

Iris Rollins

From: Ellen Plendl
Sent: Wednesday, August 3, 2022 7:45 AM
To: Consumer Correspondence
Subject: Docket No. 20220000
Attachments: Re ongoing electrical utility industrial sector machinations; ongoing electrical utility industrial sector electoral intervention and machinations leading to anti-rate payer activities; more electrical infrastructure outages; more ongoing electrical utility industrial sector electoral intervention and machinations leading to anti-rate payer activities; Consumer Inquiry - Florida Power & Light Company

See attached customer correspondence and reply for Docket No. 20220000.

Iris Rollins

From: Beatrice Balboa <beatricebalboa@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, July 29, 2022 10:59 AM
To: Ellen Plendl
Subject: Re: ongoing electrical utility industrial sector machinations
Attachments: Investment firm downgrades assessment of FPL parent company, citing Miami Herald report.pdf

Friday 29 July 2022 1100 hours

Ellen Plendl
Regulatory Consultant
Florida Public Service Commission
Office of Consumer Assistance & Outreach
1-800-342-3552 (phone)
1-800-511-0809 (fax)

To whom it may concern,

I am writing to express my ongoing deepest disappointment that the electrical utility industrial sector continues to mismanage the electrical infrastructure throughout the State of Florida despite given unfettered access to elected and appointed government officials and agencies in the furtherance of policies and agendas in pursuing poorly thought out sourcing of energy resources and a decidedly anti-consumer stance with the rate-paying public across the board. Ongoing investigations continue undercover the long-standing practices by these captains of industry to extract ever larger fees and electrical rates to aggrandize their oversized ambitions by direct and indirect political arrangements in backrooms.

The attached documentation clearly indicates the lengths that the electrical utility industrial sector continues to pursue to ensure their monolithic position in the electricity sector in the State of Florida.

Please place these observations and articles in the appropriate docket to underscore the overwhelmingly calculated cold-hearted manner that these captains seem to influence the very elected/appointed representatives that should, instead, be seeking to comfort their constituents day-to-day hardships to pay for the aggrandizement of these out sized economic sectors.

Thank you for your time in these matters and hope to hear from you soon.

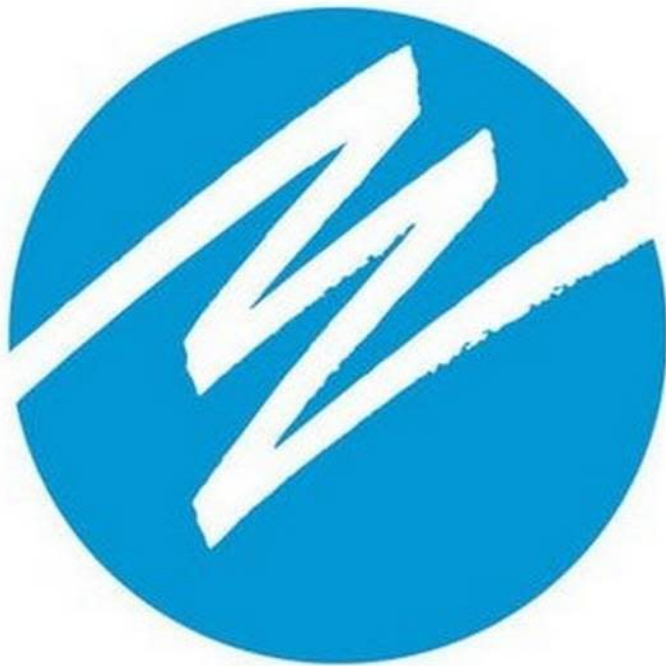
Sincerely,
Beatrice Balboa
1010 South Ocean Boulevard, Unit 1008
Pompano Beach, FL 33062-6631
USA

Investment firm downgrades assessment of FPL parent company, citing Miami Herald report



Miami Herald

BEN WIEDER
July 29, 2022, 7:55 AM



FPL

Miami

After [months](#) of headlines documenting how Florida Power & Light has secretly sought to manipulate elections and bend news coverage in its favor, one investment firm downgraded its assessment of the electric utility's parent company, NextEra Energy.

Seaport Global downgraded its stock recommendation for NextEra to "neutral" from "buy," citing, "growing media scrutiny of FPL's lobbying practices against distributed solar and retail choice ."

FPL, the country's largest electric utility, has been in the news in recent months after leaked documents, mostly published in the Orlando Sentinel, showed how political consultants tied to the company have used a network of nonprofit groups to secretly back candidates in numerous Florida races. The so-called "ghost candidates" helped siphon away enough votes from Democrats to help Republicans retain control of the Florida Senate. Records indicate the company or its consultant was also behind the hiring of private investigators to [surveil a journalist at the Florida Times-Union](#).

[READ MORE: Powerbrokers: How FPL secretly took over a Florida news site and used it to bash critics](#)

Additionally, the Miami Herald has [reported extensively](#) on the company's lobbying efforts to legislatively undermine the benefits afforded customers who pay to install rooftop solar panels on their homes. The reporting has prompted FPL or its consultant to order up personal attacks on the Herald's Tallahassee bureau chief, Mary Ellen Klas, in the Capitolist, a supposedly independent news site that FPL secretly controls.

FPL has denied its connection to the ghost candidate scheme and to surveillance of the Jacksonville reporter, but Seaport Global downgraded NextEra Tuesday following [reporting by the Herald on Monday](#) documenting how FPL had secretly bankrolled and controlled the content of the Capitolist, using it to defend the utility, advocate for legislative favors and attack FPL's critics.

Seaport Global senior analyst Angie Storzynski wrote that "last night's investigative report by the Miami Herald on FPL and a news website the Capitolist made us reassess FPL's risks.

"We worry that the growing media scrutiny of FPL could lead to formal legal, political and/or regulatory inquiries into this regulatory utility, at a time when FPL's 2021 rate case settlement is being challenged at the FL Supreme Court and NEE's stock trades at a hefty P/E premium to peers."

The assessment stops short of a recommendation that investors sell holdings in the company.

While Seaport is but one of a constellation of firms that analyze securities and make recommendations, its move represents a potential shift for the Juno Beach energy company, which has been a favorite of investors in recent years. It points to how a steady drumbeat of unfavorable news could, if it persists, ultimately damage the publicly traded company.

Over the past five years, the company's stock price has more than doubled from just over \$36 in late July of 2017 to more than \$84 now. The company's year-to-date performance hasn't been as impressive, falling roughly 7% from a high above \$91 at the beginning of the year, but its decline has been less steep than that of the S&P 500, which has lost 15% of its value in the same time period.

NextEra declined to comment on the stock downgrade.

"As a matter of policy, we do not comment on stock-related matters," said company spokesperson Debbie Larsson.

Diego Garcia, a business professor at the University of Colorado at Boulder who has studied the relationship between news coverage and stock prices says that, for the most part, all news is good news for companies.

"Investors see your name on CNBC and the Wall Street Journal and they think about buying," he said.

But recent coverage of FPL has been different, he says.

"Something like this is pretty extreme," he said.

While he believes NextEra could face a longer impact because of the amount of negative coverage it has faced, he said that the impact in most cases usually blows over with time.

NextEra's stock price experienced a small dip from the close of the market Monday until the close of the market Tuesday, closing Tuesday at just under \$80 a share, but by Friday morning the stock was back to \$84.54.

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From: Beatrice Balboa <beatricebalboa@gmail.com>
Sent: Saturday, July 30, 2022 11:45 AM
To: Ellen Plendl
Subject: ongoing electrical utility industrial sector electoral intervention and machinations leading to anti-rate payer activities
Attachments: Congresswoman Calls for Federal Probe Into Florida Utility.pdf; U.S. Congresswoman calls for federal probe into Florida Power & Light _ WLRN.pdf; Shining a light on how FPL operated behind the scenes, hoping to dim opponents _ WUSF Public Media.pdf; Florida congresswoman calls for federal probe into FPL - CBS Miami.pdf; Meet the boss of the website secretly run by FPL. He relays what to praise, who to target.pdf; Congresswoman calls for federal probe into Florida Power & Light.pdf; Congresswoman calls for federal probe into FPL.pdf; Congresswoman wants Florida utility linked to Alabama political firm investigated - al.com.pdf; Records tied to \$600,000 money transfer subpoenaed in Miami 'ghost' candidate case.pdf; Florida congresswoman calls on DOJ to investigate Florida utility company over 'dark money' claims – WFTV.pdf; Congresswoman calls for federal probe into Florida Power & Light _ firstcoastnews.com.pdf; Prosecutors seek info on money transfer in 'ghost' candidate case.pdf

Saturday 30 July 2022 1200 hours

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Regulatory Consultant
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The attached documentation clearly indicates the lengths that the electrical utility industrial sector continues to pursue to ensure their monolithic position in the electricity sector in the State of Florida and letting the electrical infrastructure system put the ratepayers in harm's way.

Please place these observations and articles in the appropriate docket to underscore the overwhelmingly calculated cold-hearted manner that these captains seem to influence the very elected/appointed representatives that should, instead, be seeking to comfort their constituents day-to-day hardships to pay for the aggrandizement of these out sized economic sectors.

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USA

Congresswoman Calls for Federal Probe Into Florida Utility

A U.S. congresswoman is asking the Department of Justice to investigate Florida Power & Light over claims that the utility used “dark money” to disguise sources of political funding and sway elections in Florida, as well as other allegations documented in recent news reports.

By [Associated Press](#)

July 29, 2022



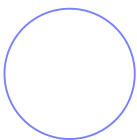
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The split at Matrix, the Alabama consulting firm, between the company's owner and former employees has led to litigation.

Castor's request for an investigation follows reporting from the Orlando Sentinel that Matrix worked to oust the utility's foes from elected office. The Miami Herald and the Sentinel reported this week that the Alabama consulting firm secretly bankrolled a Tallahassee news outlet that advocated for rate hikes, pushed for legislative favors and criticized political opponents of FPL. Last month, Florida news outlets reported that the Alabama consultants had covertly surveilled a Florida Times-Union columnist whose coverage was deemed to be critical of FPL.

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Matrix and FPL have not been accused of wrongdoing in the investigations.

U.S. Congresswoman calls for federal probe into Florida Power & Light

WLRN 91.3 FM | By The Associated Press

Published July 29, 2022 at 1:04 PM EDT



News Service Of Florida

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Shining a light on how FPL operated behind the scenes, hoping to dim opponents

WLRN 91.3 FM | By Tom Hudson

Published July 30, 2022 at 7:37 AM EDT

LISTEN • 50:29



CARL JUSTE CJUSTE@MIAMIHERALD.COM / *The Miami Herald*

Solar array floats out as FPL and Miami-Dade County launched a half-acre 402-panel floating solar array generating 160 kilowatts of power into the Blue Lagoon adjacent to Miami International Airport on Tuesday, January 28, 2020. 

New documents show how one of the largest companies in Florida secretly worked against political opponents. Power giant Florida Power and Light said it is confident it did nothing illegal in trying to shape public policy and press coverage.

Florida Power and Light powers much of Florida. It also is a very powerful voice in politics.

And just how powerful that voice is has come to light in a lawsuit involving a political consulting firm used by the utility giant.

From wanting to make "life a living hell" for a Democratic state senator to directly steering media

coverage, FPL is under new scrutiny thanks to documents shared with Florida journalists.

Anonymous email messages and an envelope with no return address were shared with Mario Alejandro Ariza of environmental news collaborative Floodlight and Annie Martin of the Orlando Sentinel. The documents and details were compared to public records such as business registrations and publicly available email addresses. The reporters also authenticated some of the material sent to them with the owner of political consulting firm Matrix, which did work for FPL.

Initially that work included voter analysis and opinion polling, "basically figuring out how people felt about certain issues," said Martin. "But the records point to a different story."

Martin and Ariza reported that in 2019, FPL President Eric Silagy emailed FPL vice presidents and said to make "life a living hell ... seriously" for then-Democratic state Senator José Javier Rodríguez.

At the time, Rodríguez proposed legislation that would have allowed landlords to use rooftop solar plans to generate electricity and sell that power to tenants. That could have cut FPL out from supplying power to those households.

Rodríguez narrowly lost re-election in 2020. A ghost candidate with the same last name admitted to accepting a bribe to appear on the ballot. The Orlando Sentinel reported that political consulting firm Matrix asked a contractor to draft a plan to recruit a Florida House representative to challenge

Rodriguez. People associated with Matrix then spent heavily prompting the campaign of the similarly named candidate who received more than 6,000 votes. Rodriguez lost his race by 32 votes. FPL has denied any knowledge of the scheme.

We believe our company and our employees have acted legally in our business dealings.

FPL Chief Communications Officer David Reuter

In a statement to The Florida Roundup, FPL said it thinks the documents were leaked to gain leverage in a legal dispute between the founder of Matrix and a former executive. The utility described Matrix founder Joe Perkins as someone who "has a federal record of making false statements, which calls into question the credibility of these documents."

In 1992, the Federal Elections Commission fined Perkins \$5,000 over campaign contributions made in 1985.

The statement from FPL Chief Communications Officer David Reuter continued. "From the moment we learned about these allegations, we undertook a thorough investigation which found no evidence of illegal wrongdoing by FPL or any of our employees. We believe our company and our employees have acted legally in our business dealings and these documents provide both an inaccurate and misleading representation of our actions."

"They have not provided us with evidence or any other kind of records that would show the rest of the

picture," said Martin. "They've said these records provide an incomplete and misleading picture. Well, OK . What's the rest of the story, then? And they're not disputing the authenticity of these records."

There has been little state government reaction to the material published this week focused on the power and influence of FPL. The state agency that regulates public utilities is the Public Services Commission .

"The Public Service Commission has said that they took a look at the spending that FPL was doing with its consultants during the previous rate case, which is when they examined how much the utility gets to charge," said Ariza. "Those reports are sometimes filed under trade secret or they're not shared with the public."

Congresswoman Kathy Castor has asked the federal government to look into FPL's political spending. The Tampa-area Democrat wants the Department of Justice to investigate what she called "very troubling" news reports.

Florida congresswoman calls for federal probe into FPL



BY ASSOCIATED PRESS
JULY 29, 2022 / 12:53 PM / AP

ORLANDO - A U.S. congresswoman from Florida is asking the Department of Justice to investigate Florida Power & Light over claims that the utility used "dark money" to disguise sources of political funding and sway elections in the state, as well as other allegations documented in recent news reports.

U.S. Rep. Kathy Castor, D-Fla., said in a letter to Attorney General Merrick Garland on Thursday that recent press reports in Florida had "exposed apparent corruption, influence peddling and breaches of the public trust by Florida's largest electric utility Florida Power & Light and its officers."

"Numerous public corruption scandals involving electric utilities across the country have resulted in federal public corruption criminal and civil probes, and it appears that such oversight is needed in Florida now," the letter said.

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Castor's request for an investigation follows reporting from the Orlando Sentinel that Matrix worked to oust the utility's foes from elected office. The Miami Herald and the Sentinel reported this week that the Alabama consulting firm secretly bankrolled a Tallahassee news outlet that advocated for rate hikes, pushed for legislative favors, and criticized political opponents of FPL. Last month, Florida news outlets reported that the Alabama consultants had covertly surveilled a Florida Times-Union columnist whose coverage was deemed to be critical of FPL.

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Matrix and FPL have not been accused of wrongdoing in the investigations.

Meet the boss of the website secretly run by FPL. He relays what to praise, who to target



Miami Herald

JUSTIN DENNIS
July 29, 2022, 1:09 PM



His name is Tim Fitzpatrick and he was the “shadow editor” of the Capitolist. The Capitolist is a Tallahassee-based website secretly run by Florida Power & Light, which uses it to attack FPL critics, advocate for legislation favorable to the utility and boost businesses, including those that pay for sponsorships.

The Capitolist hid its connection to FPL through a string of shell companies and an Alabama-based consultant called Matrix, but the relationship was revealed this past week by the Miami Herald.

Prior to publication, the Herald sought a comment from Fitzpatrick, a former FPL vice president who also previously worked for Pacific Gas & Electric Co. in California. In his role overseeing the Capitolist, he previews all content and can veto or order up stories for editor Brian Burgess to act on. Fitzpatrick did not respond to the Herald.

But he did respond when texted for comment by Justin Dennis, editor of Mahoning Matters, a digital news site that serves the Youngstown, Ohio, area and is owned by the Herald's parent company, McClatchy. They are both former staffers at the Youngstown Vindicator. Fitzpatrick's responses are summarized here.

On being the Capitolist's 'shadow editor'

Fitzpatrick told Mahoning Matters he gave Burgess ongoing advice on how to "professionalize" the site's content. He said the Miami Herald sensationalized his involvement and used the report as an example of the Herald's perceived bias against the utility company and himself, as a former employee.

The former journalist described the Capitolist's content as "straightforward" and said he stands behind its presentation.

"Brian [Burgess] has about a dozen business sponsors and advertisers who support his site because of the incredibly strong anti-business bias of the print media in Florida," Fitzpatrick wrote. "If you are a business in Florida, good luck getting your story told fairly by the major print media. Brian gives them a fair shot at telling their story."

He declined to say whether he was still involved with the website, citing confidentiality agreements related to his consulting work.

"Any suggestion that [the work] was inappropriate in any way is flat wrong, regardless of what the Miami Herald says," Fitzpatrick said.

On the Capitolist's sponsors

When asked by Mahoning Matters if the site's operators purposely misled readers about who actually runs the Capitolist, Fitzpatrick did not directly answer. Instead, he said the outlet has described itself as a pro-business website. He pointed to [its mid-year report card](#) published Saturday, July 23, which discloses support from 15 advertisers and sponsors in 2021, and 11 so far this year. That article doesn't name those backers.

"Note that the editor and publisher of the site, Brian Burgess, made it clear to the Miami Herald that he stands behind the accuracy of all stories he has published,"

Fitzpatrick wrote.

On his compensation for work at the Capitolist

Fitzpatrick declined to address how he was compensated for his work.

SUN Marketing & Advertising, the company through which money is funneled to pay his salary, was incorporated in December 2019, according to Delaware corporation filings.

On the coverage of FPL by the Capitolist, which doesn't reveal FPL's role

Fitzpatrick said the Capitolist published more than 500 stories on business and politics in the first half of this year, but estimated only a handful of them covered something related to FPL.



Congresswoman calls for federal probe into Florida Power & Light

Associated Press - Yes

8 2 1



1 Comment

11

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FPL Chief Communications Officer David Reuter said in an emailed statement that documents cited in the news reports

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Congresswoman calls for federal probe into FPL

The Associated Press

Published: July 29, 2022 at 2:17 PM

Tags: **Florida, Politics**



(WPLG)

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Castor is a Democrat.

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9+

IF

Ips0 Fa... 1 HR AGO

FPL is guilty of oh so much more. For instance, why can't I have solar power here In The Sunshine State? Because it would effect their profits. That's the Only answer.

REPLY 1 REPLY 0 2




MACvS... 34 MIN AGO


Reply to **Ips0 Facto**

Who said you can't have solar ?

I have an over 4000 foot system, grid tied, with battery backup, so where ever you're getting your info, you're wrong.

REPLY  0  0

 Add your reply

 **Macha...** 1 HR AGO

Florida enjoys one of the the best managed, best run electric utilities in the US. Our electric rates are \$10.06 vs the national average of \$10.59, not the lowest but not the highest. We need a strong electric utility company because we need them to be the best and strongest that there is during the storms of hurricane season. They spend a lot maintaining their lines and infrastructure and when storms strike Florida, they are ready to restore power. Go ahead, politicians and haters, and weaken our electric company. You won't like the result!

REPLY  0  1

FG **Florida ...** 6 HRS AGO

My father was an engineer for FP&L for 35 years..Worst company ever...They tried to make him change political party's for a promotion in the 70s and he refused and was passed over for the promotion. For those who think FP&L is so awesome go work there you will have a different opinion in the end...They need to be held accountable and stay out of politics period.....


REPLY 1 REPLY  4  3

RD **Ron Dou...** 2 HRS AGO

Reply to **Florida Girl**

Your dad was making a decent salary. He probably didn't meet all the requirements for the promotion. Maybe his performance at his present position wasn't high enough. That is a standard requirement in every company for getting a promotion. There is nothing wrong with a company encouraging employees to be worth the money they are paying them. Maybe your dad would have got the promotion if he looked up what all the requirements were. There were outside contractor jobs created to study efficiency. The recommendations were always so annoying every time I had to start doing something a different way. BTW, I turned down several promotions. I am so glad to be retired.

REPLY  1  2

 Add your reply

NN **No nonsense...** 6 HRS AGO

FPL is dirty and MUST be investigated

REPLY  1  1

 **MACvS...** 13 HRS AGO

She is only upset that she is not getting any funding, possibly seeking Soros money ?

If you check FPL in relation, say to a democrat controlled State, like California, with it's rolling blackouts and now, unannounced blackouts, FPL has been very dependable. I see their crews all the time replacing bad wooden poles with much larger concrete one's. Folks, in the event of a bad storm, you would be complaining as to why they had not been replaced, well they are upgrading, to hopefully get power restored fast after a storm outage. These things don't happen like a light switch, it takes time and has to be managed with the funds available.

You think some of these folks electric bills are high now ? How many of you realize, that to charge a new electric car one time to full charge, uses more electricity than to operate your central A/C for a full week. Imagine your doing that daily, overnight to use that electric car ? Wow, you will be shocked at your new electric bill. Isn't the EV doing you good ? LOL

We are fortunate here in Florida, with FPL, they have nuke plants, solar farms, natural gas plants and as of now, excess capacity. Not too many places can say that.

Even with all of my support for them, I still have backup generation and a solar farm on the roof of one of my garages. That's so I'm not without electric for any amount of time. In Wilma I was without for 2 weeks, ran out of fuel, in Andrew, the home was without for 4 months, never again.

Do your own due diligence.

REPLY 6 REPLIES  6  4

 SHOW OLDER REPLIES

 **MACvS...** 30 MIN AGO

Reply to **No nonsense**

What corruption ? An accusation by a radical democrat, seeking funds for her re-election campaign ? No basis. You do know, it's the PSC that reviews rate hikes and that it has oversight as well ?

When there is a fuel hike as what has happened with Biden's natural gas hikes, do you think that's not going to affect rates, of course it is.

REPLY  2  0


 **MACvS...** 26 MIN AGO

Reply to **Florida Girl**

OK, I'll bite, please explain, how they have folks been snowed ? Please, no insulting, facts and specifics, I am familiar with FPL, rate structures and solar, as I have

a grid tied system. Also I am acutely aware of natural gas increases, due to Biden, as I also have Propane and diesel generators.

REPLY  0  0

 Add your reply

FU **fed upp...** 14 HRS AGO

FPL is so dirty, they are willing to do anything to raise their profits. Wouldn't you like to bill your customers in advance for another possible leaky nuclear power plant that might not even get build and then charge your customers for the power that it generates? What a bunch of crooks! And the state officials and the Public Service Commission not only rolls over but works in collusion with FPL. FPL is so arrogant that they would engage in illegal spying on journalist, intimidation, and illegal ghost political campaigns is astounding. Its worse than GM v.s. Ralph Nader because there is nobody willing to fight FPL like Nader was in the 1970s.

REPLY  4  4

G. **g.o.** 14 HRS AGO

yeah they are really in it all for sure

REPLY  3  1

GH **ghost986** 15 HRS AGO

All of the rate hikes are the direct result of Democrat policies. Arrest yourselves!

REPLY  5  6

SH **sheca...** 17 HRS AGO

the recent rate hike has caused total hysteria their rates have skyrocketed amidst everything else - what goes up doesn't always go down - how can people survive? Ask them that? Food - medically necessary medications - or electricity now.... unbelievable.

REPLY  4  2

 **Mission...** 20 HRS AGO

FPL was absolutely amazing during the democratic induced shutdown. They worked with their customers in too many ways to list. Amazing company!

REPLY 2 REPLIES  11  10

... 9 HRS AGO

Reply to **MissionMan**

Who paid you to say this??

REPLY  1  2

NN **No nonse...** 6 HRS AGO

Reply to **MissionMan**

You must not live in Florida..

[News](#)

Congresswoman wants Florida utility linked to Alabama political firm investigated

Published: Jul. 29, 2022, 2:58 p.m.



Eric Silagy, the president and CEO of Florida Power & Light during an interview Thursday, June 9, 2022. Eric Silagy, the president and CEO of Florida Power & Light along with Gera Peoples, the Vice President and Chief Litigation Council for NextEra Energy and David Reuter, the spokesperson for FPL met with reporters from The Florida Times-Union, the Orlando

discuss the attempt by FPL to purchase the JEA, political funding and the use of outside agencies to facilitate FPL's activities. [Bob Self/Florida Times-Union] TNS

By [The Associated Press](#)

A U.S. congresswoman is asking the Department of Justice to investigate Florida Power & Light over claims that the utility used “dark money” to disguise sources of political funding and sway elections in Florida, as well as other allegations documented in recent news reports.

U.S. Rep. Kathy Castor, D-Fla., said in a letter to Attorney General Merrick Garland on Thursday that recent press reports in Florida had “exposed apparent corruption, influence peddling and breaches of the public trust by Florida’s largest electric utility Florida Power & Light and its officers.”

“Numerous public corruption scandals involving electric utilities across the country have resulted in federal public corruption criminal and civil probes, and it appears that such oversight is needed in Florida now,” the letter said.

FPL Chief Communications Officer David Reuter said in an emailed statement that documents cited in the news reports were “both an inaccurate and misleading representation of our actions.”

The owner of an Alabama-based consulting firm once used by FPL is in a bitter legal dispute with former employees, and documents cited in the news reports were leaked to gain leverage in the litigation, Reuter said.

See also: [Matrix plays powerful role in Alabama politics, pollution and scandals](#)

“From the moment we learned about these allegations, we undertook a thorough investigation which found no evidence of illegal wrongdoing by FPL or any of our employees,” Reuter said.

The split at Matrix, the Alabama consulting firm, between the company's owner and former employees has led to litigation.

Castor's request for an investigation follows reporting from [the Orlando Sentinel](#) that Matrix worked to oust the utility's foes from elected office. [The Miami Herald](#) and the Sentinel reported this week that the Alabama consulting firm secretly bankrolled a Tallahassee news outlet that advocated for rate hikes, pushed for legislative favors and criticized political opponents of FPL. Last month, Florida news outlets reported that the Alabama consultants [had covertly surveilled](#) a Florida Times-Union columnist whose coverage was deemed to be critical of FPL.

[According to](#) the Sentinel, the Alabama consultants were at the center of “ghost” candidate efforts in Florida.

A 2020 state Senate race in central Florida and two others in South Florida, have been the focus of scrutiny over whether independent “ghost” candidates entered the races solely to siphon off votes from Democrats. The “ghost” candidates in the three Florida races were promoted by a pair of entities chaired by then-GOP political consultant Alex Alvarado, according to the Orlando Sentinel.

Alvarado has been notified by South Florida prosecutors that he is a target of their investigation, which has already led to the indictment of former lawmaker Frank Artiles, according to the Sentinel. Artiles is accused of bribing another of the “ghost” candidates to run in South Florida’s Senate District 37.

Separately, two political operatives and an independent candidate were charged in Seminole County in May with election finance violations.

Matrix and FPL have not been accused of wrongdoing in the investigations.



Miami Herald

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Records tied to \$600,000 money transfer subpoenaed in Miami ‘ghost’ candidate case

Ana Ceballos, Miami Herald - Yesterday 8:04 PM



2

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Prosecutors have subpoenaed records related to a \$600,000 money transfer between dark money organizations tied to an ongoing Miami-Dade criminal case surrounding “ghost candidates” in the 2020 election, according to court records unveiled Friday.



© MATIAS J. OCNER/Miami Herald/TNS

Frank Artiles leaves the Turner Guilford Knight Correctional Center in Miami, Florida, on Thursday, March 18, 2021. Artiles posted \$5,000 bail after facing charges relating to a 2020 Senate District 37 campaign.

The transfer is adding a new layer of intrigue to a years-long question into who paid for thousands of political mail advertisements to promote sham no-party candidates in three contested Florida races that were key to helping solidify the Republican majority in the state Senate.



An advertisement for business working capital. The top part features a blue banner with the text "BUSINESS LOAN" in white, bold, capital letters. Below the banner, the text reads "Business Working Capital 2022 - Get The Money You Need Today" and "Ad www.fundinghero.com/Worki...".

**Business Working Capital 2022 -
Get The Money You Need Today**

Ad www.fundinghero.com/Worki...

While the source is not yet clear, the money transfer shows prosecutors are looking into a \$600,000 transfer made on or around Sept. 30 from Foundation for a Safe Environment, a nonprofit organization controlled by prominent Republican operative Stafford Jones, to Let's Preserve the American Dream, a nonprofit organization run by Ryan Tyson, a top GOP pollster in Florida.

During the course of the investigation, court records show that Tyson told investigators that he, too, [had sent \\$600,000 on Sept. 29, 2020, to Grow United](#), a dark money organization

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Tyson told investigators his organization transferred the money to Grow United to help “left to center” candidates, and that he “had a hunch” the money would later be transferred to the two political committees — The Truth and Our Florida — which were controlled by Tallahassee consultant Alex Alvarado.

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A labyrinth of political committees, nonprofits

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Data Targeting also paid [former Republican state Sen. Frank Artiles](#), who is facing several charges related to the no-party candidate who ran in District 37, for campaign-related work. Data Targeting paid Artiles \$90,000 over six months to work on “state legislative campaign assignments ... to include certain Senate Districts in Miami-Dade County,” according to records released by the Miami-Dade State Attorney’s Office. The contract did not detail the exact duties.

Unlike political committees, which are legally required to disclose their donors, dark money groups are not required by law to do so, which makes them useful for funders who don’t want their identities revealed when backing certain campaigns or causes.

In addition, records show that on April 20, prosecutors were seeking information from Brian Lacey, who worked with the Florida Democratic Legislative Campaign Committee until he was let go in December

2020 following “a bad cycle and losses in Florida Senate races.”

The DLCC also received money from Grow United. Lacey told investigators he recalled the contribution was made but that he did not have information beyond that and did not have access to those records because he was not employed by the committee.

Friday’s records are part of the discovery in [the case](#) against Artiles in Miami.

The candidate in Senate District 37, who shares a surname with the Democrat incumbent and received more than 6,000 votes in an election decided by just 32, was arrested on four felony campaign finance charges last year. Auto-parts dealer Alexis Pedro Rodriguez [later took a plea deal](#) in exchange for helping prosecutors build a case against his acquaintance, Artiles. Investigators say Artiles paid Rodriguez \$40,000 to run as a no-party candidate to sway the outcome of the election by siphoning votes away from the incumbent.

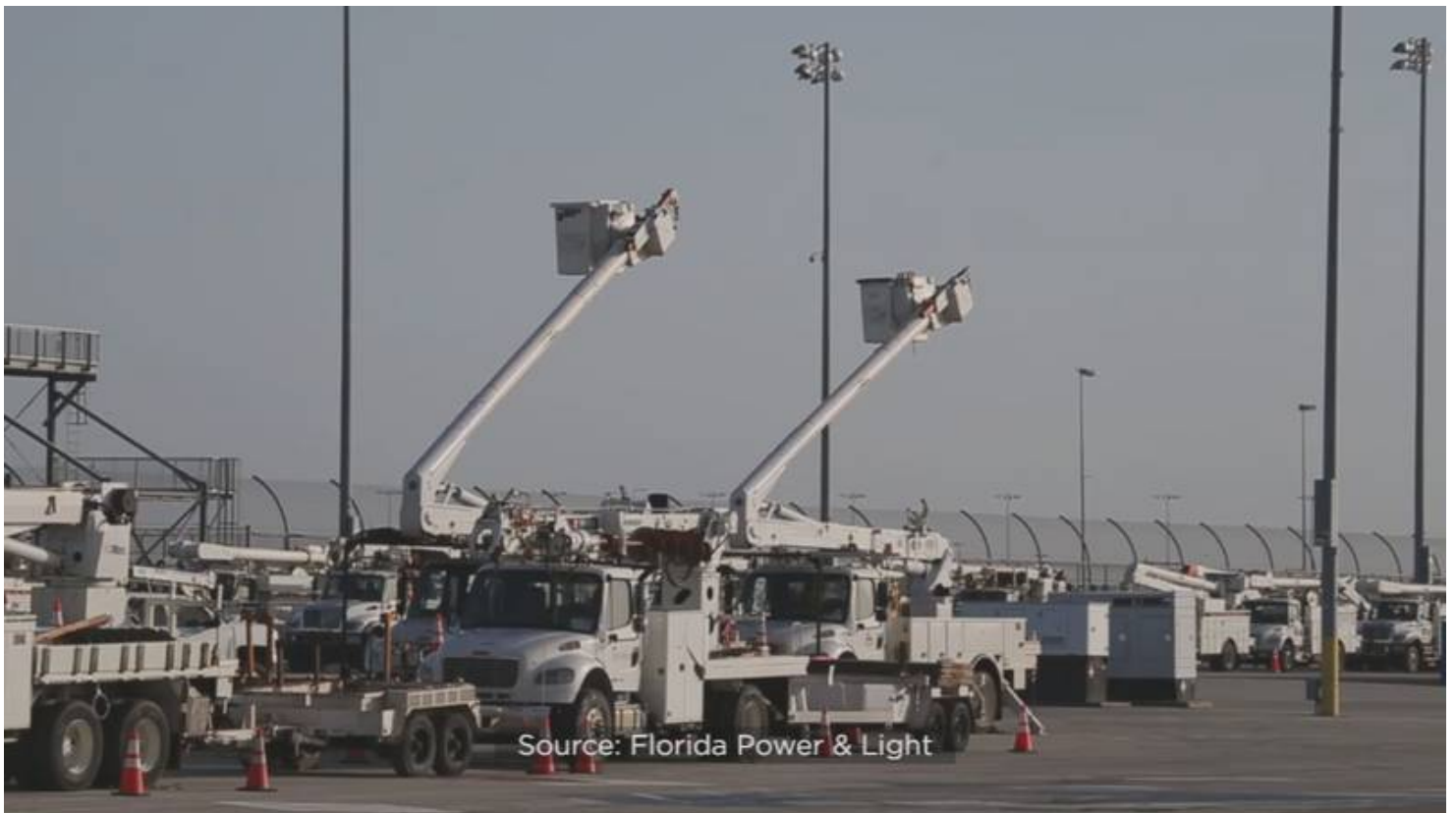
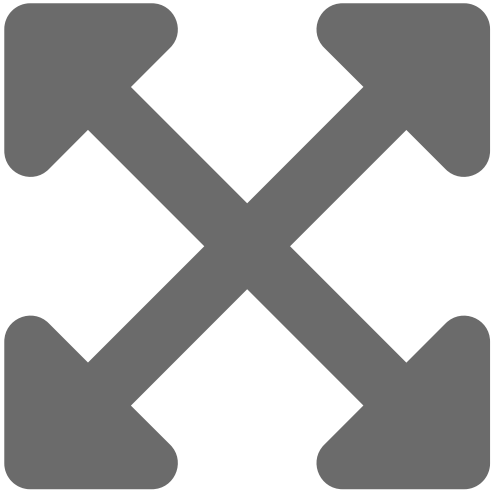
[READ MORE: After 3-day recount, incumbent Democrat loses Senate seat to Ileana Garcia](#)

Both men were charged with conspiracy to make or accept campaign contributions in excess of legal limits, accepting and making those excess campaign contributions, false swearing in connection to an election and aiding in (and eventually, submitting) false voter information. Under state law, each of those charges carries sentences of up to five years in prison if convicted.

The case is scheduled for its next hearing on Sept. 1.

Florida congresswoman calls on DOJ to investigate Florida utility company over 'dark money' claims

Expand



FPL Crews from Florida Power & Light are ready to respond to power outages due to Tropical Storm Isaias. (Florida Power & Light)



By Associated Press and Jack DeMarco

July 30, 2022 at 10:40 am EDT

ORLANDO, Fla. — A U.S. congresswoman is asking the Department of Justice to investigate Florida Power & Light over claims that the utility used “dark money” to disguise sources of political funding and sway elections in Florida, as well as other allegations documented in recent news reports.

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Understanding monoclonal antibody therapy as another tool in the fight to prevent COVID-19 for certain...

By **ASTRAZENECA**

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[Read: Mega Millions: Winning ticket for \\$1.28B jackpot sold in Illinois](#)

The split between the owner of Matrix, the Alabama consulting firm, and his former employees has led to litigation.

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[Read: Hot and dry conditions this weekend, temps reaching near record highs](#)

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[Read: Volusia County reports first confirmed case of monkeypox, 7 cases confirmed across Central Florida](#)

Matrix and FPL have not been accused of wrongdoing in the investigations.

The Associated Press contributed to this article.

Rep. Kathy Castor calls for federal probe into Florida utility

The congresswoman wrote that recent reports in Florida had "exposed apparent corruption."

Author: **Associated Press**

Published: **3:21 PM EDT July 29, 2022**

Updated: **5:47 PM EDT July 29, 2022**



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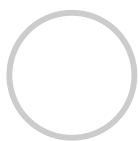
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FEATURED BY 

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Prosecutors seek info on money transfer in ‘ghost’ candidate case

The probe is examining who paid for thousands of political mail advertisements to promote sham no-party candidates in three contested Florida races.

<



In this March 18, 2021, photo, former Sen. Frank Artiles leaves the Turner Guilford Knight Correctional Center in Miami. Artiles posted \$5,000 bail after facing charges relating to a 2020 Senate District.

By **Ana Ceballos** *Times/Herald Tallahassee Bureau*

Published Yesterday

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Creating Collective Confidence Along the Coast: Coastal Impact Windows

By *Renewal by Andersen*

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The case is scheduled for its next hearing on Sept. 1.

Iris Rollins

From: Beatrice Balboa <beatricebalboa@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, August 1, 2022 8:53 AM
To: Ellen Plendl
Subject: more electrical infrastructure outages?
Attachments: Blown transformer in Pembroke Pines causes power outage - NewsBreak.pdf

Monday 1 August 2022 0900 hours

Ellen Plendl
Regulatory Consultant
Florida Public Service Commission
Office of Consumer Assistance & Outreach
1-800-342-3552 (phone)
1-800-511-0809 (fax)

To whom it may concern,

I am writing to express my ongoing deepest disappointment that the electrical utility industrial sector continues to mismanage the electrical infrastructure throughout the State of Florida despite given unfettered access to elected and appointed government officials and agencies in the furtherance of policies and agendas in pursuing poorly thought out sourcing of energy resources and a decidedly anti-consumer stance with the rate-paying public across the board. Ongoing investigations continue undercover the long-standing practices by these captains of industry to extract ever larger fees and electrical rates to aggrandize their oversized ambitions by direct and indirect political arrangements in backrooms.

The attached documentation clearly indicates the lengths that the electrical utility industrial sector continues to pursue to ensure their monolithic position in the electricity sector in the State of Florida and letting the electrical infrastructure system put the ratepayers in harm's way..

Please place these observations and articles in the appropriate docket to underscore the overwhelmingly calculated cold-hearted manner that these captains seem to influence the very elected/appointed representatives that should, instead, be seeking to comfort their constituents day-to-day hardships to pay for the aggrandizement of these out sized economic sectors.

Thank you for your time in these matters and hope to hear from you soon.

Sincerely,
Beatrice Balboa
1010 South Ocean Boulevard, Unit 1008
Pompano Beach, FL 33062-6631
USA

Pembroke Pines, FL

Blown transformer in Pembroke Pines causes power outage

By David Fleshler, South Florida Sun-Sentinel

 South Florida Sun Sentinel 12 hours ago



A double shooting at a basketball game has Pembroke Pines police releasing surveillance video they hope will lead them to the gunman Wayne K. Roustan/South Florida Sun-Sentinel/TNS

A blown transformer in Pembroke Pines caused a power outage Sunday evening, the Pembroke Pines Police Department said.

The incident happened near Taft Street and NW 95th Avenue, according to a tweet from the police department.

Police officers and firefighters are on the scene to prevent injuries from downed power lines.

Iris Rollins

From: Beatrice Balboa <beatricebalboa@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, August 3, 2022 7:39 AM
To: Ellen Plendl
Subject: more ongoing electrical utility industrial sector electoral intervention and machinations leading to anti-rate payer activities
Attachments: Matt Dixon on Twitter_ It is frequented by lawmakers generally supportive of FPL's political agenda Drinks are free, but the lawmakers we spoke to said they pay to avoid violating the gift ban State records show FPL doesn't have a liquor license,.pdf; Florida Power & Light Hosts Exclusive, Invitation-Only Lounge for Legislators and Lobbyists - Worabia Trends.pdf; FPL.pdf; Florida Power & Light operates an exclusive, invite-only lounge for lawmakers and lobbyists - POLITICO.pdf

Wednesday 3 August 2022 0730 hours

Ellen Plendl
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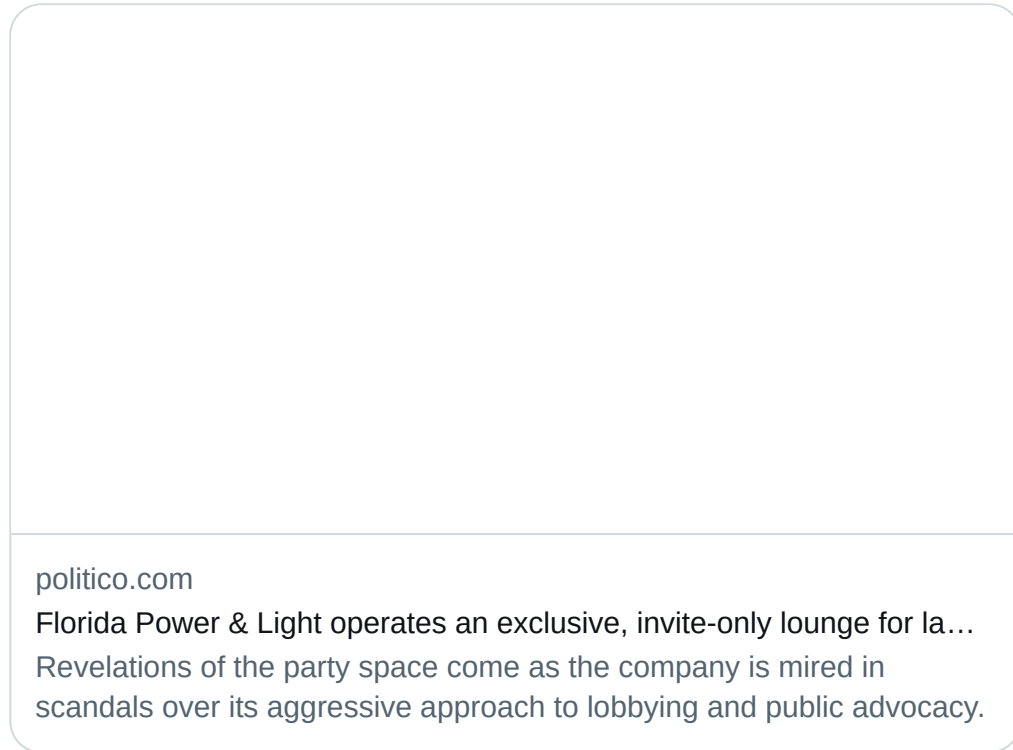
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Pompano Beach, FL 33062-6631
USA

Matt Dixon @Mdixon55 · 23h

Tucked into downtown Tallahassee, a stone's throw from the Capitol, one of Florida's most politically powerful companies runs a little known invite-only bar frequented by lobbyists and lawmakers



8

149

178

Matt Dixon

@Mdixon55

It is frequented by lawmakers generally supportive of FPL's political agenda

Drinks are free, but the lawmakers we spoke to said they pay to avoid violating the gift ban

State records show FPL doesn't have a liquor license, which is needed to sell

FPL wouldn't address this

7:27 AM · Aug 2, 2022 · Twitter for iPhone

30 Retweets 2 Quote Tweets 98 Likes

Matt Dixon @Mdixon55 · 23h

Replying to @Mdixon55

Some noted other lobbying groups have spaces like this, and they do

But none are this swanky (need FPL swipe card to get in), or big, or run by a political behemoth facing months of scandal and scrutiny

2

8

57

Amanda Carpenter @amandacarpenter · 23h

Replying to @Mdixon55

Lol

1

Unity does not occur without accountability. @flakingbaking · 23h

Replying to @Mdixon55

What's the charge that they pay for the drinks since it is a private bar? 🤔

1

1

John M. Phillips @JohnPhillips · 22h

They probably tip and claim it's payment.

1

6

FFreniere @FFreniere · 22h

Replying to @Mdixon55

WTF

Sheila Hogan @janetracker · 22h

Replying to @Mdixon55

"They were granted anonymity to discuss the event space because they feared speaking out against the powerful company." Wow.

3

FFreniere @FFreniere · 22h

Replying to @Mdixon55

They. Don't. Care. If we know.

But you get more Yankee retirees coming down here, they're not gonna be so quiescent about accountability-free Republicans doing whatever the hell

they feel like doing.

Just sayin'.

1

3

[Show replies](#)

Nathan @HIOO74 · 20h

Replying to [@Mdixon55](#)

“Any applicable costs are paid for by NextEra Energy — not FPL customers,”.

But their money comes from the customers of said company, so how does that work?

2

betajack @BetancourtJack · 19h

Replying to [@Mdixon55](#)

Is there still honor among thieves or has that train sailed?

1

More Tweets

UNITED STATES

Florida Power & Light Hosts Exclusive, Invitation-Only Lounge for Legislators and Lobbyists

20 hours ago 8 Views 7 Min Read

“I’m invited to meetings and events in their offices and I follow the gift laws,” said state Rep. David Silvers (D-Lake Clarke Shores).

Florida Power & Light confirmed they are using the space after an inquiry by POLITICO.

“Like many other companies, trade associations and other organizations in Tallahassee, NextEra Energy, FPL’s parent company, pays for private meeting space in the city that is

used for internal and external company functions,” said Chris McGrath, a Florida Power spokesman. & Subuk.

“This space has been in use for several years and all external functions that are performed in this space are carried out in accordance with the current legislation.

“Any applicable costs are borne by NextEra Energy, not FPL customers,” he added.

The revelation of previously unknown partisanship comes as the company is embroiled in scandal over its aggressive approach to lobbying and public advocacy. Among the most recent revelations: The company tried to covertly influence state elections and created news sites to attack critics and advance its political agenda.

Six people who have visited the bar on more than one occasion describe it as one of the nicest places in the city centre, lined with high-end lounges catering to the political class. Still, the location of Florida Power & Light remains unknown to the general public.

Several people said it is frequented by powerful lawmakers and staff, many of whom are considered supporters of FPL's legislative agenda and are responsible for drafting legislation directly affecting Florida Power & Light. They were granted anonymity to discuss the event space for fear of going up against a powerful company. Some work on Florida Power & Light's contract lobbying team and are not authorized to speak to the media.

“That’s what it’s all about, it’s ‘Friends of the FPL Program’ who are invited,” said one person who has frequented the bar many times. “If you’re there, you’re probably already with them.”

State Rep. Anna Escaman (D-Orlando), one of FPL’s biggest critics, said the power company’s exclusive lounge raises concerns that Florida Power & Light is illegally influencing lawmakers and violating the state’s gift ban and open meetings laws, which Requires public notice. Assemblies when MPs discuss legislative business.

“I don’t understand why any power company would need a private, invitation-only lounge for lawmakers located next to the Florida Capitol,” Escaman said. “Not only could this be a serious violation of Sunshine Laws and the prohibition on legislative gifts, but it also raises our collective concern that FPL is using corrupt business practices to influence politicians, buy media outlets and undermine democracy.”

“There’s always an increase in utility rates for customers,” he added.

One lobbyist who has been to the bar many times describes the place as “a high-end fully stocked bar, a big TV, a fireplace, I think, plus leather couches and a mix of FPL staffers, lobbyists and legislators.” The bar itself is 1,278 square feet, and the space includes a separate 548-square-foot lounge and an additional outdoor bar, according to city plans for the building reviewed by POLITICO.

State Rep. Randy Fine (R-Palm Bay) said he has been to FPL’s bar, but disagrees that it is more attractive than other bars. According to him, this is a place where people mostly talk about politics in private.

“I’ve been there, yes, but there are a lot of groups that have similar things,” Fine said. “When you’re in Tallahassee and you want to meet people, your options are limited and extremely limited when it comes to talking about politics. If I want to talk about legislation, I can invite people to my office, but politics is different. You have to go to their offices.”

According to him, there is usually a container for guests to put money in and it “always pays”.

Florida Power & Light and its subsidiaries do not have an on-site liquor license, according to a spokesman for the Department of Business and Professional Regulation, which regulates state liquor licenses.

McGrath, the FPL spokesman, did not respond to follow-up questions about whether there is a policy or requirement to ensure visitors and others comply with Florida's gift ban, which prohibits lobbyists from providing drinks, food or entertainment to lawmakers or their staff. He also would not answer questions about whether FPL has a liquor license, which would be required to sell alcohol.

Some who were at the venue said they understand there is a conflict of interest when one of the state's political and lobbying giants serves drinks to elected officials at an invitation-only venue.

"You build the nicest bar downtown, bring lawmakers there personally to stock up and rely on the honor system of a publicly traded investor-owned utility and block the press and normal people from being there," said another person visiting. space.

One person said other companies have private spaces to host lawmakers, but none the size or scope of FPL's space, which

requires an employee to swipe to access the space. Ballard Partners' lobbying practice, for example, has a patio on a building it owns. The Florida Association of Realtors also has a place for people to gather. But those places don't require an access card, another said. Both locations are well known to lobbyists.

A series of leaked documents over the past few months have revealed how FPL affects both the political and media landscape. A report led by the Miami Herald, Orlando Sentinel and Floodlight revealed how consultants working closely with Florida Power & Light used shadow groups and money laundering to influence both state and local elections. The company also took a controlling stake in an online news

site it used to promote its agenda and defeat political opponents.

In at least one case, the power company had a private investigator follow a Florida Times-Union reporter who wrote several articles about FPL's parent company, NextEra Energy, trying to buy a local community-owned utility at a disadvantage.

Florida Power & Light has denied any wrongdoing related to the media reports, saying the work is the product of a consulting firm it employs that was the wrongdoer. But a quick succession of negative headlines is starting to take its toll. Investment firm Seaport Global downgraded NextEra from "buy" to "neutral," citing "increasing media scrutiny." And Rep. Kathy Castor, a Tampa Democrat, has asked the Justice Department to investigate Florida Power & Light for its efforts to influence state politics.

The company has long been influential in the state capitol.

Florida Power & Light introduced a bill, FL HB741 (22R), during the 2022 legislative session that would reduce and eventually eliminate payments to solar rooftop owners. Republican Gov. Ron DeSantis vetoed the bill after a separate energy company, Duke Energy Florida, supported a measure that would allow utilities to charge all customers the fixed costs of solar power. DeSantis said he expects the proposal to come back next session.

Opposition from utilities this year also helped stall a bill, FL SB920 (22R), that would have prevented utilities from charging customers to install electric vehicle charging stations. Gas station owners remain concerned that utilities are unfairly entering a growing market.

FPL strongly supported the 2019 legislation, along with other utilities, that would allow them to pay customers to shore up the power grid against storm surges. Legislators passed this bill. Earlier this year, utilities filed plans to seek \$24 billion over 10 years to replace poles and other grid-hardening work.

“If true, it would clearly give Florida Power & Light a huge advantage when it comes to reaching and influencing lawmakers,” said Ben Wilcox, Integrity Florida’s director of research from the FPL lounge. “It sounds like a new twist to Florida’s smoky past.”

“FPL has a secret bar used by lawmakers and lobbyists in Tallahassee, report says” via Steve Lemongello of the Orlando Sentinel — Politically powerful Florida Power & Light has a secret bar in Tallahassee offices that’s frequented by lobbyists and lawmakers. FPL denies any wrongdoing by employees and any role in covertly monitoring the journalist. **Joe Perkins**, Matrix’s founder, has blamed “rogue” now-former employees for any misdeeds. The report said that FPL’s bar, with a separate lounge and outdoor patio, is behind shutters on the third floor of its downtown Tallahassee offices, with no outward sign it’s owned by the company.

FLORIDA

Florida Power & Light operates an exclusive, invite-only lounge for lawmakers and lobbyists

Revelations of the party space come as the company is mired in scandals over its aggressive approach to lobbying and public advocacy.



Solar arrays help power the Florida Power & Light Solar Circuit and provide shade in the infield during a NASCAR Xfinity Series auto race at Daytona International Speedway, on Feb. 16, 2019, in Daytona Beach, Fla. | Phelan M. Ebenhack/AP Photo

By **MATT DIXON** and **BRUCE RITCHIE**

08/02/2022 04:30 AM EDT



TALLAHASSEE, Fla. — Consider it Tallahassee’s version of the fabled smoke-filled backroom.

Florida Power & Light, one of the state's most politically powerful companies, operates an event space located on the third floor of the company's \$2 million, 13,000 square foot downtown Tallahassee offices. The building is nondescript and includes no signs that would indicate it's owned by one of the largest power companies in the country. The third floor of the building, where the bar is located, has a series of large shutters that make its outdoor patio area impossible to see from the street level.

The exclusive lounge is used by company officials to host lobbyists and the lawmakers

"I have been invited to meetings and events at their offices and I follow the gift laws," said state Rep. David Silvers (D-Lake Clarke Shores).

Florida Power & Light confirmed they utilize the space following inquiries by POLITICO.

"Just like many other companies, trade associations and other organizations in Tallahassee, NextEra Energy, FPL's parent company, pays for a private meeting place in the city that's used for internal and external company functions," said Chris McGrath, a spokesperson for Florida Power & Light. "This space has been used for a number of years and all external functions conducted in the space are done in accordance with applicable laws."

"Any applicable costs are paid for by NextEra Energy — not FPL customers," he added.

Revelations of the party space, which has not previously been reported, come as the company is mired in scandals over its aggressive approach to lobbying and public advocacy. Among the most recent disclosures: The company tried to covertly influence state elections and set up news sites to attack critics and further its political agenda.

Six people who have visited the bar on multiple occasions describe it as one of the nicest venues in the city's downtown, which is lined with upscale lounges that cater to the political class. Yet Florida Power & Light's venue remains all-but unknown to the general public.

Several of the people said it's frequented by powerful lawmakers and staff, most of whom are considered backers of FPL's legislative agenda and are responsible for crafting legislation directly involving Florida Power & Light. They were granted anonymity to discuss the event space because they feared speaking out against the powerful company. Some work on Florida Power & Light's contract lobbying team and are not authorized to speak to the media.

"That's its purpose, it's the 'friends of the FPL program' that are invited," said one person who has attended the bar multiple times. "If you're there you probably are already with them."

State Rep. Anna Eskamani (D-Orlando), one of FPL's biggest critics, said the energy company's exclusive lounge raises concerns that Florida Power & Light is illicitly influencing lawmakers and violating the state's gift ban and open meetings laws, which require public notice of gatherings when lawmakers discuss legislative business.

“I don’t understand why any electricity company needs a private, invite-only lounge for lawmakers that is next to the Florida Capitol,” Eskamani said. “Not only could this be a serious violation of Sunshine Laws and the legislature gift ban, but it all feeds into our collective concern that FPL uses corrupt business practices to influence politicians, buy out media outlets, and undermine democracy.”

“All while increasing utility rates on consumers,” she added.

One lobbyist who has been to the bar on multiple occasions described the location as having a “high-end fully stocked bar, big TV, fireplace I believe, a bunch of plush leather couches and a mix of FPL employees, lobbyists and legislators.” The bar itself is 1,278 square feet, and the space includes a separate 548 square foot lounge and an additional outdoor bar, according to city blueprints of the building reviewed by POLITICO.

State Rep. Randy Fine (R-Palm Bay) said he has been to FPL’s bar but disagrees that it’s swankier than other bars. He said it’s just a place for people to talk mostly about politics in private.

“I have been there, yes, but there are lots of groups that have stuff like this,” Fine said. “When you are in Tallahassee and want to meet with folks, your options are limited and extremely limited to talk about politics. If I want to talk about legislation, I can invite people to my office, but it’s different with politics. You have to go to their offices.”

He said there is usually a container at the location for guests to slip in money, and he “always pays.”

Florida Power & Light and its affiliates don’t have a liquor license at the location, according to a spokesperson for the Department of Business and Professional Regulation, which regulates state liquor licenses.

McGrath, the FPL spokesman, did not respond to follow-up questions about whether there is a policy or requirement to ensure visitors and others adhere to Florida’s gift ban, which prohibits lobbyists from providing drinks, food or entertainment to

lawmakers or their staff. He also would not answer questions about whether FPL has a liquor license, which would be needed to sell liquor.

Some of those who have been to the location said they understand there is the appearance of a conflict of interest with one of the state's political and lobbying giants providing drinks to elected officials in an invite-only location.

“You build the nicest bar in downtown, privately bring legislators in there to a stocked bar and rely on the honor system with a publicly traded investor owned utility and block press and normal people from being there,” said a second person people who has visited the space.

One person said that other companies have private venues to host lawmakers, but none with the size or scope of FPL's venue, which requires an employee swipe card to access the space. The Ballard Partners lobbying practice, for example, has a patio area on a building it owns. The Florida Association of Realtors also has a location where people gather. But those venues don't require a swipe card to access, the second person said. Both of the locations are well known to lobbyists.

Over the past few months, a series of leaked documents have revealed how FPL influences both the political and media landscapes. Reporting led by the Miami Herald, Orlando Sentinel and Floodlight have shown how consultants that work closely with Florida Power & Light [used shadow groups](#) and waves of money to influence both state and local elections. The company also took a [controlling stake in an online news site](#) that it used to help boost its priorities and bash political opponents.

In at least one case, the energy company had a private investigator [follow a Florida Times-Union reporter](#) who had written several articles framing FPL parent company NextEra Energy's attempt to buy a local community-owned utility in an unfavorable light.

Florida Power & Light has denied any wrongdoing connected to the media reports and said that the work is the product of a consulting firm it employs that had gone rogue. But the rapid succession of negative headlines is starting to take a toll. Investment firm Seaport Global downgraded its assessment of NextEra from “buy” to “neutral,” citing “growing media scrutiny.” And Tampa Democratic Rep. Kathy Castor has asked the Department of Justice to investigate Florida Power & Light over its attempts to influence the state’s politics.

The company has long been influential in the state Capitol.

Florida Power & Light drafted legislation, FL HB741 (22R), during the 2022 legislative session that would have reduced and eventually eliminated payments to solar rooftop owners. Republican Gov. Ron DeSantis vetoed the bill because of language a separate energy company, Duke Energy Florida, supported in the measure that would allow utilities to charge all customers for costs imposed by rooftop solar. DeSantis said he expects the proposal to return next session.

Opposition from utilities this year also helped stall a bill, FL SB920 (22R), that would have prevented utilities from charging customers for installing electric vehicle charging stations. Gas station owners remain worried about utilities having an unfair entry into the burgeoning market.

FPL strongly backed 2019 legislation, along with other utilities, that allows them to charge customers for fortifying the electrical grid against storms. Lawmakers passed

that legislation. Utilities earlier this year filed plans seeking \$24 billion over 10 years for replacing poles and other grid hardening activities.

“If this is true, it would obviously give Florida Power & Light a big advantage when it comes to access and influence with lawmakers,” said Ben Wilcox, research director with Integrity Florida of the FPL lounge. “It sounds like a new twist on the smoke-filled backroom deal-making of Florida’s past.”

Iris Rollins

From: Ellen Plendl
Sent: Wednesday, August 3, 2022 7:44 AM
To: 'Beatrice Balboa'
Subject: Consumer Inquiry - Florida Power & Light Company
Attachments: Re: ongoing electrical utility industrial sector machinations; ongoing electrical utility industrial sector electoral intervention and machinations leading to anti-rate payer activities; more electrical infrastructure outages?; more ongoing electrical utility industrial sector electoral intervention and machinations leading to anti-rate payer activities

Ms. Beatrice Balboa
beatricebalboa@gmail.com

Dear Ms. Balboa:

This is in response to your July 29, July 30, August 1 and August 3 emails to the Florida Public Service Commission (FPSC) regarding Florida Power & Light Company (FPL).

We will add your feedback and the articles you shared to our public record.

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

Sincerely,

Ellen Plendl
Regulatory Consultant
Florida Public Service Commission
Office of Consumer Assistance & Outreach
1-800-342-3552 (phone)
1-800-511-0809 (fax)