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BEFORE THE
FLORIDA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

In the matter of:

DOCKET NO. 20220067-GU

Petition for rate increase by Florida
Public Utilities Company, Florida Division
of Chesapeake Utilities Corporation,
Florida Public Utilities Company - Fort
Meade, and Florida Public Utilities
Company - Indiantown Division.

_____ /

PROCEEDINGS: SERVICE HEARING

COMMISSIONERS
PARTICIPATING: CHAIRMAN ANDREW GILES FAY
COMMISSIONER GARY F. CLARK
COMMISSIONER GABRIELLA PASSIDOMO

DATE: Wednesday, August 31, 2022

TIME: Commenced: 2:00 p.m.
Concluded: 2:15 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 BETH KEATING, ESQUIRE, Gunster Law Firm, 215
3 South Monroe Street, Suite 601, Tallahassee, Florida
4 32301; appearing on behalf of Florida Public Utilities
5 Company (FPUC).

6 RICHARD GENTRY, PUBLIC COUNSEL; PATRICIA A.
7 CHRISTENSEN, ESQUIRE, OFFICE OF PUBLIC COUNSEL, c/o The
8 Florida Legislature, 111 West Madison Street, Room 812,
9 Tallahassee, Florida 32399-1400, appearing on behalf of
10 the Citizens of the State of Florida (OPC.).

11 RYAN SANDY and JENNIFER CRAWFORD, ESQUIRES,
12 FPSC General Counsel's Office, 2540 Shumard Oak
13 Boulevard, Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0850, appearing on
14 behalf of the Florida Public Service Commission (Staff).

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

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

2 CHAIRMAN FAY: All right. Good afternoon. I
3 have two o'clock. We will get started for this
4 afternoon's service hearing for Florida Public
5 Utilities Company rate case.

6 My name is Andrew Fay. I am the Chair of the
7 Public Service Commission. And I also have with us
8 hear today Commissioner Gabriella Passidomo and
9 Commissioner Gary Clark. If Commissioner Passidomo
10 or Commissioner Clark would like to address the
11 body, you can do so now.

12 Commissioner Passidomo, you are recognized.

13 MS. PASSIDOMO: All right. Thank you,
14 Chairman Fay.

15 I just wanted to take a brief opportunity to
16 thank these customers that have signed up to call
17 in. In addition to those customers who have given
18 us written correspondence, we evaluate those just
19 as equally, and those are all put into the docket
20 file and, you know, we review all of those, so
21 thank to you those customers that wrote in as well.

22 CHAIRMAN FAY: Great. Thank you, Commissioner
23 Passidomo.

24 Next we will move on to the notice.

25 Mr. Sandy.

1 MR. SANDY: Good afternoon, Commissioners.

2 By notice issued on August 12th of this year,
3 this time and place has been set for a customer
4 service hearing in Docket No. 20220067. The
5 purpose of the hearing is set forth more fully in
6 the notice.

7 CHAIRMAN FAY: Great. Thank you.

8 At this time, we will move to appearances.

9 Florida Public Utilities Company, Ms. Keating,
10 you are recognized.

11 MS. KEATING: Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman and
12 Commissioners.

13 My name is Beth Keating, and I am an attorney
14 with the Gunster Law Firm. I am the lawyer here
15 today that's helping Florida Public Utilities
16 through this case.

17 I would also like to enter an appearance for
18 Mr. Mike Cassel, who is the Vice-President of
19 Regulatory and Government Affairs at FPUC. And he
20 also has a team of customer affairs specialists
21 that are going to be available to answer any
22 questions that customers may have, and be sure to
23 reach out to address any concerns they may have.

24 Thank you.

25 CHAIRMAN FAY: Great. Thank you, Ms. Keating.

1 Next we will move to the Office of Public
2 Counsel.

3 MS. CHRISTENSEN: Oh, good morning -- or good
4 afternoon, Commissioners. Patty Christensen with
5 the Office of Public Counsel. And I would also
6 like to put in an appearance for Mr. Richard
7 Gentry, the Public Counsel.

8 CHAIRMAN FAY: Okay. Great. Thank you, Ms.
9 Christensen.

10 Next we will move on to an over -- oh, staff,
11 go ahead.

12 MR. SANDY: Oh, this is Ryan Sandy on behalf
13 of staff. I have with me this afternoon Jennifer
14 Crawford.

15 I would also like to put in an appearance for
16 Commission Advisor, Mary Anne Helton, and General
17 Counsel, Keith Hetrick.

18 CHAIRMAN FAY: Great. Thank you, Mr. Sandy.

19 Next we will move to an overview of the
20 proceeding. I first want to thank the customers
21 that are taking the time to participate in this
22 meeting today. As I mentioned before, this --
23 these service hearings are designed to get customer
24 feedback and concerns and comments related to the
25 utility's request. Just out of clarification,

1 there will be a technical evidentiary hearing that
2 will take place in October regarding this rate
3 case.

4 Just for the customers to have some contacts,
5 if needed, FPUC customer service representatives
6 are available today at this time, but also by phone
7 at 1(800)524-1495, and that's for normal business
8 hours, 8:00 to 5:00.

9 The Commission also has a contact for
10 customers if needed. Sevini Guffey, who is in our
11 Economics division, she can be reached by email at
12 S-G-U-F-F-E-Y @psc.state.fl.us, or by phone at
13 (850)413-6204.

14 This official hearing will be transcribed as
15 part of the record in this docket. And for those
16 purposes, if you filled out a form on-line, you
17 have been sworn in. If not, I will make sure that
18 we swear you in before you provide your comments
19 today.

20 Just a reminder that as sworn in, there is the
21 opportunity for cross-examination for those
22 speaking today, which essentially means that the
23 parties and/or Commissioners may ask questions
24 based on your comments.

25 A few quick things for the speakers today.

1 Just, if you are not speaking, keep your phone on
2 mute for purposes of not interrupting anybody else.
3 Try to not use speakerphone on your device as we
4 can get an echo. And if you are watching the live
5 feed, turn the volume down on that life feed just
6 so we don't get a feedback during your time to
7 speak. And if for some reason you are
8 disconnected, call back, we will make sure to put
9 you back on the line to provide your comments.

10 One other opportunity for customers, if they
11 would like, you can submit your comments in
12 writing, as Commissioner Passidomo mentioned. So
13 in addition to today's opportunity, the Commission
14 will take in written comments for the record in
15 this docket. They can be mailed or emailed to the
16 Commission. If you choose to email them, send them
17 to clerk@psc.state.fl.us, and that's clerk
18 C-L-E-R-K, at P-S-C- dot F-L dot U-S. And just
19 make sure to reference this docket, which is docket
20 20220067.

21 Either way, if the comments are made in
22 writing or you present them this afternoon, they
23 will be taken into account for review on this
24 docket when the decision is made.

25 With that, I think we will move on to opening

1 statements.

2 Ms. Keating, you are recognized if you would
3 like to punt to Mr. Cassel to provide his opening.

4 MS. KEATING: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I
5 would like to punt.

6 CHAIRMAN FAY: Perfect.

7 Mr. Cassel, you are recognized.

8 MR. CASSEL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman and
9 Commissioners, and especially thank you to our
10 customers who are taking the time to dial in today.
11 We value and appreciate your comments a great deal.

12 I am Mike Cassel. I am the Vice-President of
13 Government and Regulatory Affairs for Chesapeake,
14 which is the parent company of Florida Public
15 Utilities, as well as the Fort Meade and Indiantown
16 divisions of the Florida Public Utilities. I have
17 been with the company 14 years, and like you, I am
18 a Floridan.

19 We are here today because our natural gas
20 companies have requested a rate increase. We
21 believe the current rates are no longer sufficient
22 for us to make the investments necessary to
23 continue providing reliable service that we have
24 been providing.

25 We are also requesting the ability to

1 consolidate our business units, and that's to
2 include the rate structure. And this will enable
3 us to simplify our operations and enhance the
4 service and responsiveness in the most efficient
5 manner possible.

6 The recent rate relief that we requested has
7 been as long ago as 13 years. And since that time,
8 we have managed our costs well, but we have also
9 grown and expanded into areas that previously had
10 no access to natural gas whatsoever. And most
11 notably that being Nassau saw and Escambia
12 Counties.

13 At that same time, we have been able to focus
14 on customers by driving improvements and customer
15 service and communications. And as a result, we
16 have made significant capital investments to meet
17 that demand at our customers' request.

18 Right now, we own about 3,000 miles of natural
19 gas main in the state, and we serve roughly 92,000
20 customers across the whole of Florida. There is
21 nothing more than important than our customers'
22 safety, and because of that, we have made
23 improvements, our training programs, our technology
24 specifically related to cybersecurity and the
25 protection of our customers' personal information.

1 In addition to that, our commitment to our
2 customers is to continue increasing that
3 engagement, and making it the investment such that
4 it is easier to do business with us. And our
5 accountability starts with a commitment to listen
6 and learn from you, our customers, so we fully
7 understand what your energy needs are and we can
8 better assist you. And we will work daily to
9 ensure that that service reflects the attitude that
10 you get from us.

11 So with us today is Todd Kelley, Manager of
12 Customer Care, and he is available to make sure
13 that any questions that come up will be addressed
14 today through his team. And otherwise, I thank you
15 very much for your time.

16 CHAIRMAN FAY: Great. Thank you, Mr. Cassel.

17 Next we will move to the Office of Public
18 Counsel. Ms. Christensen.

19 MS. CHRISTENSEN: Okay. Just a moment.

20 Good afternoon. I am glad to be with you this
21 morning, and I just wanted to say I appreciate all
22 the customers who took time out today to speak with
23 the Commission, to tell us about your quality of
24 service experience.

25 The Office of Public Counsel represents the

1 citizens in this base rate case, and we have hired
2 two expert witnesses to review the rate case
3 request by FPUC. They've asked for an increase in
4 revenues of approximately 24 million. Based on our
5 expert witnesses' review, we've determined that
6 they should get no more than 7.8 million in revenue
7 increase, and that is with an ROE that we are
8 recommending of no more than 9.25.

9 Again, I thank everybody who took time out to
10 call in today and to give us your feedback on the
11 quality of service and experience with the company.

12 Thank you.

13 CHAIRMAN FAY: Great. Thank you, Ms.
14 Christensen.

15 Next we will move on to the customer testimony
16 portion of this hearing. I will call a customer by
17 name, and at that time you can address the
18 Commission. If you could, just state your address
19 and whether you are a customer of public -- Florida
20 Public Utilities Florida Division of Chesapeake,
21 the Indiantown division or Fort Meade at that time.

22 So with that, I will move on to the customer,
23 the one customer that we have today for this
24 hearing, and I believe it's Ms. Bouloute. Danielle
25 Bouloute. Okay. It sounds like Ms. Bouloute is

1 not on the line.

2 Do we have any other customers on the line at
3 this time that want to participate?

4 Okay. With that, let me just double check.
5 Can we see if anybody is on the line, or no?

6 MR. MARSTON: I see three callers
7 unidentified?

8 CHAIRMAN FAY: Okay. With that, then, no
9 other speakers. We will -- and no other comments
10 from the Commissioners.

11 With that, we will see this meeting the
12 adjourned.

13 Thank you so much.

14 (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; and that this transcript constitutes a true transcription of my notes of said proceedings.

I FURTHER CERTIFY that I am not a relative, employee, attorney or counsel of any of the parties, nor am I a relative or employee of any of the parties' attorney or counsel connected with the action, nor am I financially interested in the action.

DATED this 12th day of September, 2022.



DEBRA R. KRICK
NOTARY PUBLIC
COMMISSION #HH31926
EXPIRES AUGUST 13, 2024