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BEFORE THE
FLORIDA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

In the Matter of:

DOCKET NO. 20220069-GU

Petition for rate increase
by Florida City Gas.

_____ /

PROCEEDINGS: SERVICE HEARING

COMMISSIONERS
PARTICIPATING: CHAIRMAN ANDREW GILES FAY
COMMISSIONER MIKE LA ROSA
COMMISSIONER GABRIELLA PASSIDOMO

DATE: Wednesday, September 21, 2022

TIME: Commenced: 9:30 a.m.
Concluded: 10:20 a.m.

PLACE: Melbourne Hilton
200 Rialto Place
Melbourne, Florida

REPORTED BY: DEBRA R. KRICK
Court Reporter

PREMIER REPORTING
112 W. 5TH AVENUE
TALLAHASSEE, FLORIDA
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4 Boulevard, Juno Beach, Florida 33408; BETH KEATING,
5 ESQUIRE, Gunster Law Firm, 215 South Monroe Street,
6 Suite 601, Tallahassee, Florida 32301; appearing on
7 behalf of Florida City Gas (FCG).

8 RICHARD GENTRY, PUBLIC COUNSEL; CHARLES
9 REHWINKEL, DEPUTY PUBLIC COUNSEL; MARY ALI WESSLING,
10 ESQUIRE, OFFICE OF PUBLIC COUNSEL, c/o The Florida
11 Legislature, 111 West Madison Street, Room 812,
12 Tallahassee, Florida 32399-1400, appearing on behalf of
13 the Citizens of the State of Florida (OPC.).

14 WALTER TRIERWEILER and MATTHEW JONES,
15 ESQUIRES, FPSC General Counsel's Office, 2540 Shumard
16 Oak Boulevard, Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0850,
17 appearing on behalf of the Florida Public Service
18 Commission (Staff).

19 KEITH HETRICK, GENERAL COUNSEL; MARY ANNE
20 HELTON, DEPUTY GENERAL COUNSEL, Florida Public Service
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22 Florida 32399-0850, Advisor to the Florida Public
23 Service Commission.

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

2 COMMISSIONER LA ROSA: All right. Good
3 morning. It's always nice to see how all the magic
4 happens, and make sure everything works. It's
5 certainly thank you to our technology team.

6 This morning is Wednesday, September 21st, and
7 welcome to the Florida City Gas service hearing. I
8 am Commissioner Mike La Rosa. I am joined with our
9 Chairman, Chairman Fay, here on the tron to my
10 right, and Commissioner Passidomo here to my left.
11 Thank you all that have come out today to talk to
12 us and tell us a little bit about your utility.

13 I would like to pass it over just a quick
14 introduction to Chairman Fay. Chairman, can you
15 hear us?

16 COMMISSIONER FAY: I can hear you. Can you
17 hear me?

18 COMMISSIONER LA ROSA: Yes, loud and clear.

19 CHAIRMAN FAY: Great. Thank you, Commissioner
20 La Rosa.

21 Just real quickly, I want to thank all the
22 customers for taking time to be a part of this
23 process. I want to thank our IT and technical team
24 for making sure I can be a part of this. As you
25 know, I am awaiting baby here in Tallahassee, and

1 no news to report here yet, but I appreciate all
2 the help with our team and for you making sure this
3 meeting runs smoothly, and so with that, thank you.

4 COMMISSIONER LA ROSA: Awesome. Well, thank
5 you, and we feel your presence in the room. I feel
6 like you are right next to me, even though I am
7 only watching, so thank you, Chairman.

8 Commissioner Passidomo.

9 MS. PASSIDOMO: All right. Can you hear me?
10 Thank you, Commissioner La Rosa. Is this on?

11 COMMISSIONER LA ROSA: I can hear you.

12 MS. PASSIDOMO: Can you at least hear? Can
13 you hear me? I will look at you.

14 I just want to take an opportunity to thank
15 those customers that have taken time out of their
16 morning to spend with us, and also just want to
17 briefly welcome. What a privilege it is to have
18 Senator Mayfield here. So really, really grateful
19 that she's taken the time out of her morning to
20 join us as well. So that I appreciate everyone who
21 signed up.

22 COMMISSIONER LA ROSA: Awesome. Well, thank
23 you. We will jump right into business.

24 Staff counsel, will you please read the
25 notice?

1 MR. TRIERWEILER: Good morning. By notice
2 issued on August 24, 2022, this time and place has
3 been set for a customer service hearing in Docket
4 No. 20220069-GU. The purpose of the hearing is
5 more fully laid out in the notice.

6 COMMISSIONER LA ROSA: Thank you.

7 At this time we take appearances from counsel,
8 starting with FCG.

9 MR. BAKER: Good morning, everyone.

10 This is Joel Baker, appearing on behalf of
11 Florida City Gas, and I would also like to enter an
12 appearance for Christopher Wright and Beth Keating
13 of the Gunster Law Firm.

14 COMMISSIONER LA ROSA: Office of Public
15 Counsel.

16 MS. WESSLING: Thank you, and good morning.

17 This is Ali Wessling with Office of Public
18 Counsel. And I would also like to enter an
19 appearance for Richard Gentry and Charles
20 Rehwinkel.

21 COMMISSIONER LA ROSA: Staff counsel.

22 MR. TRIERWEILER: Walt Trierweiler for
23 Commission staff.

24 COMMISSIONER LA ROSA: Thank you, counsel.

25 Now let's begin. We begin by thanking

1 everyone for taking the time to be here today. We
2 certainly appreciate your interest in the petition
3 filed by FCG.

4 As I mentioned, this hearing is designed so
5 that we can hear from you directly, the customer.
6 So it's your opportunity to express your thoughts,
7 your concerns and comments related to the utility's
8 request. In December, there will be a more
9 technical hearing where the Commissioner will take
10 up the substance and the evidence of the case. If
11 you would like to speak with an FCG customer
12 service representative, a representative is present
13 here today to speak to you. They can be reached by
14 calling (305)835-3645. Again, that's (305)835-3645
15 from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday,
16 and, of course, here at the hearing today.

17 Emily Knoblauch from our Engineering division
18 here at the PSC is also here today. She can be
19 reached at E-K-N-O-B-L-A-U @psc.state.fl.us.
20 Again, that's E-K-N-O-B-L-A-U @psc.state.fl.us, or
21 by calling (850)413-6632. That's (850)413-6632.
22 Commission technical and legal staff is also here
23 present.

24 This is an official hearing that you will --
25 that will be transcribed and become part of the

1 official record. As such, I will swear you in
2 before you share any comments. Please note that
3 your comments will also be subject to
4 cross-examination. That is, you may be asked
5 either by parties or by the Commission.

6 We appreciate your professional nature of the
7 proceedings that will take place here in front of
8 you, and of course, be courteous and professional
9 at all times.

10 In addition to sharing your comments here, you
11 may also share your comments and any official
12 remarks that you may have to the Commission's
13 consideration via mail or via email. To contract
14 -- excuse me, to contact the PSC by mail, you can
15 find a pre-addressed comment card for download on
16 our website. If would you like to email, please
17 email the Commission Clerk at
18 clerk@psc.state.fl.us. Again, that's
19 clerk@psc.state.fl.us, and reference Docket
20 20220069-GU.

21 If during the course of the hearing customers
22 have said, you know, what they ultimately believe
23 in and what their thoughts are and you agree with
24 someone, please feel free to say ditto or like
25 comments. Of course, we like to keep everything

1 professional and keep things as comfortable as
2 possible.

3 Let's move on to opening statements, and we
4 will start here with FCG, please present a brief
5 opening statement.

6 MR. BAKER: Thank you, Commissioner La Rosa.
7 For our opening remarks, I will hand it over to
8 Kurt Howard, the General Manager of Florida City
9 Gas.

10 COMMISSIONER LA ROSA: Thank you.

11 MR. HOWARD: Good morning. And thank you,
12 Commissioners and Mr. Chairman, for conducting this
13 hearing, and thank you to the customers who have
14 shown up this morning and taken time out of your
15 morning.

16 My name is Kurt Howard. And as the General
17 Manager of Florida City Gas, I would express my
18 gratitude to serve you.

19 Florida City Gas, or FCG, is a regulated
20 utility, which means the Public Service Commission
21 oversees our rates and operations to ensure that we
22 deliver safe and reliable service.

23 FCG has requested Commission approval of new
24 base rates. The need for this proceeding is driven
25 primarily by the investments the company has made

1 to support new growth and maintain exceptional
2 service reliability. It's been about five years
3 since FCG's last rate proceeding, so, of course,
4 inflation is also a factor.

5 Everyone has been facing increased costs
6 lately, and we know no one likes to pay higher
7 prices. At FCG, we work hard to keep our
8 operations efficient, while making sure to deliver
9 you safe and reliable service. We are proposing a
10 four-year plan that is designed to provide
11 stability and certainty for our customers. After a
12 single necessary increase in February of 2023, the
13 plan would keep base rates flat until at least
14 January of 2027.

15 You can find more information about our plan
16 on-line, but today is about hearing from you. Some
17 customers have told us the value of the service we
18 provide, and we are grateful for their support, but
19 we also want to hear about ways we can improve our
20 service and better serve you.

21 As always, we are here to support our
22 customers, and if you need assistance with your
23 service, we have representatives standing by to
24 answer any questions or address any concerns.

25 On behalf of everyone at FCG, I want to thank

1 you for your participation, and we look forward to
2 hearing from you.

3 COMMISSIONER LA ROSA: Thank you.
4 Office of Public Counsel.

5 MS. WESSLING: Thank you.

6 And again, this is Ali Wessling with the
7 Office of Public Counsel. And for those of you who
8 are not familiar with our office, the Office of
9 Public Counsel was created by the Legislature, and
10 we represent the customers of Florida City Gas.

11 We are here today because Florida City Gas has
12 filed a request for a variety of changes to their
13 current rates, including an increase in base rates
14 and charges sufficient to generate a total base
15 rate revenue increase of \$29 million, an
16 incremental base rate revenue increase of \$22
17 million, a 10.75 return on equity, or profit, an
18 equity ratio of 59.6 percent, the implementation of
19 something called a reserve surplus amortization
20 mechanism, or RSAM, approval of artificially
21 derived RSAM facilitating depreciation rates,
22 permission for a mechanism to a just base rates in
23 the event that tax laws change during or after the
24 conclusion of this proceeding, as well as several
25 other requests.

1 We have intervened for you in this case, and
2 we have two expert witnesses who are going to
3 testify on your behalf. We are going to contest
4 those areas of this request that we do not feel are
5 reasonable or prudent. We will challenge the
6 overall level of the rate increase, and it's our
7 experts' opinion that the company is asking for
8 four-and-a-half times what they need in order to
9 provide good service. Our expert has calculated
10 that the company needs no more than \$4.8 million,
11 instead of the \$22 million that they have
12 requested.

13 One of the largest areas where we will focus
14 is on the RSAM. We and our experts believe this is
15 not warranted or reasonable. We also believe that
16 the requested profit is far too high, and our
17 experts will be recommending a much more well
18 reasoned and appropriate profit rate of 9.5 percent
19 for the Commission's consideration.

20 We also believe that the equity ratio, which
21 is the basis upon which the company's profits are
22 determined, is far too high, and our experts will
23 provide testimony to support a more suitable equity
24 ratio that is close to what the company has
25 operated with just fine for 20 years.

1 There are several other aspects of Florida
2 City Gas' request that we will be taking issue with
3 and providing testimony about.

4 Also, please keep in mind that the law
5 requires Florida City Gas to prove that what they
6 are asking for is reasonable and prudent. And we
7 are going to challenge all of those areas that we
8 do not feel are reasonable and prudent.

9 Now, today is your hearing. This is not the
10 Public Service Commission's hearing, my hearing,
11 FCG's hearing. This is the customers' hearing.
12 And we ask you that please take advantage of this
13 opportunity. Please speak up. Tell the
14 Commissioners how you feel about Florida City Gas,
15 whether that's good or bad. You can talk about the
16 quality of FCG service, how you feel about the rate
17 increase, et cetera. Please use your voice to
18 participate, and we all look forward to hearing
19 from you.

20 Thank you.

21 COMMISSIONER LA ROSA: Thank you, Ms.
22 Wessling.

23 We will move on now to the customer testimony
24 portion of the service hearing.

25 I first would like to introduce and recognize

1 Senator Mayfield. Senator, it is a pleasure to be
2 here. I don't know if we are officially in your
3 district. I know we are certainly nearby, and we
4 appreciate you coming out and sharing some comments
5 with us today, so thank you.

6 SENATOR MAYFIELD: Okay. I don't know if it's
7 on.

8 COMMISSIONER LA ROSA: Yeah, there you go.
9 Loud and clear.

10 SENATOR MAYFIELD: In all these mics, how they
11 work and how they operate.

12 Thank you guys for coming. One, I did -- this
13 is my district. It's the heart of my district
14 actually, and so I wanted to thank you guys for
15 coming and taking the opportunity to hear what our
16 constituents have to say about Florida City Gas.

17 I am not here for one way or the other.
18 That's your job. You can make that decision on
19 what you think is the right thing to do, but I am
20 really here to listen to what my constituents have
21 to say on how the service is.

22 You know, we get -- we get constituents call
23 our office all the time on various issues, so it's
24 always good for elected officials to know firsthand
25 what those issues are so we can help them and

1 maneuver through the process when they do have
2 issues.

3 But thank you guys for coming. I know it's a
4 long way for you guys to come here and do it, but I
5 think it is a testament of the Public Service
6 Commission to actually come into the district where
7 the constituents are, instead of them driving to
8 Tallahassee, to hear and express their thoughts on
9 it. So thank you. Enjoy. Spend lot of money
10 while you are here. We need it, and let me know if
11 there is anything I can help you guys with.

12 COMMISSIONER LA ROSA: Thank you, Senator.
13 And thank you for your commitment and your service
14 to our state.

15 We will now move on to the customer portion.
16 I am just going to break down how this will work.

17 We will give each customer three minutes to
18 speak. Of course, I will let you finish your
19 thoughts and comments, and will try not to hold a
20 super hard line, but I certainly want to make sure
21 we give everyone the opportunity to speak today.

22 I have instructions in front of me that tell
23 me that there is a red light in front of you and a
24 yellow light in front of you. I don't know that
25 that's exactly true, but I will nod and give you a

1 heads-up as we get closer to time if that
2 ultimately becomes an issue during the time before
3 us.

4 The attorney for the Office of Public Counsel,
5 Ali Wessling, will call your name when it is your
6 turn to speak in the order in which you signed up.
7 She will call three names at a time. So the second
8 name we will have notice that they are next up in
9 line and be ready to go.

10 We will be swearing all of you in at the same
11 time. So I am going to ask for those of you who do
12 intend to testify before us today, if you could,
13 please stand and raise your right hand.

14 (Public speakers sworn by Commissioner La
15 Rosa.)

16 COMMISSIONER LA ROSA: Thank you.

17 With that, when you address the podium, please
18 state your full name, your address, where you live,
19 whether you are in the service territory, of
20 course, your comments for us today. And of course,
21 that will be transcribed in the official record.

22 Ms. Wessling, I would like to turn it over to
23 you for your comments.

24 MS. WESSLING: Thank you.

25 So the first three names that I have are Tim

1 Girard, Tim Zorc and John Newton. So Tim Girard
2 will be up first.

3 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I got a text from Mr.
4 Zorc, he is running a little late, but he will be
5 here about 10 minutes late.

6 MS. WESSLING: Okay. And is there a Tim
7 Girard?

8 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Mr. Girard is going to
9 enter a letter into the record. He was unable to
10 make it due to a business issue.

11 MS. WESSLING: So is there a John Newton here?

12 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Yes.

13 COMMISSIONER LA ROSA: Thank you for your
14 appearance, and you are recognized when you are
15 ready.

16 PUBLIC COMMENT

17 MR. NEWTON: Thank you. I am John Newton.
18 Good morning.

19 MS. WESSLING: Good morning.

20 MR. NEWTON: I didn't have a prepared
21 statement or anything like that, but I was here
22 initially for one reason but I have another thought
23 as well.

24 I am a developer, a real estate developer,
25 project manager for various construction projects,

1 and I just experienced a very great relationship
2 working with City Gas in the construction of a
3 supermarket up in Rockledge, on Barton Boulevard.
4 Thrifty Specialty Produce & Meats. It's a very
5 unique grocery store in the fact that it has a
6 massive commercial kitchen preparing cooked foods,
7 bakery items, pastries, desserts all day long, for
8 the folks who buy the dough, as well as those who
9 want to eat in and dine in the grocery store.

10 It was a massive undertaking to renovate a
11 70-year-old building that had been rundown.
12 Winn-Dixie had abandoned it more than 15 years.

13 We worked real closely with Mike Rooney of
14 City Gas Company. He was exceptional to deal with.
15 We worked with the design team to come up with our
16 needs for gas appliances related to the overall AC
17 units that are roof-mounted to preheat the air so
18 we actually heat the air before it goes into the
19 grocery store so we don't have condensation.

20 We also have an unusually large number of
21 commercial gas appliances for the kitchen and deli,
22 and for sushi bar that is to be worked with, as
23 well gas water heaters.

24 I just wanted to say I found the service, the
25 attention to detail, exceptional. And when it came

1 ready for inspection, we dealt with several folks
2 at City Gas, one name I remember fondly, hated him
3 but loved him at the end, it was a gentleman named
4 Frasier, who told us our engineers didn't know what
5 they were doing when they came to locate our
6 shutoff valves and our emergency disconnects. And
7 we took his advice, changed everything, and it made
8 everything better, and allowed for the proper flow
9 of gas.

10 The day we opened the store, folks in the
11 store had been cooking all night the night before,
12 had every gas appliance running. And I come to
13 work about 7:30 that morning expecting the store to
14 open at 8:00, no gas, and everything was not
15 working.

16 And what had happened is -- I don't think
17 anybody anywhere in the system expected the gas for
18 the grocery store to be as great as it turned out
19 to be, because off outside of our building's
20 footprint, there is a gas line to the building,
21 they have a mechanical device in there that is sort
22 of an emergency shutoff. When it feels like too
23 much gas is going out the pipe, it sort of closes
24 off, and not send a warning to anybody, it just
25 stops. And that apparently happened because so

1 much gas was being used so suddenly.

2 I am going to tell you, before I even got
3 there, I knew about this, and I had folks from City
4 Gas on the phone in 10 minutes. There were folks
5 on-site by the time I got from Melbourne Beach
6 Atlantic to Rockledge. The problem was resolved
7 within an hour. They dug into the parking lot,
8 they replaced the valve, put it in place, and we
9 were going to by 10:30. It was amazing.

10 The food that got cooked before it went off
11 carried us through the hour-and-a-half or so down
12 time. I just want to say thank you to the folks
13 that did service us and handled that emergency
14 flawlessly, effortlessly, without complain, and did
15 everything. So I have accolades for the service
16 team and the people I have been dealing with on a
17 professional level for the gas company.

18 I do, however, have a concern how much the
19 rate increase is now that I see it when I am here.
20 I had notes seen this before, and I was not able to
21 get information quick enough on the phone. But
22 based on the volume of our gas use, this going to
23 be a tremendous cost difference in the store in
24 Rockledge, as well as the store in Palm Bay. And I
25 would be remiss if I didn't say 28 percent increase

1 in one year is a big one.

2 Yes, I, do believe everybody is entitled to
3 cost of living increases, and so forth, but having
4 just dealt with a massive cost of garbage increase
5 in Palm Bay, the other location, we it tripled when
6 the City decided to take a new service provider
7 over the old service provider, that ended up
8 costing go the store an extra \$24,000 a month.

9 You know, money -- money is money, and things
10 count. And I just hope that you guys can come up
11 with some type of a fair agreement somewhere
12 probably between what you are asking for, and would
13 be closer to CPI increases on an annual basis.

14 That's my thoughts. I don't have enough
15 information. There was quite a bit of information
16 of reasonable profit and things like that, and that
17 was interesting to hear. So I look forward to you
18 guys having a discussion, and hopefully working
19 something out that is reasonable and fair and
20 return this to reality.

21 Thank you.

22 COMMISSIONER LA ROSA: Thank you for your
23 testimony today.

24 MS. WESSLING: All right. The next three
25 names are Pedro Fernandez, John Thomas and Jackie

1 Hoskins. Are any of those here?

2 What was your name, sir?

3 MR. THOMAS: John Thomas.

4 MS. WESSLING: Okay. You are welcome to come
5 up.

6 PUBLIC COMMENT

7 MR. THOMAS: Mr. Virtual Chairman and
8 Commissioners, thank you for allowing me to speak
9 today.

10 May name is John Thomas, and I am the CEO of
11 the Home Builders and Contractors Association of
12 Florida's Space Coast. My observations are -- or
13 my comments are being made for personal -- personal
14 observations, because I have not had the
15 opportunity to speak to our board to get the board
16 to address this as an issue.

17 But I will tell you that I am here to comment
18 on my observations, and that is that Florida City
19 Gas is an outstanding industry and community
20 partner. They are extremely involved in our
21 association helping to further the cause of the
22 building and construction industry here in Brevard
23 County. And they are very involved in different
24 things we can do and community support, they
25 support our association, and as well as their

1 interaction with our industry partners similar to
2 Mr. Newton, who is a member of the HCBA, and I
3 think you will hear many comments similar to his as
4 far as their professionalism and they are just an
5 incredible organization to work with.

6 So I just wanted to make sure you were aware
7 of our support of Florida City Gas as a company,
8 and I wish I could speak to the rate increase from
9 the board perspective, but I hope you understand I
10 am not at liberty to do that. But I just want to
11 make you aware that they are involved in our
12 community and our industry here on the Space Coast.

13 COMMISSIONER LA ROSA: Great. Thank you for
14 your testimony.

15 MR. THOMAS: Absolutely. Thank you.

16 MS. WESSLING: All right. That -- I went
17 through the list. I will go back through. Is Mr.
18 Zorc here yet?

19 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: He is very close.

20 COMMISSIONER LA ROSA: And what we can do is
21 take a break for a few minutes, certainly allow him
22 to come, and we are good at that point. So, you
23 know, maybe just go through the list, and if no one
24 else is here, we will just take a, you know, an
25 intermediate break for a short time.

1 MS. WESSLING: Okay. So Mr. Girard, he is
2 going to submit written --

3 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I will go out in the
4 parking lot and I will make sure I get him here as
5 quick as possible.

6 MS. WESSLING: Mr. Zorc is on his way.

7 The other two names are Pedro Fernandez and --

8 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: He is not going to be
9 here today.

10 MS. WESSLING: Okay. And Jackie Hoskins.

11 And is there anyone else here who has not
12 signed up but wishes to speak as a customer?

13 COMMISSIONER LA ROSA: Okay. So then let's
14 take an informal recess for the time being and come
15 back.

16 MS. WESSLING: Thank you.

17 COMMISSIONER LA ROSA: Thank you.

18 (Brief recess.)

19 COMMISSIONER LA ROSA: All right. I think we
20 are ready to resume. I don't know the difference
21 between a formal and informal recess, so we will
22 just come right back into it, Ms. Wessling.

23 MS. WESSLING: Thank you. And I was told this
24 is working. Can you all hear me? No? Still not
25 working. Okay.

1 Well, is there a Tim Zorc here now?

2 MR. ZORC: Yes.

3 MS. WESSLING: Hi, please come forward.

4 MR. ZORC: Good morning. Tim Zorc. So I am
5 part of the reason for your informal short-term
6 break to give me a few more driving minutes to get
7 here in time.

8 COMMISSIONER LA ROSA: Mr. Zorc, do you
9 mind -- is he sworn in?

10 MR. ZORC: Yes, sir.

11 COMMISSIONER LA ROSA: Thank you. You may
12 resume.

13 PUBLIC COMMENT

14 MR. ZORC: Yeah. My name is Tim Zorc, a
15 lifelong resident of Indian River County, past
16 County Commissioner, and my occupation is tied to
17 the real estate and building industry. I am a
18 current and have been a customer of City Gas for
19 probably the last 10 years.

20 I am here to speak in favor of the rate
21 increase. Nobody likes rate increases, but you
22 have to get down to the reality of why we are
23 having to ask for a rate increase? Costs across
24 the board have gone up dramatically in a number of
25 different areas in the commodities market, whether

1 it's the therms for natural gas fuels, labor costs,
2 et cetera, have all gone up dramatically.

3 I am -- I have always been a fan of natural
4 gas. Many, many years ago, my first project, I
5 brought in the first natural gas line into Vero
6 Beach to service a new 200 home community because
7 of the lower out costs and the environmental
8 benefits.

9 Currently, when I have new projects on the
10 line, I insist that we include natural gas into the
11 projects; again, because of the environmental
12 benefits and the lower cost. When you compare
13 creating that same energy with electricity, the
14 natural gas, even with the increase, is still --
15 still far -- still far more competitive.

16 When I purchased my recent home development,
17 one that I did not build, I don't do that very
18 often, I have seven kids at home, our dryer on
19 natural gas runs constantly. Every waking hour it
20 is just spinning away. But also we converted
21 everything in the house that we could to natural
22 gas, hot water heater, stove, as well as the dryer.

23 During my years as a County Commissioner,
24 again being -- when I look at -- when I say I am a
25 fan of natural gas, it's the benefits that it

1 brings to the table. But you have to look at if
2 you have a great product but a bad service
3 provider, it's not a good match. That's where
4 Florida City Gas comes in. Their team of people
5 are always there to help you. Their service people
6 in the field when your customer has a question or a
7 concern, they are right on the spot and very
8 responsive. So you have to have a good product as
9 well as a good provider to match up.

10 Just to the -- to the south of Vero Beach,
11 there is a municipal provider, a municipal natural
12 gas provider. Their rate increase is dramatically
13 higher, and it goes in effect on 10/1. But
14 municipalities, as with electricity, don't have to
15 come before the Public Service Commission to ask
16 for rates. They just need three out of five votes
17 and they could raise the rates without any type of
18 good open faith like you have here in the Public
19 Service Commission.

20 You know, currently, even with the rate
21 increases, if you compare my current electric bill,
22 530, my gas bill is \$67. If I am relying on all
23 electricity, I guess my bill would probably be
24 closer to 800. So with the effects of the benefits
25 of natural gas, what it does, especially on your

1 cooking, hot water heating and your drying, it is
2 just very much -- very more efficient than using
3 the services of electricity.

4 So even with the increase, which, again, I
5 don't like increases, but if you are a business and
6 your costs go up, and you don't recover those
7 costs, you become no longer in business. So you
8 have to remain competitive. You have to have --
9 you have to cover your costs. You have to have an
10 opportunity to earn a reasonable profit. And, you
11 know, the benefits of natural gas bring that.

12 So I am happy to answer any questions that you
13 may have, and with Chairman Fay not at the table, I
14 neglected to give my opening to you as well, sir.

15 Any questions?

16 COMMISSIONER LA ROSA: I think -- I think we
17 are good. Thank you very much for your testimony.

18 MR. ZORC: Sure. Thank you.

19 MS. WESSLING: I was just going to see, has
20 anyone else shown up? Is there anyone else that
21 would like to speak?

22 That's all.

23 COMMISSIONER LA ROSA: All right. So just --
24 just in closing, thank you to all the customers
25 that have spoken today. Certainly, this is a very

1 important part of the rate case and proceedings
2 that will be before us.

3 So if you have any questions, please feel free
4 to discuss them with our staff members and, of
5 course, the company representatives who are here.

6 I want to say a special thank you to Senator
7 Mayfield. Thank you for coming out, and we will
8 try to spend money here in your district as we
9 depart here today back to Tallahassee.

10 I will kick it off to Chairman Fay, any
11 closing comments?

12 Commissioner Passidomo?

13 MS. PASSIDOMO: No.

14 COMMISSIONER LA ROSA: Awesome. Well, again,
15 thank you all today. Thank you to my fellow
16 Commissioners, and please see that this meeting is
17 adjourned.

18 Thank you.

19 (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
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financially interested in the action.

DATED this 30th day of September, 2022.



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