

Charlie Smith

From: Charlie Smith on behalf of Records Clerk
Sent: Tuesday, June 25, 2024 7:45 AM
To: 'David Harbeitner'
Cc: Consumer Contact
Subject: RE: Docket No. 20240025 EI - Duke Energy Florida, LLC

Good morning David Harbeitner,

We will be placing your comments below in consumer correspondence in Docket No. 20240025, and forwarding them to the Office of Consumer Assistance and Outreach.

Best regards,

Charlie Smith II

Office of Commission Clerk
Florida Public Service Commission
2540 Shumard Oak Blvd.
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0850
850-413-6770

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From: David Harbeitner <davidh@suncoastsierra.org>
Sent: Monday, June 24, 2024 7:58 PM
To: Records Clerk <CLERK@PSC.STATE.FL.US>
Subject: Docket No. 20240025 EI - Duke Energy Florida, LLC

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Hello,

I am a resident of St Petersburg, Florida and a ratepayer of Duke Energy. I am contacting you about their pending rate increase, Docket No. 20240025-EI.

I am requesting that this rate increase be denied. Here are the reasons I believe this rate increase should be denied:

1) Duke reduced their energy efficiency goals by 90% in 2014. Reducing demand for power is the most cost effective way to manage the increasing demand for electricity. This is particularly true for the poorest rate payers. Prior to any increase be considered, efficiency goals and programs supporting those goals must be put in place.

2) There is an over-reliance on fossil fuels as our source of power. While Duke has been shuttering coal plants, they have greatly increased their use of gas which has its own set of problems. Moving to this volatile fuel and allowing 100% of the fuel cost to be passed on to ratepayers creates a moral hazard for Duke. This concern is compounded by the fact Duke is a part owner of the Sabal Trail pipeline, allowing them to profit by bringing oil into the state and knowing regardless of price their ratepayers will cover 100% of this expense. Duke should be increasing their commitment to solar power as well as battery storage.

3) The minimum customer bill is an unwarranted fee. Customers who happen to consume less power are charged for not using enough electricity. This is a disincentive to consumers to help reduce their consumption. The Customer Charge has been the baseline fee all ratepayers are subject to. The minimum bill requirement should be removed. Additionally, the existence of a minimum bill is not disclosed on any of the changes to rates inserts provided by Duke.

4) Duke's request to increase their Rate of Return on Common Equity to 11.15% should be denied. Their current rate of return is more than adequate as a monopoly investor owned utility. Ratepayers should not be expected to create above average returns for shareholders of Duke's stock. Additionally, in recent requests for rate increases in other states, Duke has asked for a lower rate of return than what they are requesting that Florida customers pay. Clearly there is no supporting information to justify this arbitrary profit increase or they would have requested it in other states.

5) There are also questions about the stewardship Duke maintains for being prudent spenders of ratepayers funds. A good example is the recent addition of bigger and taller poles in neighborhoods throughout Pinellas County. While I appreciate this is being done to harden the grid against storms, the fact is the cheaper and more durable solution is to bury the lines. Even in areas where the lines are readily accessible (alleys, along streets), Duke subcontractors are erecting multiple new poles. Operationally, they need to be more efficient.

Thank you for considering my input and denying Duke their request to increase our energy bills.

Sincerely,

David Harbeitner
225 9th Ave N
St Petersburg, FL 33701