected  
24          investments for next year and still have well over  
25          \$2 billion in profits left over.

1           It's even worse than that. FPL also wants to  
2           use value that you customers are going to create  
3           through your payments using what they call a  
4           depreciation reserve surplus to pad their profits  
5           even more, up to an extra billion-and-a-half  
6           dollars over the next four years.

7           FAIR and our witnesses have to file and will  
8           present detailed evidence, and we will work hard,  
9           really hard, to prevent FPL from getting any of  
10          your money that they don't need, and to prevent  
11          them from using up value that you customers create  
12          to pad their profits even more.

13          Tell the Commissioners what you think. Thanks  
14          for being here, and thanks for your attention.

15          CHAIRMAN CLARK: Thank you, Mr. Wright.

16          Any other parties?

17          MR. SKOP: Mr. Chair, Nathan Skop. I just  
18          wanted to an appearance on behalf of the Larsons,  
19          and I will waive opening in the interest of time.  
20          I apologize, I had technical difficulty in dialing  
21          in.

22          CHAIRMAN CLARK: Thank you. Your appearance  
23          is noted, Mr. Skop. I appreciate that.

24          Anyone else from the parties?

25          All right. We will move now to our customer

1 testimony portion of the hearing. I just want to  
2 remind our customers, you will be given three  
3 minutes to make your remarks. I would ask that you  
4 keep your phone on mute until you are called upon  
5 to speak.

6 I am going to attempt to call three names --  
7 three customer names at a time so you will know  
8 what order you will be speaking in and you can be  
9 prepared.

10 If we miss you, or you do not hear us call  
11 your name, or you are disconnected and you come  
12 back and on the line and we've already called you,  
13 we will pick you back up at the end of the hearing.  
14 So don't worry about trying to get our attention,  
15 we will call on you and give you an opportunity to  
16 speak before we conduct -- before we conclude the  
17 hearing today.

18 All right. Our first three speakers are going  
19 to be Mr. Ike Crumpler, Margaret Marker, Alfred  
20 Brewton.

21 We are going to begin with Ike Crumpler. Are  
22 you on the line, Ike?

23 MR. CRUMPLER: Yes, sir.

24 CHAIRMAN CLARK: All right. I need to swear  
25 you in before we begin.



1           (Whereupon, Ike Crumpler was sworn by Chairman  
2 Clark.)

3           MR. CRUMPLER: Yes, sir.

4           CHAIRMAN CLARK: All right. You are  
5 recognized for three minutes, sir.

6           MR. CRUMPLER: Thank you.

7           My name is Ike Crumpler. I am a resident of  
8 Stewart. I am also a husband, a father and a  
9 business owner, and I am very grateful to be a  
10 customer of FPL.

11           We understand that, particularly in these  
12 times, we are seeing the cost of everything  
13 increase, and rarely do you recognize any real  
14 value to associate with that. This is not the case  
15 with FPL.

16           We have seen repeated and wise investment in  
17 our infrastructure that has really increased the  
18 area's storm hardening in which I live, and I  
19 really respect the way they have also invested in  
20 renewables. I have had the privilege to see some  
21 of those up close, and I know they make a  
22 difference in our long-term sustainability for  
23 power.

24           I don't envy the rate, but I respect the  
25 robust regulatory environment in which FPL exists,

1 so I can understand and support why this increase  
2 would be taking place, and I think it's reasonable  
3 and spaced out over a good period of time.

4 Just a very quick personal story. During  
5 Hurricane Irma, our family did experience a  
6 blackout. And while my young daughters were kind  
7 of excited about those conditions for a moment,  
8 because fortunately there was no damage, my wife  
9 and I were concerned. She has a very serious  
10 medical condition that requires refrigeration of  
11 her medicine. And before we even had a chance to  
12 just wait a couple hours, FPL had the power back  
13 on.

14 They are -- they are a great company, a great  
15 employer, and well worth the investment of this  
16 increase. And those are my thoughts. Thank you  
17 very much for the time to speak.

18 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Thank you very much, Mr.  
19 Crumpler.

20 Any parties have any questions for Mr.  
21 Crumpler?

22 Commissioners?

23 All right. I am going to -- let's -- I think  
24 this might expedite things just a little bit.

25 Instead of asking the parties after each speaker if

1           they would like to ask questions, I am going to  
2           forego that. If you would like to ask a question  
3           of the witness, any of the parties or any of the  
4           Commissioners, please just stop me, give me a flag  
5           as soon as they get through speaking and I think  
6           that will expedite things a little bit more.

7           All right. Next up, Margaret Marker?

8           MS. MARKER: Yeah, I am here.

9           CHAIRMAN CLARK: Margaret, you are recognized  
10          for three minutes.

11          MS. MARKER: Thank you so much.

12          So I am also an FPL customer. I am a wife and  
13          a mother and a business owner in Ft. Lauderdale,  
14          and I am in full support of the increase. I think  
15          it's a necessity in order to keep our forward  
16          progress into the solar fields, into renewable  
17          energy.

18          I also would like to see continuing  
19          improvements. During hurricanes, I know that FPL  
20          does an excellent job, but I think there is always  
21          room for improvement, and the only way that's going  
22          to happen is if we continue to increase funding and  
23          allow progress for technology.

24          And I think, you know, at least in Ft.  
25          Lauderdale, we had a very clear example with --

1 with the sewers, where the infrastructure was not  
2 kept up-to-date and technology was not improved,  
3 and then there was a total collapse. And I don't  
4 think that we would be wise to expect anything  
5 different if we -- if we don't allow funding for  
6 improvements, and for technology, and for  
7 continuing good service to the customers.

8 You know, especially as a business owner, I  
9 can't work, I can't pay my people if we don't have  
10 electricity. And we need to continue to allow them  
11 to -- to serve us and give them the money they need  
12 to do that in the way that we are accustomed to.

13 Thank you.

14 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Thank you, Ms. Marker.

15 Next up, Alfred Brewton.

16 MR. BREWTON: Alfred Brewton.

17 CHAIRMAN CLARK: You are recognized for three  
18 minutes.

19 MR. BREWTON: Thank you, sir.

20 Al Brewton. I am in Northwest Florida, Milton  
21 -- Milton -- Milton area. I am a Gulf Power  
22 customer and a small business owner in the City of  
23 Milton, and I am very much okay with the increase  
24 in rates.

25 As we all know down in our area, we had

1           Hurricane Sally, and also Milton wasn't affected as  
2           a lot of areas, but we did have some outages and  
3           all, and I am with Gulf Power Company, where I see  
4           the other two was FPL, but Gulf Power on our end is  
5           doing an excellent job in getting -- getting the  
6           power back up and to make sure that everything is  
7           every -- everywhere.

8           And I am also a community activist, and in my  
9           neighborhoods and all, I go around and check for  
10          streetlights, and so forth and so on, in certain  
11          areas, and I get the pole number and I call them  
12          in, and within a reasonable amount of days they've  
13          got the lights and all going.

14          So I am 100 percent for the increase. Of  
15          course, I run a small business, and I know I have  
16          to increase things too, so I think it's within the  
17          ramifications of what's needed to move our country  
18          and area forward.

19          Thank you very much.

20          CHAIRMAN CLARK: Thank you very much, Mr.  
21          Brewton.

22          The next three speakers will be Ann Leonard,  
23          Chanda Ryan, Shay Catrett.

24          Ms. Ann Leonard, are you on the line?

25          MS. LEONARD: Yes, I am.

1 CHAIRMAN CLARK: You are recognized.

2 MS. LEONARD: Thank you.

3 My name is Ann Leonard. I live in Panama  
4 City, Florida, and I am speaking as a residential  
5 customer. And while I am not advocating for a rate  
6 increase, it is my understanding that over the next  
7 several years rates will be lower than they are  
8 today, and I would just like to share my  
9 appreciation for Gulf Power.

10 In the aftermath of Hurricane Michael, my  
11 brother, who lost his home in Hurricane Katrina,  
12 drove over to help us. And as he drove into town,  
13 he came to the intersection of Highway 231 and 77,  
14 and as far as he could see there were power trucks  
15 on their way to our community.

16 When he got to my house, he told me that it  
17 brought tears to his eyes remembering from Katrina  
18 how long it took and the joy that he remembered in  
19 seeing them in his own neighborhood. I felt that  
20 same sense of relief and thankfulness as I sat in  
21 my own front yard and watched as new poles were  
22 installed.

23 The coordination of Gulf Power and their  
24 partners was absolutely remarkable during the  
25 hurricane. One of my favorite photos from the

1 storm is my sweet little house in the dark with  
2 every single light on as soon as the power was back  
3 up.

4 I also serve as the director of a technical  
5 center here in Panama City, and want to recognize  
6 the good work of Gulf Power in our school  
7 community. We have had a Gulf Power representative  
8 serve on our advisory board for many years, even  
9 through changes in local leadership, and I am very  
10 thankful for their ongoing support for our mission  
11 and their support of our school.

12 And the last thing I would like to mention is  
13 that I have a deep appreciation for the culture of  
14 inclusiveness that I have -- that I have observed  
15 with Gulf Power. Over a number of years, I have  
16 been so pleased to see the high visibility of  
17 women, particularly in leadership roles, in the  
18 energy industry, and I am extremely grateful for  
19 the inspiration and example that this provides to  
20 the women who are enrolled in our electrical  
21 program.

22 Gulf Power has proven to be a great partner  
23 for this community, and thanks for your time.

24 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Thank you very much, Ms.  
25 Leonard.

1 Chanda Ryan. Chanda Ryan.

2 Shay Catrett.

3 All right. The next three customers will be  
4 Santa Chamber, Roy Baker and Paul Blackwell. I  
5 will have to swear Paul Blackwell in.

6 Santa Chamber.

7 MS. TUCKER: Good morning, Chairman and  
8 Commissioners. Actually my name is Donna Tucker.  
9 I am the President and CEO of the Santa Rosa County  
10 Chamber of Commerce Tourist Information Center, and  
11 we are located in Milton, Florida, Northwest  
12 Florida, and I just wanted to make some comments  
13 regarding Gulf Power and their representatives.

14 I have been with the chamber for 21 years, and  
15 we embarked on a building project for a new chamber  
16 and tourist information center on Avalon Boulevard,  
17 and it was an incredible benefit to have  
18 representatives with Gulf Power on our team from  
19 the design phase all the way through the completion  
20 of the construction. The recommendations for  
21 energy efficiency, materials, everything from  
22 windows to phone sill to HVAC to hot water and LED  
23 lighting resulted in a cost savings much lower than  
24 we had anticipated and budgeted. So that has  
25 enabled us to show a financial and environmental



1 responsibility to our many donors and members  
2 throughout the Santa Rosa County area.

3 So I just want to say we were very proud to  
4 have them onboard, and appreciate their engagement  
5 that has resulted in a brand new building and we  
6 are saving money.

7 CHAIRMAN CLARK: All right. Thank you very  
8 much for your comments today. My apologies on the  
9 name mixup there. Next up, Roy Baker.

10 MS. TUCKER: That was probably my fault.

11 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Thank you.

12 Mr. Baker.

13 MR. BAKER: Good morning, Commissioners.

14 Chairman Clark and Commissioners, I am Roy Baker  
15 with Opportunity Florida. Opportunity Florida is a  
16 rural area opportunity organization which serves 10  
17 rural counties in Northwest Florida technical and  
18 marketing support.

19 I personally am not a customer of Gulf Power  
20 or Florida Power & Light; however, several of my  
21 rural counties are served by Gulf Power.

22 We are fortunate enough to have Gulf Power and  
23 Florida Power & Light decide to reduce their carbon  
24 footprints and to diversify their electrical  
25 production methods. They have both chosen to build

1 more renewable energy and green energy solar farms  
2 in our area in several of our rural counties.

3 The scale of each one of these farms produces  
4 about 74.5 megawatts, and that's enough  
5 electricity, as President Silagy mentioned, to  
6 cover over 15,000 homes. In several of our  
7 counties, more electricity will be produced than is  
8 needed for the number of homes in that county.

9 Essentially, this equates to the county  
10 becoming what we call a green energy county, which  
11 would be a new marketing brand for these small  
12 rural counties and communities. This new branding  
13 is a specialty niche which may be used to attract  
14 advanced manufacturing and other high tech  
15 industries who wish to use a total green energy  
16 brand in their product of service solution  
17 offerings.

18 We are fortunate enough to have partners like  
19 Florida Power & Light and Gulf Power and their  
20 efforts, and we are happy to have them as marketing  
21 partners working with our rural communities to  
22 create new economic development investment  
23 opportunities and jobs for our citizens.

24 Thank you, Commissioners.

25 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Thank you very much, Mr.

1 Baker.

2 Next up, Paul Blackwell. Mr. Blackwell, are  
3 you on the line?

4 MR. BLACKWELL: I am.

5 CHAIRMAN CLARK: I need to swear you in,  
6 Mr. Blackwell.

7 (Whereupon, Paul Blackwell was sworn by  
8 Chairman Clark.)

9 MR. BLACKWELL: I do.

10 CHAIRMAN CLARK: All right. You are  
11 recognized, sir.

12 MR. BLACKWELL: Good morning. My name is Paul  
13 Blackwell, and I am a customer of Gulf Power. I am  
14 a resident of Navarre, Florida, and I serve as the  
15 Operations Manager at the Santa Rosa Mall in Mary  
16 Esther, Florida.

17 I am in favor of increased rates in Gulf Power  
18 to enhance improved infrastructure in Florida,  
19 especially Northwest Florida.

20 I started here at Santa Rosa Mall in December  
21 of 2007. Within a few weeks, Dan Studebaker, a  
22 representative from Gulf Power, showed up at our  
23 door and arranged a visit to kind of review our  
24 power usage. He toured 750,000 square feet of  
25 retail space with me, and reviewed our power costs

1 and went through our bills and found a way to get  
2 us involved in a lighting retrofit incentive  
3 program. We ended up saving 65 percent a month on  
4 our power bill, and paid for the entire project,  
5 interior and exterior, within three months.

6 This occurred just about the same time the  
7 economy went into a tailspin, just 2008-ish, and  
8 retail, of course, bore the brunt of that. So  
9 saving \$100,000 a year on our power bills really  
10 kind of helped the mall survive. The owners were  
11 so impressed that they kind of considered Gulf  
12 Power as our partners, and they have even allowed  
13 Gulf Power to park their -- or stage their fleet  
14 out of our parking lot after emergency events, and  
15 they've offered them space within the mall even to  
16 use as a break room or a rest area so that they can  
17 serve the community from our area.

18 We -- we were very grateful for Jim Kubik and  
19 Brian Reeves, an engineer who also helped us with  
20 numerous projects here at the mall, including 240  
21 new apartment buildings, or apartments that we have  
22 just built on the property, all without  
23 interrupting power to the existing mall. We  
24 couldn't have done any of this without Gulf Power's  
25 help, and we are truly, truly grateful for

1 everything they have done for us.

2 That's all I have got.

3 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Thank you very much for your  
4 testimony today, Mr. Blackwell.

5 The next three customers are Kyle Schoolar,  
6 Patti Sunday, Tim Zook.

7 Mr. Schoolar, I will need to swear you in.  
8 Are you on the line?

9 MR. SCHOOLAR: I am here.

10 (Whereupon, Paul Schoolar was sworn by  
11 Chairman Clark.)

12 MR. SCHOOLAR: I do.

13 CHAIRMAN CLARK: You are recognized.

14 MR. SCHOOLAR: Thank you for the opportunity  
15 to make comments today.

16 As a residential customer of Gulf Power, I can  
17 speak to their amazing customer service, their  
18 amazing -- (inaudible) -- with the app and  
19 everything else, it makes it so easy to pay bills,  
20 to check on the status of outages or report  
21 outages.

22 Speaking directly to, you know, the Hurricane  
23 Sally and their ability to get the power back on in  
24 Pensacola, where I live, they were able to do that  
25 in just a matter of days. And so I just want to

1 share some positive comments about the amazing  
2 service that Gulf Power provides to residential  
3 customers.

4 CHAIRMAN CLARK: All right. Thank you very  
5 much, Mr. Scholar.

6 Next up is Patty Sunday. Ms. Sunday, I will  
7 need to swear you in. Are you on the line?

8 MS. SUNDAY: I am, sir.

9 (Whereupon, Patti Sunday was sworn by Chairman  
10 Clark.)

11 MS. SUNDAY: Yes.

12 CHAIRMAN CLARK: You are recognized.

13 MS. SUNDAY: Okay. Thank you.

14 Yes, my name Patti Sunday. I live in Panama  
15 City, Florida. I wanted to do a ditto to someone  
16 early on that said prayers to the Miami families  
17 and first responders. I support that a great deal,  
18 and I appreciate that person bringing it up.

19 I wanted to let you know that I work in  
20 economic development now. Prior to that, I had an  
21 ad agency for 20 years, focusing a lot on Hispanic  
22 families and niche, and I think I need to disclose  
23 that my husband is a certified energy manager, so I  
24 am a well-trained wife.

25 I really like the app from Gulf Power. I walk

1           about three to five miles every day for exercise,  
2           and I use it as being a good community member when  
3           I see lights or things reported, and I am amazed at  
4           how quickly it is addressed when I report small  
5           things that I see. So I really like that as a  
6           citizen.

7           I also viewed the message from the CEO a few  
8           months back. I really enjoyed that as a  
9           communications professional. I have lived and  
10          worked in four other states, and I was astounded by  
11          how progressive and smart the CEO explained about  
12          solar and the storage batteries, I just was  
13          thrilled.

14          I do realize that the rates will be a little  
15          bit higher, and I think it's incredibly important  
16          that we invest in infrastructure.

17          My father actually served in the CCC Corps a  
18          long, long time ago. He is in heaven now. And I  
19          think that type of movement when we, a long time  
20          ago, started to invest in infrastructure. It  
21          lasted us for a very long time, and I find it  
22          responsible, and I am glad that my husband and I  
23          are sitting on money and things that will make it  
24          smarter and greener for ourselves, our children and  
25          our grandchildren.

1           The other thing that I wanted to mention is  
2           that I have 20 years as a volunteer for at-risk  
3           population. Some of the early folks had mentioned  
4           their concerns about disconnections, and so I  
5           officially volunteer to be on any type of anything  
6           that you guys need as it relates to planning for  
7           that in the future, because I do care about that as  
8           well.

9           Thank you.

10           CHAIRMAN CLARK: All right. Thank you very  
11           much, Ms. Sunday.

12           Next up, Tim Zook.

13           MR. ZOOK: Good morning.

14           CHAIRMAN CLARK: Mr. Zook, you are recognized.

15           MR. ZOOK: Thank you.

16           My name is Tim Zook. I am actually a  
17           chiropractor in Niceville, Florida. I had a  
18           practice there for 30 years. I have been a Gulf  
19           Power customer, and I also have Gulf Power for my  
20           home. I have no opinion on the rates, but mine is  
21           going to be very short.

22           Gulf Power has been nothing but stellar in  
23           relation to the service they've given, the reaction  
24           they've had to various hurricanes and storms. You  
25           know, it's a good company. It's reliable, and I



1 trust them.

2 That's all.

3 CHAIRMAN CLARK: All right. Thank you very  
4 much for your testimony, Mr. Zook.

5 The next three individuals will be Jan Wilson,  
6 Juan Andrada, Allen Lassiter. Begin with Jan  
7 Wilson. I will need to swear you in.

8 Ms. Wilson, are you on the line?

9 MS. WILSON: Yes, I am.

10 (Whereupon, Jan Wilson was sworn by Chairman  
11 Clark.)

12 MS. WILSON: Yes.

13 CHAIRMAN CLARK: You are recognized.

14 MS. WILSON: Thank you.

15 My name is Jan Wilson, and I am a Gulf Power  
16 customer in Navarre, Florida. I recently, in the  
17 last five years, moved from another state, so I  
18 have had experience with a previous power company,  
19 found the power to go up constantly there, and the  
20 only way to manage my bill was budget billing, so I  
21 knew each month what my bill would be. I don't  
22 find the need to do anything like that here.

23 I also moved in the area where I had never  
24 experienced a hurricane before. I was a bit  
25 concerned about whether or not I would experience a

1 lot of power outages with the weather. I found  
2 that Gulf Power has been very good about getting  
3 power restored quickly. The one time it did go out  
4 was Sally.

5 The customer service definitely has been very  
6 good since I have been down here for the five  
7 years.

8 As other people have said, the application is  
9 fantastic -- (inaudible) -- navigation, working  
10 with my account, anything like that has been great  
11 without having to phone in. It's easy to do my  
12 payments on-line.

13 I understand that increases are necessary to  
14 advance infrastructure, it requires capital  
15 investment. Realizing that clean energy is a must,  
16 the cost -- (inaudible) -- are reasonable with rate  
17 increases are necessary to move forward.

18 Ultimately, we are providing a solid and sound  
19 infrastructure for our children, our grandchildren,  
20 and we must move forward, and I am fine with rate  
21 increases.

22 That's about all I have.

23 CHAIRMAN CLARK: All right --

24 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Wow, they must have a  
25 lot of money in these places --

1           CHAIRMAN CLARK:  -- thank you very much, Ms.  
2           Wilson.

3           Next up, Juan Andrada.

4           MR. ANDRADA:  Good morning.  My name is Juan  
5           Andrada.  I live in Panama City, Florida.  And one  
6           of the things that I wanted to express was Gulf  
7           Power does an outstanding job for a very reasonable  
8           price.

9           And people seem to forget that we had a little  
10          hurricane called Michael in this area that wiped  
11          out the whole electric grid in at least our county,  
12          if not more, and power was restored in what -- in  
13          the time that no one had predicted.  People thought  
14          we were going to be out of power for two months.  
15          We were out of power for two weeks, if that.

16          The other thing is, when Gulf Power needs to  
17          show up, they do show up.  There are no other  
18          public utility companies in this area that are  
19          capable of that.  You call the phone company and  
20          maybe they will show up.  Maybe they won't.  Gulf  
21          Power will do what they say they will do.

22          And I ditto the previous caller that said  
23          there is capital needed for building  
24          infrastructure.  The infrastructure in our country  
25          is way behind the times.  All that Gulf Power and

1 Florida Power & Light, or NextEra, are trying to do  
2 is move to forward to at least be on par with other  
3 areas.

4 That's all I have.

5 CHAIRMAN CLARK: All right. Thank you very  
6 much, Mr. Andrada.

7 Next up Allen Lassiter.

8 MR. LASSITER: Can you hear me?

9 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Yes, sir, loud and clear.  
10 You are recognized.

11 MR. LASSITER: My name is Allen Lassiter.  
12 Born and raised in Okaloosa County. Never left  
13 Okaloosa County. I worked for the City of Fort  
14 Walton for 33 years. Now I work for Okaloosa  
15 County.

16 I have had to deal with Gulf Power for over 40  
17 years. They have always been a great company,  
18 outstanding work. Always had great customer  
19 service advisers call in advance, call in  
20 afterwards, check on you.

21 I cannot say anything about an increase. All  
22 I can say is that Gulf Power has always stood  
23 behind me and my companies, or cities and counties  
24 I have worked for. And I love that outage website.  
25 It really keeps us informed.

1 I would just like to let everybody know that  
2 Gulf Power is a great company.

3 Thank you.

4 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Thank you very much, Mr.  
5 Lassiter.

6 Next up Stanley Rodgers.

7 MR. RODGERS: Good morning.

8 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Mr. Rodgers, you are -- are  
9 you there?

10 MR. RODGERS: I am there.

11 CHAIRMAN CLARK: All right. You are  
12 recognized, sir.

13 MR. RODGERS: Hello. Good morning. My name  
14 is Stanley Rodgers. I live in the fine city of  
15 Graceville, Florida, the northwest Panhandle. I am  
16 a fairly new resident, a recent resident anyway. I  
17 returned to Florida a year ago.

18 My experience with Gulf Power started when I  
19 tried to get electricity at my house, I was told it  
20 was another utility. And after spending two hours  
21 out in the sun having to produce all kind of ID and  
22 everything, it was determined that Gulf Power  
23 actually provided electricity to our new house --  
24 well, our house we bought anyway. And I find out  
25 that within minutes of going on-line, I was able to

1 get power to our house arranged. It was -- a  
2 simple process started there with great customer  
3 service, and compared to the other one  
4 particularly.

5 But as I lived this last year, even a tough  
6 time for all of America, I find it not only that  
7 Gulf Power was there any time I needed them.  
8 Buying an older home, we had some questions about  
9 saving on our utilities, and I consulted with Gulf  
10 Power representatives, and they were able to offer  
11 some creative, innovative and new technology to us.  
12 And being retired people, a retired couple, we  
13 were -- we were able to greatly reduce our electric  
14 consumption in this home with their recommendation.

15 The other thing that I have found over the  
16 year, the last year, is they are really innovative  
17 in that they are adding solar fields in our county.  
18 They are maintaining our line maintenance service  
19 in cutting these trees back to keep them off the  
20 lines so that in the severe thunderstorms.

21 And important also I think is they are  
22 involved in our communities. Everywhere I go in  
23 Northwest Florida, if I go to a meeting, I find  
24 Gulf Power has a representative there that can  
25 communicate directly with the community. And I

1 think that's a good key that big power companies,  
2 or big companies overlook sometimes. They are  
3 involved within our communities.

4 I think they are on the cutting edge of saving  
5 us money. If it takes a little rate increase, I  
6 support that, because we are growing up here in  
7 North Florida, and we need to be ready for that  
8 growth, and I support that and Gulf Power  
9 particularly, and their great customer service.

10 And I thank you for giving me an opportunity  
11 to support my company.

12 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Thank you very much for your  
13 testimony today, Mr. Rodgers.

14 Next three customers will be Daniel Zimmern,  
15 Tom Lloyd, Scott Luth.

16 Mr. Zimmern, are you on the line?

17 MR. ZIMMERN: Yes, sir.

18 CHAIRMAN CLARK: You are recognized, sir.

19 MR. ZIMMERN: Thank you, Chairman Clark and  
20 Commissioners.

21 I have lived in Florida for all of my 60  
22 years. I have been in the commercial real estate  
23 business as a salesman, a broker and developer in  
24 Pensacola, Escambia and Santa Rosa counties for  
25 over 25 years. I have had dozens of circumstances

1           that required help and support from Gulf Power over  
2           the years. These needs include residential  
3           accounts support, to large real estate development  
4           issues, including construction and even emergency  
5           response issues.

6           The company, and particularly the staff, here  
7           in Northwest Florida what have been extremely  
8           helpful every time, they have been timely and they  
9           provide quality service. Their staff and employees  
10          are responsive and seem to be great stewards of the  
11          public's trust, and keep their growth, both  
12          service-effective and cost-effective.

13          I have had multiple out-of-state clients who  
14          have noted the low cost of our power here versus  
15          theirs at home, including the perils of natural  
16          disasters. They have been -- always been  
17          responsive. We need our power provider to be ready  
18          for unforeseen issues. Gulf has a great history of  
19          being a great steward of the public's trust and  
20          money. You know, they are appreciated in the  
21          Panhandle, and I am support of the requested rate  
22          increase.

23                   CHAIRMAN CLARK: All right. Thank you very  
24                   much, Mr. Zimmer.

25                   Next is Tom Lloyd. Mr. Lloyd, are you on the



1 line?

2 MR. LLOYD: Yes, sir, I am.

3 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Mr. Lloyd, I need to swear  
4 you in before we begin.

5 (Whereupon, Tom Lloyd was sworn by Chairman  
6 Clark.)

7 MR. LLOYD: Yes, sir, I do.

8 CHAIRMAN CLARK: You are recognized.

9 MR. LLOYD: All right. So just a little  
10 background. I am the Operations Chief here with  
11 Santa Rosa County Emergency management. Santa Rosa  
12 County is roughly 184,000 people, 1,100 square  
13 miles.

14 I have been in the role with emergency  
15 services since 2006 here in Santa Rosa County. In  
16 2014 I took over as the Emergency Management  
17 Operations Chief and worked very closely with Gulf  
18 Power.

19 We have noticed, not that Gulf wasn't great,  
20 we have noticed a fantastic transition when FPL  
21 stepped into its partnership role with Gulf here in  
22 our county.

23 I can speak from a 911 operator's perspective.  
24 When we have to pick up the phone and contact the  
25 dispatch for Gulf Power and let them know that

1 we've got an outage or, you know, we've experienced  
2 some type of incident, whether it's a line down or  
3 pole that's been compromised, and it is -- there  
4 has been a drastic change for the better with the  
5 -- regarding the performance that has happened here  
6 in our county.

7 There are multiple projects that I believe the  
8 public maybe doesn't see, or doesn't realize what's  
9 going on, but there are multiple projects that we,  
10 as emergency managers, see going on behind the  
11 scenes with hardening of infrastructure and  
12 strengthening of lines to ensure that we are  
13 without power for only a minimal amount of time.

14 When we take into consideration -- my first  
15 experience with FPL was in 2016 with Hurricane  
16 Matthew, the first time that I dealt with them and  
17 their customer service area, I was deployed to  
18 Flagler County, and it was next level. There is no  
19 other way to describe the way that the employees  
20 handled themselves, from the crews, to the  
21 dispatchers, to the representatives we have in the  
22 EOC.

23 From the emergency management perspective as  
24 far as partnerships go, we do have two embedded  
25 employees from Gulf Power that are in our emergency

1 management office. When we do activate and their  
2 level of responsiveness to any problem that they  
3 can assist with, not just power company related but  
4 anything they feel as though they can help  
5 streamline, they are not hesitant at all to -- to  
6 inject the way that they can help our community;  
7 but they also stay in their lane and they are very,  
8 very good at the job that they do.

9 So again, from the emergency management  
10 perspective, representing Santa Rosa County, it is  
11 next level, unprecedented experience when it comes  
12 to us getting our infrastructure back exactly the  
13 way that it needs to be, and we have noticed  
14 multiple projects that are in the forward-thinking  
15 phase, where you are constantly seeing the company  
16 lean forward in anticipation of storms, natural  
17 disasters and day-to-day operations.

18 That is all I have.

19 CHAIRMAN CLARK: All right. Thank you very  
20 much for your testimony today, Mr. Lloyd.

21 Next up, Scott Luth?

22 MR. LUTH: Yes, sir.

23 CHAIRMAN CLARK: You are recognized.

24 MR. LUTH: Thank you. I appreciate the  
25 opportunity to speak this -- this morning.

1           Yeah, I am Scott Luth. I am a resident  
2           customer of Gulf Power in Pensacola, and I am also  
3           the head of economic development for Pensacola and  
4           Escambia County.

5           First as a resident, I want to say that Gulf  
6           Power has been extremely responsive, obviously, any  
7           time that they are needed to support customer  
8           calls, there has been great response. Their  
9           follow-up in supporting the community from that  
10          perspective is, again, has just been stellar and  
11          extremely appreciated as a customer.

12          But also as the head of economic development,  
13          we work with a lot of our business industry, and  
14          Gulf Power has been a tremendous community partner,  
15          and we are seeing and expecting no less from our --  
16          our good friends at Florida Power & Light as they  
17          begin to continue the transition and support our  
18          community, just like Gulf Power has done, you know,  
19          for many, many decades and generations.

20          The type of support that we received, you  
21          know, through Gulf Power and its -- its many  
22          employees that dedicate so much time and energy,  
23          and also their personal resources to support our  
24          community here has just been a wonderful  
25          investment.

1           They are a true community partner, with the  
2           goal of not only supporting the community from --  
3           from a growth perspective, but also, you know,  
4           making sure that we have the support that we need.

5           Again, the responsiveness is there. Storm  
6           recovery is just amazing as we need to see those  
7           things from a business perspective, you know, as  
8           well as just the forward-thinking investments that  
9           we continue to see from Gulf Power and Florida  
10          Light, and even in the recent years, that's kind of  
11          transitioned the community and the region in the  
12          area to more green renewable technology, which  
13          is -- which is very important with a lot of the  
14          investments that we see from outside companies  
15          looking to relocate, or grow, or to continue to  
16          look for communities that are forward-thinking. So  
17          it's exciting to see a company that acknowledges  
18          that, and actually supports that transition.

19          Lastly is from a competitiveness standpoint.  
20          We compete with a lot of other states across the  
21          United States, as well as nationally, and, you  
22          know, currently the way things are structured, and  
23          the support that we receive from Gulf Power, you  
24          know, is an extremely competitive situation where  
25          we are trying to bring new investment here. So we

1           also want to thank them, and we know that they are  
2           tremendous stewards of the resources and funding  
3           that we receive and our customers pay them every  
4           day allowing us to continue to be competitive from  
5           that perspective.

6           Lastly, I 100 percent support the investments  
7           that are for the increase in rates which will allow  
8           for the investments that are going to be needed as  
9           the company transitions, you know, from Gulf Power  
10          to Florida Power & Light. I see that as a  
11          tremendous need, and understand those investments  
12          are -- are what's going to continue to allow us to  
13          be competitive in the future as well, and continue  
14          to see the support and the resiliency that allows  
15          us to continue to grow as an economy here on the  
16          Gulf Coast.

17          So I would be happy to answer any questions,  
18          but those are my comments this morning.

19          CHAIRMAN CLARK: All right. Thank you very  
20          much, Mr. Luth, for your testimony today.

21          The next three customers to testify will be  
22          Ray Palmer, Carmen Smith, Ted Everett.

23          We are going to begin with Ray Palmer.

24          MR. PALMER: Good morning.

25          CHAIRMAN CLARK: Mr. Palmer, you are

1 recognized.

2 MR. PALMER: Thank you very much.

3 I am Ray Palmer, President of Pensacola Sports  
4 located, obviously, here in Pensacola. We are a  
5 small private not-for-profit organization, been  
6 around 65 years or so. Our mission is to improve  
7 our community through the power of sport.

8 My wife and I are both native Pensacolians,  
9 and therefore, are both been long-term customers of  
10 Gulf Power, and we have seen the impact that Gulf  
11 Power has had on our community throughout our --  
12 our life.

13 I will change direction just for a second and  
14 thank Mr. Silagy and Florida Power & Light, as we  
15 have learned that my nephew-in-law's aunt is  
16 missing in the catastrophe in Miami, and we have  
17 yet to hear from her. So we thank them for any and  
18 all efforts they are doing to give some -- some  
19 closure to that family in what appears to be a very  
20 tragic situation for them personally.

21 But that's typical of what we have seen in  
22 Gulf Power across our 60 plus years, is we've seen  
23 them not only respond positively to impacts of many  
24 storms over our years in our community, but also  
25 their assistance to other communities, and that is

1 a very important and valuable component of being a  
2 public service organization, such as Gulf Power and  
3 Florida Power & Light, because we certainly feel  
4 for these communities as they are impacted because  
5 we can relate to that.

6 Gulf Power has provided some really good jobs  
7 for many of our friends and family over the years,  
8 and their seemingly endless support to  
9 organizations in our community is just amazing. I  
10 would venture to say that there is virtually zero  
11 causes, worthy causes in our community that Gulf  
12 Power has not stepped up and played a role in  
13 support.

14 We have a limited number of large corporations  
15 that small not-for-profits or not-for-profits can  
16 call on in a community our size, and Gulf Power  
17 seemingly always seems to be able to say yes.  
18 Volunteers. Board representation. It just seems  
19 to be endless, and that's a very critical component  
20 in a community of ours, to give us the quality of  
21 life so that people, such as Mr. Luth, who -- who  
22 promote our economic development and try to attract  
23 organizations to come to our community is very  
24 important that quality of life component.

25 So on behalf of myself and my organization, we



1 support the Gulf Power rate request at this time.

2 CHAIRMAN CLARK: All right. Thank you, Mr.  
3 Palmer. And our thoughts and prayers go out to  
4 your family during this difficult time as well.

5 Next up is Carmen Smith.

6 MS. SMITH: Good afternoon. I am here. Good  
7 afternoon, Commissioner.

8 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Yes. You are recognized.

9 MS. SMITH: My name is Carmen Smith, and I am  
10 Executive Director at Chipola Area Habitat for  
11 Humanity. Since 2016, when we merged with what at  
12 the time was Washington County Habitat for  
13 Humidity, I have had direct contact with our local  
14 Gulf Power representatives to ensure that we --

15 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Ms. Smith, we are -- we are  
16 having a very -- Ms. Smith, can I interrupt you?  
17 We are having a very difficult time understanding  
18 you. Can you get a little closer to the phone, or  
19 make some adjustment?

20 MS. SMITH: Sir, I am holding the receiver, as  
21 you requested. I am not on speaker. I believe  
22 that's someone else's feedback that may be  
23 interfering with me.

24 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Ms. Smith can you hear me?

25 MS. SMITH: I can hear you, and I am holding

1 the phone as you requested.

2 CHAIRMAN CLARK: We are just -- we are having  
3 a very difficult time, and our court reporter can't  
4 hear your -- your comments. We want to make sure  
5 they are recorded.

6 COURT REPORTER: I can hear her.

7 CHAIRMAN CLARK: You can?

8 MS. SMITH: I hear her just fine.

9 COURT REPORTER: Yes, sir.

10 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Okay. Go ahead. We will let  
11 you go. We will -- we will read the recording  
12 later.

13 MS. SMITH: Okay. I apologize for that. I  
14 will start over if it's okay.

15 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Yes. That's fine.

16 MS. SMITH: Okay. Thank you.

17 I am Carmen Smith, and I am the Executive  
18 Director at Chipola Area Habitat for Humanity.  
19 Since 2016, when we merged with Washington County  
20 Habitat, I have had direct contact with our local  
21 Gulf Power representatives to ensure that we have  
22 had the necessary services needed to conduct our  
23 mission in our service area. We currently serve  
24 Jackson and Washington counties in the Florida  
25 Panhandle.

1           As you all may know, Habitat is a nonprofit  
2 affordable housing provider, and we operate retail  
3 stores, namely the store in Chipley, Florida, to  
4 fund our residential construction activities.

5           As a part of this, what we are required to do  
6 is oftentimes submit work orders for temporary  
7 utilities, for construction all the way, running  
8 the gamut through being able to transfer utilities  
9 to our partner families.

10           And, you know, full transparency, I will say  
11 that historically is not a common thing that you  
12 have customers that speak highly of utility  
13 companies, and especially in our small rural  
14 service area, with many companies, customer service  
15 lacks when it's headquartered elsewhere.

16           I can stand here today and say that is not the  
17 case with Gulf Power Company. That has not  
18 happened. The ease of connection of service, as  
19 well as the timeliness of service provision is  
20 quite impressive.

21           What's even more impressive, and even more  
22 heartfelt to our organization, is the smooth  
23 transition of transferring power to our habitat  
24 homeowners. Gulf Power not only serves our  
25 organization well, it serves our clients well in

1           our community as a whole.

2           Gulf Power has been a notable partner of our  
3           organization, and regularly supports and invests  
4           resources into our Northwest Florida community. As  
5           many on the call have stated, Gulf Power is a  
6           staple in our community, and one that, whether a  
7           small organization or large, that we turn to and  
8           value as a partner.

9           I have had the opportunity to publicly support  
10          Gulf Power's solar farms in the Jackson County  
11          community, and I have done so because I respect  
12          their commitment to technological innovation.

13          Gulf Power continues to demonstrate their  
14          support and engagement in our community. Their  
15          employees are active in our organizations. Their  
16          employees are active in our community. The  
17          commitment to our community is not only in  
18          supporting initiatives that come from local out,  
19          but also proposing and being innovative and  
20          bringing to our communities the technological  
21          enhancements that will provide and deliver reliable  
22          and sustainable energy.

23          I have been extremely proud of the service  
24          provision in the aftermath of both Hurricane  
25          Michael and Hurricane Sally. As someone noted

1 earlier on the call, Gulf Power delivers safe and  
2 reliable service. Gulf Power shows up when they  
3 say they are going to show up.

4 In addition to this, I have been able to  
5 appreciate the updates that we get via email and  
6 text regarding restoration of power. It's obvious  
7 that in the -- it's obvious at the level of  
8 planning that goes into preparing for storms is  
9 something that allows utilities to be restored as  
10 quickly as possible.

11 I have had the opportunity to work with  
12 multiple utility companies in our region, and I can  
13 say regarding service restoration, Gulf Power is  
14 the most impressive and has moved the fastest.

15 In the aftermath of both natural disasters, as  
16 well as the pandemic, in our line of work we have  
17 seen rising in costs across the board. I recognize  
18 that system and infrastructure improvements require  
19 a great bit of investment, and I hate to say it,  
20 but it relates to a rise in costs.

21 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Ms. Smith, would you -- would  
22 you mind wrapping up?

23 MS. SMITH: Yes, I am wrapping up, sir.

24 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Thank you.

25 MS. SMITH: The rising cost of standards and,

1           you know, minimally where we stand is the rising  
2           cost minimally preserves the service provision, but  
3           enhances it, so we offer our understanding to the  
4           request.

5           Thank you, sir.

6           CHAIRMAN CLARK: Thank you very much for your  
7           comments today, and I apologize for the -- the bad  
8           connection to begin with.

9           Next up is Ted Everett --

10          MS. SMITH: No worries.

11          CHAIRMAN CLARK: -- Mr. Everett.

12          MR. EVERETT: Yes, sir.

13          CHAIRMAN CLARK: You are recognized.

14          MR. EVERETT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

15          My name is Ted Everett. I reside in Chipley,  
16          Florida. I am currently the director of the  
17          Washington County Chamber of Commerce, as well as  
18          the Director of the Washington County Economic  
19          Development Council. I also have the privilege and  
20          the honor to be the Chair of Opportunity Florida, a  
21          board that was referenced earlier by Mr. Roy Baker.

22          I stand by what Mr. Roy Baker has said about  
23          Gulf Power and all of their projects within the  
24          northwest region, and what it is going to bring to  
25          our region, not only for creating jobs, but also

1           being the leader of green energy.

2           Mr. Chairman, I have found Gulf Power to be a  
3           really great partner in economic development, as  
4           well as other community activities. Whenever there  
5           is a -- whenever there is something that we need  
6           personally, some help, some advice, marketing help,  
7           we go to Gulf Power and they help us. They are  
8           helping building our community. They help in every  
9           form and fashion so that we can help bring jobs to  
10          this area.

11          Their low rates are very good when businesses  
12          are looking at this area. They look at these rates  
13          and they are very competitive, and these rates give  
14          us an advantage to lure businesses into this  
15          northwest region.

16          Every capital investment, every job that they  
17          create only helps make our community and our region  
18          stronger. For this, I applaud them.

19          On a personal note, after Hurricane Michael, I  
20          am a residence of one house at the end of the line.  
21          I have three meters on the property. They were all  
22          down. Gulf Power I did not think could do this in  
23          less than two weeks. By the end of day four, all  
24          of my power to all of my meter boxes were up and  
25          running, and I was just totally amazed. Not only

1 did they do this for myself, they did this for the  
2 entire community.

3 Having -- being the Chamber Director, I have  
4 talked to many people during that period of time.  
5 We were all amazed and very pleased with the work  
6 that Gulf Power did to restore our power and get us  
7 back on our feet as quickly as possible.

8 I truly support this rate increase. I truly  
9 support Gulf Power and all the things that they do  
10 to help the entire region. And that is my  
11 testimony, Mr. Chairman.

12 Thank you.

13 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Thank you very much, Mr.  
14 Everett.

15 Next three witnesses will be Brooke McLean,  
16 Leonard Blount and David Peaden.

17 Brooke McLean, are you on the line?

18 MR. MCLEAN: Yes, sir, I am.

19 CHAIRMAN CLARK: You are recognized.

20 MR. MCLEAN: Thank you, sir. Thank you,  
21 Commissioners.

22 I am the President and CEO of the Air Force  
23 Enlisted Village. We are a non-profit 501(c)(3)  
24 senior living community in Shalimar, Florida. We  
25 have 415 independent living apartments, and 66



1           assisted living apartments, including 18 of those  
2           set up for memory care and memory support. We  
3           support approximately 550 residents.

4           We recently completed a construction project,  
5           over 63 additional apartments, and we had great  
6           service from Gulf Power during that time, and then  
7           the transition bringing those apartments on-line.

8           We understand that the resilient power is  
9           crucial, not just to our local area, but  
10          specifically to our residents who rely on  
11          consistent power both for oxygen purposes for many  
12          of our residents, and also for the necessary  
13          cooling to be able to stay comfortable and -- and  
14          safe.

15          We would ask for consideration that many of  
16          the people in the state of Florida do survive on a  
17          fixed income, and any rate increase is going to  
18          place a strain on them; but we also understand that  
19          there are concerns with resilient power, and making  
20          sure that we have the support that we need for our  
21          residents here.

22          I would also like to recognize Bernard  
23          Johnson, who has been a fantastic partner for us.  
24          When we have had power outages in this area, either  
25          due to a storm or another incident, he is often on

1 the line with me within 10, 15 minutes, and giving  
2 me consistent updates about what is happening and  
3 when we can expect to have power restored back into  
4 our community.

5 So those are my comments. I appreciate the  
6 opportunity to testify.

7 Thank you.

8 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Thank you, Mr. McLean. We  
9 are having a little bit of difficulty understanding  
10 you on our end, but our court reporter did not come  
11 on the line, so I am assuming that she got all of  
12 it.

13 I realize that, in this communication world,  
14 we may not all be hearing the same thing. And if  
15 the Commission -- the three of us here are not  
16 hearing you very well, I certainly want to hear  
17 your testimony, but a lot of times there is nothing  
18 you can do to fix it on your end. So as long as  
19 our court reporter is getting the information and  
20 recording it for us, I am just going to let it go  
21 ahead and proceed. We will all take a look at the  
22 testimony at some point in time and familiarize  
23 ourself with it.

24 So my apologies if we can't hear you, but we  
25 will make sure that your comments are official.

1           Just a reminder, make sure that everyone is  
2           not using the speakerphone function, that you are  
3           speaking directly into your phone.

4           Again, thank you very much, Mr. McLean.

5           Next up is Leonard Blount. Mr. Blount, are  
6           you on the line? I will need to swear you in.

7           MR. BLOUNT: Yes, sir.

8           (Whereupon, Leonard Blount was sworn by  
9           Chairman Clark.)

10          MR. BLOUNT: Yes, sir, I do.

11          CHAIRMAN CLARK: You are recognized.

12          MR. BLOUNT: Okay. My name is Leonard Blount.  
13          I am the Vice-Chairman of T.J. Roulhac Enrichment  
14          and Activity Center. It's a nonprofit organization  
15          that's located in Chipley, Florida, 651 Pecan  
16          Street, and actually we are not far, maybe 20  
17          minutes Jacob City, that's Jackson County, where  
18          you guys just did the solar panels.

19          I am also a customer also, but we are a  
20          historical site, a nonprofit organization. We have  
21          been in existence for maybe 18 to 20 years, and we  
22          operate as a nonprofit community outreach center.  
23          We have a -- a clinic -- a free medical clinic and  
24          it's vastly stretching out to expand to maybe the  
25          support of three counties, and we serve everything

1 from after school programs to college connection  
2 programs, community activities from funerals to  
3 family reunions. So we play a very active part of  
4 the community, and we are extremely satisfied with  
5 the service that we have received.

6 I guess the recent things -- the recent things  
7 is, of course, we had a hurricane and we had  
8 damage, telephone poles down. It was corrected  
9 within three or four days.

10 Lightning storm, and someone came out and  
11 fixed that next day service. And we actually  
12 called, it was only about three hours after we  
13 called that it was completed.

14 I actually had a squirrel on the line once to  
15 break up the wiring started a fire, and out here  
16 immediately, same day service, fixed that.

17 And being a program old school, a historical  
18 school, and in the process of restoring the school,  
19 we were a little concerned about the rates, not  
20 that they didn't -- the rates are great compared to  
21 the service that you get for the rate, but we  
22 wanted to know how could we cut our costs. So we  
23 called, and of course Gulf Power sent a local agent  
24 out to go through our facility. And you would be  
25 surprised what lights -- changing old lights in a

1 gym would do, but that extremely helped us. And on  
2 several occasions, a representative came out to  
3 just watch and check to see what we were doing, you  
4 know, and we requested it, so that was good.

5 So we just want to say, No. 1, we are glad,  
6 and we are in the process of continuing to restore  
7 this historical site. We are about 80 percent  
8 there, and the rates are corresponding with the  
9 service, which is great. And we just think  
10 we're -- I guess I think I am in church, thank God  
11 for you guys for helping us to be more and to be  
12 everything to this community that we can be.

13 It feels almost like home. I recognize some  
14 of the voices and names, but -- but T.J. Roulhac  
15 Enrichment Activity Center, our name explains what  
16 we do. And because of what you are doing, we can  
17 do a better job in this community. So we thank  
18 you, and we thank everyone for making this phone  
19 call possible.

20 Thank you.

21 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Thank you, Reverend Blount.  
22 And thank you for the work that you do in our  
23 community as well.

24 Next up is Mr. David Peaden.

25 MR. PEADEN: Yes, sir. Thank you, Mr.

1 Chairman.

2 CHAIRMAN CLARK: You are recognized.

3 MR. PEADEN: I am David Peaden. I am the  
4 Executive Director of the Home Builders Association  
5 of West Florida. I have been in this position  
6 almost 24 years, and I have worked with Gulf Power  
7 during this time on a variety of issues and many  
8 storms.

9 From my experience, Gulf Power has worked hard  
10 to improve customer service. They worked hard to  
11 work with our builders, our electrical contractors  
12 and members of the HBA.

13 We did have some challenges when the Southern  
14 Company sold to Florida Power & Light in terms of  
15 our temporary pole hookups with our electrical  
16 contractors and some customer service operations.  
17 The company leaders, Brian Henderhan, Sandy Sims,  
18 Rick Buyers and Jeff Hatch stayed in constant  
19 contact with me. Once they understood what the  
20 issues were, they worked hard to make sure that  
21 things got better. And frankly, they did it in a  
22 very fast fashion.

23 They continued to monitor the situations and  
24 have monthly WebEx calls with our members to see if  
25 there is any additional issues they need to be

1 working on.

2 In terms of Hurricane Sally, it was impressive  
3 to watch Gulf Power quickly restore power after the  
4 storm. Everybody wants their power to be restored  
5 immediately, and there is a cost associated with  
6 tremendous service. And I think the citizens of  
7 Texas would agree that they wish they had reliable  
8 service all the time.

9 So I believe the increase is reasonable and  
10 should be granted, especially in the long-term  
11 rates will come down.

12 In my view, Gulf Power is a community leader  
13 who continues to make a positive impact on our  
14 local nonprofits, veteran groups, school districts  
15 and the colleges. I appreciate the work they do.

16 Thank you.

17 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Thank you very much, Mr.  
18 Peaden.

19 Next up is George Card. Mr. Card, I need to  
20 swear you in before you begin.

21 (Whereupon, George Card was sworn by Chairman  
22 Clark.)

23 MR. CARD: Yes, I do.

24 CHAIRMAN CLARK: All right. You are  
25 recognized, sir.

1           MR. CARD: My name is George Card, and I live  
2           at 507 Fifth Street here in Chipley, Florida, and I  
3           would like to give ditto to Gulf Power for a job  
4           well done. They have been not only in my life,  
5           because I have been a Gulf Power recipient for --  
6           for years, but in the area when Hurricane Michael  
7           came through, and a lot of destruction was done,  
8           within days we had power again. And I am thanking  
9           them, and I am thanking -- definitely I am thanking  
10          God for it.

11           Also, the customer service representatives,  
12          whenever you call and you got a problem, somebody  
13          is there fast and in a hurry. And I would just  
14          like to just -- in the area that I live in now,  
15          thank you for the Habitat for Humidity. When  
16          streetlights are out, when power storms come  
17          through and limbs are falling on the lines, you  
18          call Gulf Power, they are soon there.

19           So I would just like to thank you for allowing  
20          me to give this testimony. Thank you very much.

21           CHAIRMAN CLARK: Thank you very much, Mr.  
22          Card.

23           Next up, Orlando Rodriguez. Orlando  
24          Rodriguez.

25           Next is Bill Imfeld.



1 MR. IMFELD: Yes, this is Bill Imfeld here.

2 CHAIRMAN CLARK: You are recognized.

3 MR. IMFELD: Yes, sir.

4 CHAIRMAN CLARK: You are recognized.

5 MR. IMFELD: Hello. Okay. Thank you.

6 I am the Executive Director of Walton County  
7 Economic Development Alliance, and I have been a  
8 residential customer of Gulf Power for 24 years.  
9 So instead of going through the same things that  
10 you heard from Scott Luth and Ted Everett, I will  
11 just give them dittos there, but I would like to  
12 say that we have numerous clients that come down  
13 from the Rust Belt and from New England and looking  
14 to relocate to the Florida area, and there have  
15 been a number of occasions where they have made the  
16 comments that the rates from Gulf Power have been  
17 extremely favorable compared to what they were  
18 experiencing up in the north end. They give us a  
19 tremendous advantage. They work for us all the  
20 time for helping to bring new business to Florida,  
21 and especially to the Florida Panhandle, and I just  
22 want to say while we recognize that we are always  
23 concerned about costs, as both a consumer and for  
24 economic growth, we would not oppose a modest rate  
25 increase.

1 Thank you.

2 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Thank you, Mr. Imfeld.

3 Next three speakers are Taundis Holcomb, Nan  
4 Foster, Pat Byrne. Beginning with Taundis  
5 Holcomb -- Holcomb. Ms. Holcomb, are you on the  
6 line?

7 All right. Next speaker, Nan Foster.

8 MS. FOSTER: Yes, sir, I am here.

9 CHAIRMAN CLARK: All right. Ms. Foster, you  
10 are recognized.

11 MS. FOSTER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

12 MR. RODRIGUEZ: Hello. Good morning. Hello.

13 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Yes, who is this?

14 MR. RODRIGUEZ: Orlando Rodriguez.

15 CHAIRMAN CLARK: I am sorry, I couldn't  
16 understand you.

17 MR. RODRIGUEZ: Orlando Rodriguez, we have  
18 comment --

19 CHAIRMAN CLARK: All right. Mr. Rodriguez,  
20 you are -- let me -- I need to swear you in first.  
21 Can you hear me?

22 MR. RODRIGUEZ: Yes, sir.

23 CHAIRMAN CLARK: All right. Stand by one  
24 second, Ms. Foster. Let me get Mr. Rodriguez.

25 MR. RODRIGUEZ: Sorry?

1                   (Whereupon, Orlando Rodriguez was sworn by  
2 Chairman Clark.)

3                   MR. RODRIGUEZ: Yes.

4                   CHAIRMAN CLARK: Okay. You are recognized for  
5 three minutes, sir.

6                   MR. RODRIGUEZ: Okay. Hello.

7                   CHAIRMAN CLARK: Yes, Mr. Rodriguez, you may  
8 begin. You have three minutes.

9                   MR. RODRIGUEZ: Yes, sir. Okay, perfect.

10                  Okay. My name is Orlando Rodriguez. I live  
11 at -- (inaudible) -- Florida. We receive excellent  
12 service from FPL all the time. For example, last  
13 year, two years ago, we have -- (inaudible) --  
14 here, and we needed new service. FPL, all the  
15 time -- (inaudible) -- tell us to start the new  
16 service bring all the information we need to have.  
17 So when I called, I have any issue and so I called,  
18 they sent answer all the time with the most  
19 efficient, very excellent customer service all the  
20 time able to help, so I am very happy with FPL.

21                  CHAIRMAN CLARK: All right. Thank you very  
22 much for your testimony today, Mr. Rodriguez.

23                  All right. Back to -- let me try one more  
24 time. Taundis Holcomb. No response.

25                  Ms. Foster, are you still on the line?

1 MS. FOSTER: I am.

2 CHAIRMAN CLARK: You are recognized.

3 MS. FOSTER: Nan Foster here speaking on  
4 behalf of myself as a residential client, as well  
5 as our business located in Milton, Florida.

6 I would like to just ditto the comments of  
7 Donna Tucker with the Santa Rosa County Chamber of  
8 Commerce, and David Peaden with the HBA in  
9 Pensacola.

10 We, over the course of numerous years, have  
11 had an opportunity to establish a great community  
12 partnership with Gulf Power and its local people.  
13 We have also been afforded the opportunity to work  
14 indirectly with FPL as this merger is happening.

15 We are here to say that we certainly, as a  
16 business owner and a homeowner, support the  
17 requested increase. We know that it is very  
18 difficult to make these kind of decisions; however,  
19 in order to for us to progress forward with things  
20 in our society, these rate increases are necessary,  
21 as much as we would not like them.

22 So again, we are just here to say that we  
23 support and appreciate our relationships, both  
24 professionally and personally, with Gulf Power, and  
25 they are a fantastic community partner. And we

1 appreciate the opportunity to speak and show our  
2 support for them.

3 Thank you.

4 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Thank you for your testimony,  
5 Ms. Foster.

6 Next up, Pat Byrne.

7 MR. BYRNE: Yeah. This is Pat Byrne. I am in  
8 Niceville, Florida, center of the Panhandle, center  
9 of Gulf Power territory, and I am a real estate  
10 developer dealing in commercial and residential. I  
11 wanted to talk about the quality of service.

12 A lot of us were concerned when Southern  
13 Company sold Gulf Power to Florida Power & Light,  
14 and the interaction with the Gulf Power staff has  
15 been excellent. The change has gone well, and it  
16 -- it's a little bit different doing things, but it  
17 works. The quality of service is phenomenal.

18 And I just wanted to point out, yesterday my  
19 office loss its internet in the morning, and it was  
20 two o'clock the next morning before we got it back.  
21 If this would have been Gulf Power, there would  
22 have been trucks on the street working on it within  
23 an hour many.

24 The rate increase itself, the things that  
25 Florida Power & Light and Gulf Power want to do as

1 far as cleaner energy and solar energy are not  
2 free, and they come with a price tag, and it  
3 appears, from my perspective, to be a very  
4 reasonable price tag. One of the things that's so  
5 critical is storm hardening, and every penny that's  
6 spent on that is a penny well worth it.

7 So I do support the rate increase, that it  
8 seems reasonable, and thank you for your time.

9 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Great. Thank you very much,  
10 Mr. Byrne.

11 All right. Next three speakers will be Mr.  
12 Joe Wade, Nichole Barefield and Thomas Lee.

13 Mr. Wade. Joe Wade.

14 All right. Ms. Barefield, are you on the  
15 line?

16 MS. BAREFIELD: Yes, I am.

17 CHAIRMAN CLARK: You are recognized.

18 MS. BAREFIELD: Good morning. My name is  
19 Nichole Barefield, and I live at 239 Marlin Circle  
20 in Panama City Beach, Florida. I have been a  
21 residential customer of Gulf Power since 1980.

22 In all of my years as a customer, this company  
23 has provided consistent, valued and reliable  
24 service, both in power and with the consumer  
25 services.

1           As with many on this call, I live in a coastal  
2           area and frequently impacted by storms and severe  
3           weather causing outages, so I don't take this  
4           service lightly. Regardless of the cause of  
5           interruption or time of day, it's been my  
6           observation the company representatives have been  
7           quick to respond in the restoration of power, and  
8           professional in all related activity.

9           This representation does not happen by  
10          accident. It is the result of a clearly defined  
11          mission, a plan of work that is rigorously enforced  
12          reinforced and implemented by the employees of the  
13          company, always with safety in mind. It also  
14          requires operational investment to ensure the  
15          superior level of service can be supported.

16          This is never more evident than the response  
17          to recent severe storm disruption, including during  
18          Hurricane Michael. I was amazed at how quickly  
19          Gulf Power and the related contractors mobilized  
20          restored power and cleared lines, not just in my  
21          area of Bay County, but also north in Washington  
22          and surrounding counties where I work.

23          As a residential and business consumer, I want  
24          to ensure this level of support is always available  
25          when needed, and I expect Gulf Power to manage

1           their investment responsibly and for the benefit of  
2           their customer utility needs. This is why I am  
3           pleased to see the company is involvement in  
4           sustainable and new energy resources such as solar  
5           fields here in Northwest Florida.

6           As a business operator, I can also attest to  
7           the company's long-time efforts in supporting  
8           economic growth and development, which not only  
9           makes them good stewards in the communities they  
10          serve, but ultimately benefits our consumers who  
11          live and work in that area.

12          Thank you for your time.

13          CHAIRMAN CLARK: Thank you for your testimony,  
14          Ms. Barefield.

15          Next up, Mr. Thomas Lee.

16          MR. LEE: Hello, my name is Thomas Lee. I am  
17          the Assistant Director at Florida Panhandle  
18          Technical College in Chipley, Florida. I am  
19          speaking on behalf of the college, but also as a  
20          residential customer of Gulf Power.

21          I would just like to begin by saying ditto to  
22          the comments that were made several people ago  
23          about the community support that Gulf Power has --  
24          has and continues to provide in a rural community,  
25          and the value that that serves.



1           We have worked with Gulf Power. We have  
2           always been extremely satisfied with Gulf Power.  
3           And I have been in my job for over 10 years, and  
4           we've worked with them through Hurricane Michael.  
5           They used our commercial vehicle driving range as a  
6           staging area, was extremely pleased at the response  
7           time during the hurricane.

8           We worked with them to it upgrade our  
9           perimeter lighting on campus to LED lighting, and  
10          the cost savings and energy savings that that  
11          provided. They are always a phone call away. I  
12          have never had any complaints.

13          Would also like to express my appreciation for  
14          their commitment to renewable energies, but at the  
15          same time, also to the conversion of the coal  
16          plants and the expansion of -- to natural gas, and  
17          the expansion of that to ensure a stable and  
18          reliable power grid as we transition to more  
19          renewable resources. And I know that takes --  
20          infrastructure takes money. So I understand  
21          increase, and I appreciate their commitment to  
22          that.

23          Thank you.

24                 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Thank you very much, Mr. Lee.

25                 Our next three customers are Joseph -- excuse

1 me, Jose Mir, Arthur Cullen, Olive McNaughton.

2 First up is Mr. Mir.

3 MR. MIR: Yes. My name is Jose Mir. I am a  
4 resident of South Florida, and I am a South Florida  
5 native, and born and raised, which is rare in South  
6 Florida, but anyway, I -- I support Florida Power &  
7 Light's proposed plan. I also understand that  
8 investment is needed in maintaining -- (inaudible)  
9 -- in an area, and being born and raised here,  
10 there has been so many storms I can't even name  
11 them all, but Florida Power & Light always steps up  
12 and remedies the outages efficiently and  
13 effectively. As a residential customer, we have  
14 always found their service to be outstanding, very  
15 responsive and proactive.

16 I also sit on the Board of Friends of South  
17 Florida Autism, which is a not-for-profit, and we  
18 are the fundraising arm for our school. And as you  
19 can imagine, when there are special needs kids,  
20 losing power is not ideal. On a personal level, I  
21 have a son who is special needs, and I can tell you  
22 when we lose power, it's a big deal. However, FPL  
23 has always stepped up and we can always rely on  
24 them.

25 I love to see also their trucks getting ready

1 for their proactive preparation. It's second to  
2 none. They also are great supporters of the  
3 community, which has been cited up already, but  
4 also their willingness to even help other  
5 communities, so I understand that investment is  
6 required, and I support it.

7 Thank you.

8 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Thank you very much, Mr. Mir.

9 Next up, Arthur Cullen. Mr. Cullen, are you  
10 on the line?

11 Next up, Olive McNaughton.

12 MS. MCNAUGHTON: Yes, I am here.

13 CHAIRMAN CLARK: All right. You are  
14 recognized.

15 MS. MCNAUGHTON: My name is Olive McNaughton.  
16 I live in Port St. Lucie, Florida in St. Lucie  
17 County.

18 I am almost 87 years old, and I live alone.  
19 My only source of income is my Social Security in  
20 the amount of \$870.20 per month. I have monthly  
21 bills for medication, electricity, telephone,  
22 water, internet, gas, insurance, license and  
23 repairs for my 12-year-old car, house alarm, saving  
24 for health insurance, which is over \$1,000 a year,  
25 as well as taxes, which is also over \$1,000 a year.

1 Last but not least, food.

2 My house is only 1,300 square feet. The  
3 thermostat never moves from 80 degrees. A little  
4 portable fan goes around the house with me in the  
5 summer, and a little portable heater in the winter.

6 I use a microwave that has micro convection  
7 features. It cooks, roasts and bakes, so I very  
8 rarely turn on the electric stove. And the setting  
9 on my hot water heater is always on warm.

10 I am also an FPL on-call credit program, which  
11 allows FPL to turn off the power to my house at  
12 certain times each day. Despite all my efforts to  
13 conserve, my last four electric bills went from  
14 \$56.89 for March up to \$104.49 for June, which is  
15 due this Thursday, July 1.

16 I have a CD for my funeral expenses that pays  
17 me 0.35 percent interest. That's 35 cents on \$100.  
18 FPL wants to increase that -- increase what would  
19 give them a higher rate for their shareholders of  
20 11.5 percent interest. That's \$11.50 on \$100,  
21 while I am getting 35 cents.

22 Distressing the poor seems to be the order of  
23 the day, but it's not right. Who cares? The  
24 hundreds of houses of lower income families who,  
25 when they can't pay their bill, their power will be

1 disconnected. I am asking that the increase not be  
2 given.

3 Thank you.

4 COMMISSIONER FAY: Thank you, Ms. McNaughton,  
5 for your testimony.

6 Next up Maria Medina.

7 MS. MEDINA: Yes, Maria Medina here.

8 COMMISSIONER FAY: Ms. Medina, you are  
9 recognized.

10 MS. MEDINA: Thank you Mr. Chairman.

11 My name is Maria Medina, and I am a resident  
12 and business owner in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida. I  
13 am here to speak as to my experience with Florida  
14 Power & Light during some construction we had been  
15 doing over the last few years.

16 I would like to speak as to my very positive  
17 interactions with the technicians and the people in  
18 the call center. They have helped us throughout  
19 the construction process to get a safer hurricane  
20 proof line drawn to four of my buildings. They are  
21 always responsive. They came to the sites multiple  
22 times and consulted with the construction workers.  
23 Their service went above and beyond anything that I  
24 would have ever expected from a utility company.

25 I would also like to reiterate other peoples'

1 statements as to their responsiveness during  
2 hurricanes. And having experience too while living  
3 down here, I can definitely say that getting your  
4 power back both to business and home within a  
5 matter of days was extremely astounding. I could  
6 not believe that they were working so fast.

7 And those are my positive comments that I  
8 would like to express as to Florida Power & Light.  
9 Thank you for your time today.

10 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Thank you very much, Ms.  
11 Medina.

12 Next up, Collier Merrill.

13 MR. MERRILL: Mr. Chairman.

14 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Yes, sir, you are recognized.

15 MR. MERRILL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman and  
16 Commissioners.

17 My name is Collier Merrill. I am a Gulf Power  
18 customer, both residential and business. I am  
19 going to speak for a second on the business side of  
20 it.

21 I have five restaurants up in the Panhandle,  
22 we serve about a million customers a year. You  
23 know, as I tell all my managers, you are always  
24 working when you are in the hospitality business.

25 This came shortly after the announcement of

1 the merger with FPL and Gulf, we had an issue with  
2 one of the restaurants. When I was out of town, I  
3 got a call from the manager that said, Saturday  
4 night, summer and balmy, and the power had gone  
5 out. He said, you know, normally go through the  
6 help line, but at that point they weren't  
7 registering an outage. It turned out to be an  
8 adjacent building contractor that knocked our power  
9 out. Nonetheless, the 200 plus customers plus a  
10 wedding reception in the private room could attest  
11 that there was no power and no air conditioning,  
12 and as the kitchen filled up with smoke, as the  
13 exhaust fans were out, called me and I called a  
14 Gulf Power lady I knew, and she jumped on it.

15 I called the manager back and said do whatever  
16 you got to do. You can make drinks without power.  
17 He started making drinks to try to keep people  
18 happy, and within about 32 minutes they had the  
19 power back on.

20 But you always have a groan from customers  
21 when they realized everything was over, the free  
22 happy hour was over, but they immediately sent a  
23 truck out even though it wasn't registering with  
24 them at the time because it was a neighboring  
25 building.

1           And later I learned, when I got back in town,  
2           that this lady's mother had passed away, and they  
3           actually had the funeral that day. And when I  
4           found that out, I called her, I was very apologetic  
5           and condolences. I said, I wish you would have  
6           told me that, I wouldn't have -- I certainly would  
7           have told you not to worry about that. She said  
8           that's why I didn't tell you, because that's my  
9           job.

10           And I say all that to say that, you know,  
11           customer service and, you know, that's regardless  
12           of what else is out there, you know, you got take  
13           care of that, and that's just an example of mine.  
14           I have been in this over 20 years, and also in real  
15           estate development, but, you know, I was very  
16           impressed with that and I just wanted to pass that  
17           along.

18           CHAIRMAN CLARK: Thank you very much for your  
19           testimony today, Mr. Merrill.

20           Next up is Chip Armstrong. Chip Armstrong.

21           Next up -- next three speakers will be Gary  
22           Brunk, Stuart Baine, Laurel Dalton.

23           Mr. Brunk. Gary Brunk.

24           Stuart Baine. Stuart Baine.

25           Laurel Dalton.



1 MS. DALTON: Hello.

2 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Ms. Dalton, you are  
3 recognized.

4 MS. DALTON: Thank you.

5 My name is Laurel Dalton, and I reside in Palm  
6 Beach Gardens, Florida. And while I am not an  
7 advocate for an increase, I am an extreme advocate  
8 for FPL.

9 I want to say something nice about them,  
10 because I come to you not only as a resident, but I  
11 also work for a nonprofit medical society in Palm  
12 Beach County, and we work with underserved youth  
13 and medical professionals.

14 During the pandemic in 2020, we received a  
15 very unexpected welcomed contribution from FPL.  
16 Our local FPL made and donated hundreds of face  
17 masks, which we distributed to medical providers on  
18 the front line of the COVID-19 pandemic. These  
19 people needed protection during a time of shortage  
20 and delays --

21 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Ms. Dalton, we've lost you.  
22 Can you hear me? Ms. Dalton? Ms. Dalton?

23 All right. If she comes back on, we will pick  
24 her up at the end.

25 Next three speakers will be Catherine

1 Christofis, Richard Barrett and Victoria Olson.

2 MR. WADE: I hate to interrupt --

3 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Yes.

4 MR. WADE: Joe Wade. I missed my speaker spot  
5 because I couldn't log in for some reason.

6 CHAIRMAN CLARK: All right. Mr. Wade, we will  
7 pick you up at the very end. Just hang on the line  
8 and we will come back to you in a couple of  
9 minutes.

10 MR. WADE: Thank you very much.

11 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Ms. Dalton, did you make it  
12 back on the line per chance?

13 MS. DALTON: I am on the line. Can you hear  
14 me? Did you hear anything I said?

15 CHAIRMAN CLARK: We got about three-quarters  
16 of it. We lost you somewhere in the middle there.

17 MS. DALTON: Well, I will just repeat the part  
18 where I said about the pandemic.

19 In 2020, we received an unexpected and  
20 welcomed contribution from FPL. We distributed  
21 hundreds of face masks to medical providers that  
22 went to providers at hospitals, long-term care  
23 facilities, pharmacies, community testing sites and  
24 many of our over 250 members who work on the front  
25 line. And one small thing can impact so many

1 people. I am so grateful to FPL for what they do  
2 in the community.

3 Thank you.

4 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Thank you very much. Sorry  
5 for that technical difficulty.

6 MS. DALTON: You are welcome.

7 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Next up is Catherine  
8 Christofis.

9 MS. CHRISTOFIS: Yes, I am here.

10 CHAIRMAN CLARK: You are recognized.

11 MS. CHRISTOFIS: Okay. I am here in Miami,  
12 and I am absolutely opposed to any sort of increase  
13 that FPL is trying to propose.

14 As a member of Peace and Garden, I am  
15 President of Peace and Garden Condominium in North  
16 Miami, we have some of the highest FPL rates  
17 because we also get surcharged by the City. So  
18 while I am hearing all these people in the north  
19 giving all their complimentary things about FPL.  
20 Yes, they do a good job, that's because we are  
21 paying them to do a good job. We expect them to do  
22 so because they are getting paid a very hefty fee.

23 When we wanted to have our church looked at  
24 because we are receiving bills that are  
25 astronomical, the FPL person came out and basically

1           said, well, there is not much we can do. You are  
2           going to have to stuck with the high bills. So  
3           that's the customer service part of it.

4                    We also see here in Miami that they are doing  
5           storm strengthening, which is totally an  
6           unnecessary -- unnecessary.

7                    We don't need more concrete poles. We have  
8           them. What is really more needed are lines don't  
9           snap when you have hurricane force winds coming,  
10          and they don't go underground because they say that  
11          they can't do that.

12                   Well, that's fine, but we also have people  
13          right now that are in the middle of a pandemic.  
14          It's very callus for FPL, a corporation that has \$1  
15          billion in reserves, that has the ability to  
16          constantly have an incoming cash flow go ahead and  
17          do such a huge rate increase while people are  
18          suffering.

19                   And as a member of ARP, who also represents 30  
20          million seniors or more in the country, that has a  
21          majority of seniors in Florida, we are totally  
22          opposed to the idea of raising rates on our most  
23          vulnerable at a time when they are suffering with  
24          low Social Security income, low CD rates, and yet  
25          FPL wants to raise it to 12 percent.

1           If the people in the north, who seem to be all  
2           individuals who have gotten some sort of economic  
3           gain, as I am hearing that they are economic  
4           development individuals and not-for-profits, we are  
5           not here to discuss the goodness of FPL in  
6           distributing the millions of dollars that they are  
7           getting from us. We are here to say, yes or no to  
8           a rate increase that will affect us in a very  
9           negative manner during one of the worst economic  
10          periods that we are in.

11          So I am asking the Public Service Commission,  
12          do not listen to what glowing results FPL does.  
13          Yes, they do a good job, but they should not be  
14          allowed to price gauge -- price gauge at a time  
15          when people are suffering. It's incomprehensible  
16          to me how they would do it; and such a huge rate  
17          hike, not a minimal one of, say, one or two  
18          percent.

19          So if the people in the north area that loves  
20          Gulf, let them get our huge increase and see how  
21          they will like it and keep our rates here the same.

22          And one more thing, whenever they do any sort  
23          of rebuilding on the roadways, they never get the  
24          permits from FDOT, because when I verified when  
25          they went to do a hard strengthening of these

1 concrete poles, they went ahead and did the work  
2 and placed the poles in the wrong place. Their  
3 project manager was rude to the association. They  
4 did not assist us. They refused to listen to our  
5 calls. So it's not all a glowing report for FPL.

6 We were very saddened to see the disrespect  
7 that we encountered with this organization, and  
8 being that they are so large they think they can  
9 get away with anything. So it is not all roses and  
10 wine.

11 So please listen to the seniors in this state  
12 that are suffering during this time --

13 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Thank you.

14 MS. CHRISTOFIS: -- that's the most important  
15 thing.

16 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Thank you for comments, Ms.  
17 Christofis.

18 MS. CHRISTOFIS: Thank you very much.

19 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Thank you.

20 All right. Next up is Richard Barrett.

21 MR. BARRETT: Hello.

22 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Richard Barrett?

23 MR. BARRETT: Yes, sir. This is Richard  
24 Barrett. I am a third generation resident of Ft.  
25 Lauderdale, and customer of FPL, and I have got

1 good things to say about them, but unfortunately,  
2 like the laid before me, thank God she said  
3 something negative, I have been working since  
4 November of 2019 to had do get a pole which was  
5 leaning replaced behind my home, and it's been song  
6 and dance. FPL, its not ours. It's AT&Ts' pole.  
7 AT&T, it's not our pole, it's FPL's. And I said,  
8 okay, it must belong to the City. I am going to  
9 have my attorney send them a notice that they are  
10 in violation. And then finally -- finally, about  
11 four months ago, I got the pole replaced.

12 Now they replaced the pole, but now I am going  
13 through the song and dance with AT&T and Comcast to  
14 get their wires removed from the old pole and put  
15 on the new pole.

16 And that sounds like a personal problem, but  
17 what I am worried about is I read after Wilma about  
18 the millions and millions of dollars that the  
19 Public Service Commission approved for FPL for  
20 storm damage. And I am just thinking, what would  
21 have happened if I hadn't have been so dogged in  
22 getting this pole replaced, if a storm had come  
23 through and taken the pole down and maybe burned  
24 down my house, or killed my animals, or killed me,  
25 what would have happened? Would that just be storm

1 damage instead of maintenance? And I wondered,  
2 that would have gone straight to the bottom line as  
3 profit as far as I am concerned. And I just wanted  
4 to speak out.

5 Like I say, I think FPL does a good job in  
6 most things, but in this, I wonder how many poles  
7 are in existence because these guys said, oh, no,  
8 no. The wires hold up the pole. You don't have to  
9 worry. There is a lot of poles out there like  
10 that. It's not a problem. Well, it was a problem  
11 to me, and probably would be to anybody on the line  
12 here if it was in your back yard.

13 So I appreciate y'all. I think the Public  
14 Service Commission does a good job, and I thank you  
15 very much for listening to me. And like I say,  
16 it's been a struggle, but the pole -- as a matter  
17 of fact, they are out there working -- AT&T is  
18 working this afternoon between 2:00 and 4:00 to  
19 finish their wire moving to the new pole, and after  
20 that, I still have to get FPL back to take down the  
21 rest of the pole and remove it from the ground and  
22 carry it away. And when they get it out, they are  
23 going to see it's broken at the bottom, and that I  
24 was right all along. And if anybody would like to  
25 see the photographs, I have those.



1           Anyhow, thank you very much for listening to  
2           me, and I hope the rates -- the rates -- I don't  
3           know. If they get them in accordance to what they  
4           do, I have no problem with it, but I worry about  
5           some of the previous speakers that it may be -- I  
6           don't know. I just don't like the comment. I just  
7           know I am having problems with the pole, and it's  
8           been a struggle, and I hope other people take the  
9           time to struggle with their poles and make sure my  
10          electricity doesn't go -- go bad because they  
11          neglect the pole.

12                 Was that the end dingdong?

13                 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Yes, sir -- yes, Mr. Barrett.  
14                 Thank you very much.

15                 And you can feel free to submit those photos  
16                 as a record in the document. If you will just  
17                 email those to our staff, they will be more than  
18                 happy to include them in the docket.

19                 Thank you for your testimony today.

20                 MR. BARRETT: Oh, wonderful. I appreciate  
21                 your help. Thank you very much for what you do.

22                 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Next up is Victoria Olson.  
23                 Victoria Olson.

24                 Briyana Joseph.

25                 MS. JOSEPH: Hello, yes.

1 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Briyana Joseph.

2 MS. JOSEPH: Hi, can you hear me?

3 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Yes. You are recognized.

4 MS. JOSEPH: Okay. Give me one second to pull  
5 up my notes.

6 So, yes. Hello. My name is Briyana Joseph,  
7 and I am an FPL customer in Miami, Florida. Thank  
8 you so much for this opportunity.

9 It's an honor to speak after CEOs and business  
10 owners, executive directors and others whose  
11 position I hope to be in one day, and it is an even  
12 bigger honor to be a person that can be here today  
13 to speak on behalf of lower income people, an  
14 economic group of customers who are most likely at  
15 work right now unable to speak here today.

16 I want to ditto what -- I believe her name  
17 might have Olive, the 87-year-old, as well as the  
18 other customer who recently just spoke from South  
19 Florida against this rate hike.

20 So I grew up in one of the lowest income areas  
21 in the state, Liberty City Miami. Raised by  
22 Haitian parents who believe in me and the avenues  
23 that exist in this country for people to achieve  
24 their wildest dreams. I pulled myself up by my  
25 bootstraps and worked the hardest that I could. I

1 graduate with my Master's degree from the  
2 University of Miami in December. And last week,  
3 Wednesday, at only 24 years old, I became a  
4 homeowner right here in Liberty City. I rejoiced,  
5 but shortly after I learned about this rate hike.

6 If y'all move forward with this hike, I will  
7 struggle to pay for things like food, medical care  
8 and other utilities.

9 And so rate hikes unfairly affect low-income  
10 families and people. People are still recovering  
11 from the economic effects of the COVID crisis, and  
12 now companies like FPL plan to increase base rates  
13 for vulnerable communities like mine.

14 FPL was one of the several power companies  
15 that resumed closing customers' accounts due to  
16 nonpayment during the second wave of the pandemic.  
17 FPL actually disconnected over 500,000 households  
18 over the course of the pandemic, including many of  
19 my friends and family.

20 We cannot allow companies to continue taking  
21 advantage of working class families and people.

22 FPL can use the funds they already have to  
23 continue to improve and work towards renewable  
24 energy. As a party earlier mentioned, this  
25 proposal will provide these companies over \$1

1 billion increase in revenue over the next four  
2 years, which isn't necessary, especially because as  
3 you have seen on this call, so many people have  
4 reported already receiving effective and efficient  
5 services.

6 Everyone simply can't afford this rate  
7 increase. So please give us a chance. Please give  
8 us citizens who are just trying our best to get by  
9 a chance. I beg you.

10 Thank you so much.

11 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Thank you very much for your  
12 testimony today, Ms. Joseph.

13 Next up is Linda Shirey. Linda Shirey, are  
14 you on the line?

15 And next is Frank Mazuca. Frank Mazuca.

16 All right. I know one we need to go back and  
17 get, and that is Mr. Joe Wade. Are you on the  
18 line, Mr. Wade?

19 MR. WADE: Yes, I am. Can you hear me this  
20 time?

21 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Yes, sir. You are  
22 recognized, sir.

23 MR. WADE: Great. Thank you.

24 Sorry, earlier I just tried, and I was on the  
25 wrong phone number.

1           Yeah, I am -- I do appreciate. I am with Gulf  
2           Power in Pensacola, Florida. Enjoyed their  
3           dedication to try and keep rates low, et cetera,  
4           and also community service, the -- however, we all  
5           realize that they have merged with Florida Power &  
6           Light, and we have no experience up here with  
7           Florida Power & Light, and from I just heard from a  
8           comment from a previous speaker, that they are not  
9           too happy with them in some cases.

10           We have enjoyed Gulf Power. They are a good  
11           steward.

12           Can you hear me?

13           CHAIRMAN CLARK: Yes, sir.

14           MR. WADE: Okay. However, this rate increase,  
15           I don't think all the -- all the information is  
16           being put on the table. I looked really deeply  
17           into the rate increase; supposedly 12 percent in  
18           2022, 13 percent in 2023, still supposedly  
19           derementing after that, but that's an over 25  
20           percent increase in two years. And, you know, I  
21           think it's lowballed.

22           I looked at the -- I used to be in the energy  
23           business with TYCO, and I started looking at your  
24           actual details of that so-called assumption that go  
25           into the increases, and that's lowballed because

1           you -- you assume a fuel charge decrease of 24  
2           percent during that. How do we know that with all  
3           the, you know, natural gas coal plants being shut  
4           down, nuclear plants are being threatened. You  
5           already had to close one down here in Florida, and  
6           the green regulations, if they ever get put in, is  
7           going to put a tax on everything. So I think that  
8           fuel charge decrease is a gold assumption that it's  
9           going to decrease, but that much especially. You  
10          also happen to leave out all the taxes, 15.2  
11          percent that are on my bill after the rates.

12                 So I think you are looking at more like a  
13          30-percent increase in the next two years, and  
14          that's sort of being miscommunicated to the public.  
15          And that's my calculation. I spent four hours  
16          figuring this out.

17                 And so I am just wondering, you know, why you  
18          are hiding that, and also what you are throwing in  
19          there is a tiered increase. So after a thousand  
20          kilowatt hours, you are actually increasing the  
21          rate of anything over that. So you are actually  
22          forcing a rationing type, where the more you use  
23          over a thousand, and you happen to use in your  
24          examples a thousand kilowatt hour use, when the  
25          average home about 1,400, so you are not going to

1           hide math.

2                   And I am really kind of upset at the way the  
3           insidious action that you guys showed this  
4           information to the public. And also you are trying  
5           to get rid of all these power plants that are made  
6           from natural gas, you are trying to turn us into  
7           Texas a little bit, because you are trying to go at  
8           least four or five percent solar by, what 2030,  
9           according to FPL's solar mandates they are trying  
10          to get. Solar power we know is 10 times more  
11          expensive than gas -- natural gas and coal-fired  
12          plants.

13                   And so I think this insidious nature in which  
14          you are trying to show the information and hide  
15          some of the facts is what's more fearful to me.  
16          Plus your plan attempts to go into this renewables.  
17          And the sun only shines 68 percent of the time  
18          during the day here in Florida on average, and  
19          those efficiency or those solar panels is, at most,  
20          20 percent, and that's on the high end. So they  
21          got also a decremental deficiency decrement of two  
22          percent per year.

23                   So -- so I heard the bell. I just want to  
24          state that I am against this, and I am in agreement  
25          that the people down in South Florida actually have

1           some beefs that should be brought up here and known  
2           by the northern people.

3           CHAIRMAN CLARK: All right. Thank you for  
4           your testimony today, Mr. Wade.

5           Are there any other customers that were  
6           registered to speak today that may have been  
7           missed?

8           MS. RYAN: This is Chanda Ryan. Can you hear  
9           me?

10          CHAIRMAN CLARK: Yes, ma'am. Your name again  
11          was?

12          MS. RYAN: It's Chanda, C-H-A-N-D-A.

13          CHAIRMAN CLARK: Yes, Ms. Ryan, you are  
14          recognized.

15          MS. RYAN: Okay. I am a -- I have been a  
16          residential Gulf Power customer for about 21 years,  
17          and I came from Alabama, so I was used to Alabama  
18          Power, so I was really appreciative of the same  
19          dedication and support and excellent customer  
20          service that Gulf Power has been providing. And  
21          even when we have had the severe storms, I really  
22          appreciated specifically the app that they created.  
23          You can, you know, see realtime if there is ever a  
24          power outage, when it should be back on, and it's  
25          always been back on before, you know, they said, so



1 we've never had to be, you know, waiting for our  
2 power to be on.

3 And I just wanted to share that I personally  
4 support the reasonable rate increase, and that I  
5 think that it's really important, just like Gulf  
6 Power knows the importance of being ready for, you  
7 know, the storms that come our way. So I know that  
8 is going to take a lot of funding to be ready, and  
9 I just want to say that I support the rate  
10 increase.

11 CHAIRMAN CLARK: All right. Thank you very  
12 much, Ms. Ryan.

13 Anyone else we missed?

14 All right. Thank you again for taking time  
15 from your schedules to call into this service  
16 hearing today. Your comments and testimony are  
17 very important to this process, and we appreciate  
18 you very much assisting us with this proceeding.

19 If you have any questions, please feel free to  
20 discuss them with one of our staff members or a  
21 company representative. Their contact information  
22 has been provided in the notice, and also can be  
23 found on the PSC website.

24 Commissioners, do I have any other closing  
25 comments? Anyone?

1                   Without that, we stand adjourned. Thank you  
2                   for being here.

3                   (Proceedings concluded.)

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CERTIFICATE OF REPORTER

STATE OF FLORIDA )  
COUNTY OF LEON )

I, DEBRA KRICK, Court Reporter, do hereby  
certify that the foregoing proceeding was heard at the  
time and place herein stated.

IT IS FURTHER CERTIFIED that I  
stenographically reported the said proceedings; that the  
same has been transcribed under my direct supervision;  
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I FURTHER CERTIFY that I am not a relative,  
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financially interested in the action.

DATED this 23rd day of July, 2021.



DEBRA R. KRICK  
NOTARY PUBLIC  
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EXPIRES AUGUST 13, 2024