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BEFORE THE  
FLORIDA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

In the Matter of:

DOCKET NO. 20240026-EI

Petition for rate increase  
by Tampa Electric Company.  
\_\_\_\_\_ /

PROCEEDINGS: SERVICE HEARING

COMMISSIONERS  
PARTICIPATING: CHAIRMAN MIKE LA ROSA  
COMMISSIONER ART GRAHAM  
COMMISSIONER GARY F. CLARK  
COMMISSIONER ANDREW GILES FAY  
COMMISSIONER GABRIELLA PASSIDOMO

DATE: Tuesday, June 11, 2024

TIME: Commenced: 2:30 p.m.  
Concluded: 3:50 p.m.

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

REPORTED BY: DEBRA R. KRICK  
Court Reporter and  
Notary Public in and for  
the State of Florida at Large

PREMIER REPORTING  
TALLAHASSEE, FLORIDA  
(850) 894-0828

1 APPEARANCES:

2 MALCOLM N. MEANS, ESQUIRE, Tampa Electric  
3 Company, 123 South Calhoun Street, Tallahassee, Florida  
4 32301; appearing on behalf of Tampa Electric Company  
5 (TECO).

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

11 BRADLEY MARSHALL and JORDAN LUEBKEMANN,  
12 ESQUIRES, Earthjustice, 111 S. Martin Luther King Jr.  
13 Boulevard, Tallahassee, Florida 32301; appearing on  
14 behalf of Florida Rising (Florida Rising) and League of  
15 United Latin American Citizens of Florida (LULAC).

16 SARI AMIEL, ESQUIRE, 50 F St. NW, Eighth  
17 Floor, Washington, DC 20001; appearing on behalf of  
18 Sierra Club (Sierra Club).

19 ADRIA HARPER, ESQUIRE, FPSC General Counsel's  
20 Office, 2540 Shumard Oak Boulevard, Tallahassee, Florida  
21 32399-0850, appearing on behalf of the Florida Public  
22 Service Commission (Staff).

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1 APPEARANCES CONTINUED:

2 KEITH HETRICK, GENERAL COUNSEL; MARY ANNE  
3 HELTON, DEPUTY GENERAL COUNSEL, Florida Public Service  
4 Commission, 2540 Shumard Oak Boulevard, Tallahassee,  
5 Florida 32399-0850, Advisor to the Florida Public  
6 Service Commission.

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## 1 PROCEEDINGS

2 CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: All right. Sorry about  
3 that, that little bit of a delayed start. I want  
4 make sure, of course, we get the right individuals  
5 that have signed up, making sure that we are giving  
6 them every opportunity to discuss today.

7 Before we get officially started into the  
8 hearing, just kind of a quick note. I think maybe  
9 you realized those that are here us, the air  
10 conditioner is not working as great, or as much as  
11 we with like it to, so we are working through that  
12 certainly throughout the agency, but our critical  
13 folks are here, we will do everything we can to  
14 obviously get through this meeting. I think we are  
15 okay right now for the time being. I have  
16 summarized some of my words so that we can move  
17 along a little bit quicker, but that shouldn't have  
18 to rush any of the customers, of course, that are  
19 on the line.

20 Good afternoon. Again, welcome to this  
21 customer service hearing as a part of this -- this  
22 is a part of the review of the Tampa Electric  
23 Company's request for a rate adjustment. Today's  
24 service hearing is an important part of the  
25 process, and is dedicated to hearing from you, the

1 customer.

2 I am Mike La Rosa. I am honored to be the  
3 Chairman here at the Florida Public Service  
4 Commission. With me is my fellow Commissioners. I  
5 would like to give them an opportunity to quickly  
6 introduce themselves.

7 Commissioner Graham.

8 COMMISSIONER GRAHAM: Good afternoon. My name  
9 is Art Graham. I am one of the five Commissioners  
10 here at the Public Service Commission. I just  
11 wanted to take a moment just to let the people that  
12 are coming before us to speak to know that this is  
13 your opportunity to let us know what you think  
14 about the company, what you think about Tampa,  
15 TECO; if they are doing a good job; if they are  
16 doing a bad job; if you had any personal  
17 experience, we want to know those details, because  
18 that all comes into account when we are trying to  
19 figure out the rates here. So don't be shy. Tell  
20 us the good, the bad and the ugly. And believe me,  
21 it's not going to fall on deaf ears.

22 Thank you.

23 CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Commissioner Clark.

24 COMMISSIONER CLARK: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

25 In the interest of time, I will just echo

1 Commissioner Graham's sentiments. My name is Gary  
2 Clark, and it's a privilege for us to be able to be  
3 here and listen to the comments of customers today.

4 Thank you.

5 CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Thank you.

6 Commissioner Fay.

7 COMMISSIONER FAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

8 I will just thank the customers for taking the  
9 time to participate in this. It is important to  
10 us. We do go through all the information when  
11 making a decision on rate cases, and so thank you  
12 for jumping on the line this afternoon.

13 Thank you.

14 CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Commissioner Passidomo.

15 COMMISSIONER PASSIDOMO: My name is Gabriella  
16 Passidomo. I am the fifth of the Commissioners  
17 here.

18 I just want to thank you all for being on the  
19 line. Also, continue to write into us, and we  
20 really do appreciate all of your comments as we  
21 move forward through this process.

22 Thank you.

23 CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Excellent. Thank you.

24 Ms. Harper, can you please read the notice?

25 MS. HARPER: Yes.

1           By notice published on May 24th, 2024, this  
2           time and place was set for a customer service  
3           hearing in Docket No. 20240026-EI. The purpose of  
4           this hearing is set forth more fully in the notice.

5           CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Excellent. Thank you.

6           Let's move to appearances of counsel. Let's  
7           start with Tampa Electric Company.

8           MR. MEANS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and good  
9           afternoon, Commissioners.

10           I am Malcolm Means with the Ausley McMullen  
11           Law Firm, appearing on behalf of Tampa Electric.  
12           And I also have with me today from Tampa Electric  
13           Karen Sparkman, who is Vice-President Customer  
14           Experience, and Penelope Rusk, who is  
15           Vice-President Regulatory.

16           Thank you.

17           CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Thank you.

18           Office of Public Counsel.

19           MR. PONCE: Thank you, Chairman and  
20           Commissioners.

21           My name is Octavio Ponce, appearing for the  
22           Office of Public Counsel. And with me today, I  
23           have Patty Christensen and Austin Watrous.

24           Thank you.

25           CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Thank you.

1 Florida Rising, League of United Latin  
2 American Citizens.

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

4 Bradley Marshall and Jordan Luebkekmann on  
5 behalf of Florida Rising and the League of United  
6 Latin American Citizens of Florida, better known as  
7 LULAC.

8 Thank you.

9 CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Thank you.

10 I have belief dialed in is the Sierra Club, is  
11 that correct?

12 MS. AMIEL: Yes. Thank you. Good afternoon.  
13 This is Sari Amiel appearing on behalf of the  
14 Sierra Club.

15 CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: I don't believe we have any  
16 other counsel dialed in so I am going to go to  
17 staff counsel.

18 MS. HARPER: Yes. Thank you. This is Adria  
19 Harper from the General Counsel's Office. I would  
20 also like to enter an appearance for your  
21 Commission Advisor, Mary Anne Helton, and your  
22 General Counsel, Keith Hetrick.

23 CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Thank you.

24 Let me begin by thanking each of you for  
25 taking the time out of your schedule to call in and



1 share your experience and quality of service that  
2 Tampa Electric Company has had.

3 In August, there will be a more technical  
4 hearing. I encourage you to follow along in that  
5 hearing. Of course, you are a witness, and your  
6 testimony will be officially put into the record  
7 today. I say that not to create any concern. You  
8 may have some cross-examination from a Commissioner  
9 or another counsel, but that's just there to  
10 clarify maybe statements or comments that you may  
11 have had, again, just to make sure that we make the  
12 record as clear as possible.

13 In addition to sharing your comments here, you  
14 may provide comments additionally through our  
15 website or through physical mail. On our website,  
16 you will find a contact the Commission mailer  
17 that's pre-addressed as a comment card for  
18 download, again, on our website. You can email at  
19 clerk@psc.state.fl.us. Please reference the docket  
20 number. The docket number is 20240026-EI. That's  
21 20240026-EI, please put that in the subject line.  
22 And again, you know, you may provide comments that  
23 way.

24 So I am going to move towards opening  
25 statements and allow each of the counsels that are

1 here three minutes for opening statements.

2 Let's start with Tampa Electric Company.

3 MR. MEANS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And Ms.  
4 Sparkman is going to deliver some comments for  
5 Tampa Electric.

6 CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Great. Thank you.

7 You are recognized.

8 MS. SPARKMAN: Good afternoon, Commissioners  
9 and ladies and gentlemen. I am Karen Sparkman,  
10 Vice-President of Customer Experience for Tampa  
11 Electric Company.

12 Information about our request has been  
13 provided and is readily available on our website,  
14 so I won't go over that again here. I do want to  
15 say that we want to hear from our customers, and we  
16 appreciate the opportunity to participate in this  
17 hearing today.

18 We are available to help if you have any  
19 specific questions regarding our request for a rate  
20 increase, or have questions about your electric  
21 bill or other service concerns. Please call this  
22 number, 1(800)272-3172, where we have staff  
23 standing by to address any questions.

24 Thank you.

25 CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Thank you.

1 Office of Public Counsel.

2 MR. PONCE: Thank you again.

3 My name is Octavio Ponce, and I have the  
4 privilege of representing the customers of TECO  
5 through the Office of Public Counsel. For anyone  
6 who is not familiar with our office, we were  
7 created by the Legislature to represent all  
8 customers of Tampa Electric Company.

9 We are here today because TECO has filed a  
10 request for a large increase in their current  
11 rates. In response to this, we have hired expert  
12 witnesses to evaluate TECO's request. We have  
13 engaged in extensive discovery with the company,  
14 and we have deposed several of TECO's witnesses in  
15 order to identify areas where we can save costs for  
16 you, the customers.

17 Some of the primary areas we have identified  
18 in this rate case where we think we can find  
19 reduced rate impact include the initial revenue  
20 requirement. TECO is requesting a base revenue  
21 increase of approximately \$296 million effective on  
22 or about January 1, 2025. Based on the discovery  
23 that we have done, and our expert witnesses'  
24 evaluations, we do not believe -- we recommend that  
25 the Commission limit this increase to no more than

1           \$75 million.

2           Subsequent year adjustments. On top of this  
3           2025 ask, TECO is also asking for additional  
4           revenue increases for 2026 and 2027. These amounts  
5           -- these amounts come out to approximately \$100  
6           million for 2026, and approximately \$71 million  
7           more for 2027. We are recommending increases of no  
8           more of an approximately 60 million for 2026, and  
9           no more than 2020 -- 24 million for 2027. Our  
10          recommendations are based on proposed cuts to  
11          TECO's proposed new projects that we believe should  
12          be considered routine replacements.

13          Finally, return on equity. The utility is  
14          entitled to earn a reasonable return on equity;  
15          however, the utility has requested a return of  
16          equity of 11.5 percent, which we do not believe is  
17          reasonable. Our research indicates that TECO only  
18          requires a return on equity of 9.5 percent to  
19          provide a reasonable return to its shareholders.

20          That being said, there are many more areas  
21          that we will litigate to reach the best result  
22          possible for TECO's customers. Keep in mind that  
23          the law requires that TECO prove everything that  
24          they are asking for is reasonable and prudent. In  
25          any area that we believe that TECO has not met that

1           burden of proof, we plan on challenging them on  
2           that.

3                   With that being said, just as your  
4           Commissioners told you earlier, today is your  
5           hearing. This is your chance to speak up and tell  
6           the Commissioners how you feel about TECO, the  
7           good, the bad or the ugly. You can talk about the  
8           quality of TECO's service; how you feel about this  
9           -- their proposed rate increases, anything that has  
10          to do with TECO. Please use your voice to  
11          participate. I look forward to hearing more from  
12          you.

13                   Thank you very much.

14                   CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Thank you.

15                   Let's move to Florida Rising and LULAC.

16                   MR. MARSHALL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I  
17          will be brief.

18                   A Bradley Marshall on behalf of Florida Rising  
19          and LULAC.

20                   Florida Rising and LULAC are associations of  
21          residential customers and are in this case because  
22          last year, TECO had the third highest residential  
23          electricity bills in the nation out of 149  
24          utilities with more than 100,000 residential  
25          customers.

1           Basically, there are two parts of a rate case,  
2           the size of the pie, that is how much rates  
3           increase, and how that pie is sliced, how much each  
4           customer class pays, also known as cost of service.

5           We think that Tampa Electric Company is asking  
6           for that pie to be much bigger than it should be,  
7           and we think that they are planning to give a slice  
8           to residential customers that is way larger than it  
9           should be, and we look forward to hearing  
10          everyone's testimony today.

11          Thank you.

12          CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Thank you.

13          Sierra Club.

14          MS. AMIEL: Thank you. Good afternoon. This  
15          is Sari Amiel, appearing on behalf of Sierra Club,  
16          an intervenor in this rate case.

17          Sierra Club is mainly concerned about TECO's  
18          interest on keeping uneconomic coal use on-line,  
19          despite barely utilizing them, and despite their  
20          high costs to ratepayers. As you have heard from  
21          other parties, TECO has some of the highest rates  
22          in the country, one of the least diverse resource  
23          mixes in the country, and a very high reserve  
24          margin.

25          A major reason for TECO's high rates is

1           because the company has continued to rely on two  
2           already uneconomic coal-fired plants, Big Bend 4  
3           and Polk 1. When each one of these units is run on  
4           coal, operating and maintenance costs and fuel  
5           costs exceed their benefits to ratepayers, as we've  
6           shown in opening testimony by a Sierra Club  
7           witness. This witness has also shown that TECO's  
8           coal and gas units face high environmental  
9           compliance costs associated with new environmental  
10          rules that were finalized this year.

11                 The simple fact is that today, TECO could  
12          retire the coal components at Polk 1 and commit to  
13          stop burning Big Bend 4 on coal, operating as a  
14          purely gas plant until its retirement.

15                 Finally, TECO could save more money for  
16          ratepayers by applying for federal funding under  
17          the Energy Infrastructure Reinvestment Program,  
18          which would provide funding for utilities to  
19          refinance existing plant balances and reinvest  
20          their savings in new clean energy resources to  
21          lower costs for TECO customers.

22                 Thank you for the opportunity to make these  
23          comments.

24                 CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Excellent. Thank you.

25                 Not hearing any other counsel there on the

1 line, let's move on to customer testimony.

2 My records do not indicate that there is any  
3 public officials or elected officials that are on  
4 the line or that have signed up. I just want to  
5 double check if that's accurate.

6 Okay. So before we jump right into the  
7 customer list, if you have not been sworn in, I  
8 will ask you to be sworn in. Everyone on the list  
9 currently is sworn in, but if someone does jump on  
10 the line that did not sign up, I will have to take  
11 the oath really quick with you. And then if you  
12 have spoken at previous service hearings for this  
13 case in particular, please try to direct your  
14 testimony towards new items just to make sure that  
15 we give everyone a fair amount of time.

16 To all of the customers that have signed up, I  
17 would like to try to limit your comments to five  
18 minutes. I certainly won't interrupt you if I feel  
19 like you are getting to your point, but we haven't  
20 had to do that just yet, but I just wanted to kind  
21 of put that out there.

22 Mr. Ponce is here with us with the Public  
23 Counsel's office. He is your voice in this  
24 process. He is going to be helping us today, and  
25 when it's your turn to speak, he will call your



1 name. I am going to ask him to call out names in  
2 groups of three so that you know that you are ready  
3 when your name is about to be called.

4 The names on our list are not in alphabetical  
5 order. They are in the order in which folks signed  
6 up in. So certainly listen closely when the names  
7 are called.

8 And I will go ahead and turn it over to you,  
9 Mr. Ponce, with identifying the first three names.

10 MR. PONCE: Thank you, Chairman.

11 Just to be clear, I have a list from earlier  
12 today that has a different order from the most  
13 latest, so the most latest list looks like it  
14 starts with John Schaffer, Aslam Hayat and Lee  
15 Daly. These are the customers prepared to offer  
16 you testimony.

17 CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Thank you. That's accurate  
18 with the first three I have got as well. So let's  
19 start with Mr. Schaffer. John Schaffer, you are  
20 recognized when you are ready to offer your  
21 testimony.

22 MR. SCHAFFER: Good afternoon, everybody, and  
23 just a real quick thank you for giving us this  
24 opportunity today to talk.

25 As you kind of heard in opening testimony,

1           TECO has one of the highest current costs for  
2           residential folks. And as we all know living in  
3           Tampa, we are seeing inflation more than we've ever  
4           seen before. I would just like everybody to kind  
5           of take into consideration all those factors. The  
6           factor that I believe the parent company of TECO  
7           also seeing very high if not record profits over  
8           the past several years. Take everything into  
9           consideration, and knowing that every single family  
10          here in Tampa is continuing to suffer. Especially  
11          as we hit record heat, AC usage is having to be  
12          used more than ever. And that is all I have to  
13          say.

14                    Thank you.

15                    CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Thank you.

16                    Next up is Aslam Hayat. Aslam Hayat.

17                    Okay. Let's move on to Lee Daly. Lee Daly.

18                    Lee Daly, if you are on the line, you are  
19                    recognized.

20                    MS. DALY: Thank you, Commissioner.

21                    CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Yes.

22                    MS. DALY: Thank you very much.

23                    CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: And just identify yourself  
24                    since the last person wasn't there -- I am sorry,  
25                    ma'am, just identify yourself as you begin your

1 testimony.

2 MS. DALY: Yes, sir. Yes, sir. This is Lee  
3 Daly.

4 I just wanted to thank you for letting us  
5 weigh in on the proposed increases over the coming  
6 years. The proposed rate increases are not in line  
7 with the rate of inflation, and would put a lot  
8 more burden on residents who are trying to make  
9 ends meet in this economy.

10 I conserve as much as I can. I keep my AC on  
11 79 in the summer, 70 to 72 in the winter, put on a  
12 lot of sweaters, you know. I am paying attention  
13 to how much I am drawing out of that energy pool,  
14 but the bills are getting ridiculous, and it's only  
15 going to get worse as our climate continues to  
16 increase the heat.

17 If those rate hikes that are being justified  
18 by various claims of improving -- (inaudible) -- in  
19 current power plants, improving infrastructure and  
20 building more solar capacity are true, I want to  
21 see those -- (inaudible) -- and timelines of  
22 projects, especially cost timelines and plans for  
23 moving towards renewable resources like solar,  
24 hydro and wind power.

25 That is all.

1           CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Thank you for your  
2 testimony.

3           Mr. Ponce, you can identify the next three.

4           MR. PONCE: Next three customers offering  
5 their testimony are Mr. John Bone, Brittany Panton  
6 and Ingrid Royster.

7           CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Thank you.

8           Mr. Bone, are you on the line?

9           MR. BONE: Yes, I am here.

10          CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Excellent, you are  
11 recognized when you are ready.

12          MR. BONE: I am sorry, I am not -- I am  
13 allowed to start now?

14          CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Yes, you are still on.

15          MR. BONE: Thank you.

16          As you have mentioned, the Commission,  
17 representatives of TECO and all interested parties  
18 and individuals, thank you for allowing me to speak  
19 here today.

20          Requests for rate increases, according to the  
21 rate case docket, is to allow the company an  
22 opportunity to earn a fair rate of return on its  
23 investment when research are done. Currently,  
24 TECO's annual revenues are around \$2.7 billion,  
25 which certainly sounds pretty fair to me, but now

1 revenues take into account business costs such as  
2 raw materials, productions, payroll, taxes and so  
3 on. So instead, if you look at the net profit  
4 margins, which do include these metrics, TECO still  
5 has a net profit margin of -- well, in 2022, the  
6 net profit margin was 570 million, which was a  
7 17.04 percent net profit margin.

8 In perspective, the average national net  
9 profit margin is 7.71 percent across different  
10 industries. And net profit margin of 10 percent is  
11 regarded as very good for most businesses. TECO's  
12 current net -- well, 2023 net profit margin is, on  
13 average, 25 percent above very good.

14 In addition, between 2019 and 2023, TECO's  
15 parent company, Emera, Incorporated's net profits  
16 increased by over 54 percent, and the typical TECO  
17 has increased by 62 percent during that time.

18 So I would say that these numbers indicate  
19 that TECO already makes an extremely healthy return  
20 on investment, and has done so year-on-year since  
21 it was acquired by Emera back in 2016.

22 Moving on, the other part of TECO's request  
23 for rate increases is due, and I quote, common cost  
24 of operating a utility. So my question would be  
25 just what exactly do those operating costs relate

1 to? Are they potential improvements, genuinely add  
2 real value TECO provides? Are they projects that  
3 are in the public's interest? Are they projects  
4 that the customers have consensus with?

5 For example, what kind of planned projects  
6 does TECO have for renewable energy generation? On  
7 a slightly smaller scale, what is TECO doing about  
8 investing in new charging infrastructure?

9 And full disclosure here, I do own an EV, but  
10 I am a home charger so, personally, I don't need EV  
11 fast charging stations, but I know that there are  
12 thousands of EV chargers across central Florida,  
13 and even more across the state itself who do need  
14 them.

15 Now, from my research, I could find no mention  
16 of a single TECO EV project. Not one. Which is  
17 strange, because, for example, fast EV chargers  
18 offer huge revenue streams for TECO that don't  
19 involve the move the hot potato trying to increase  
20 customers bills. I know this, because I have been  
21 working in the EV field for 10 years now, so if  
22 there is anyone at TECO listening to this who  
23 wishes to get in touch with me, I would be more  
24 than happy to offer you my expertise and knowledge,  
25 and you can contact me at [john@johnbone.com](mailto:john@johnbone.com).

1           Anyway, another example we've recently come to  
2           with TECO is using the operation costs, and just  
3           within the last month, like came down our street  
4           put in new utility poles and neighborhood power  
5           lines, which they have done less than 10 years  
6           previously. So I don't know quite why that was  
7           necessary. We certainly haven't noticed any  
8           improvements to our electrical supply since they  
9           did that. You know, it's not like an oven cooks  
10          any faster or our lights shine any brighter, so I'm  
11          asking was that a unnecessary project, or was it  
12          something simply, you know, that TECO could use as  
13          a lobbying device for rate increases that they are  
14          doing a project like that.

15          Wrapping up. From the numbers alone, I think  
16          TECO's large current revenues provide more than a  
17          fair share of return, and easily they cover the  
18          cost of operating a utility, while still allowing  
19          it a very substantial profit. I don't see how TECO  
20          can fully justify asking the Commission for a rate  
21          increase at the present time based on that they are  
22          already earning an extremely fair rate of return,  
23          and without providing concrete proof and iron clad  
24          assurances to the Commission that it will  
25          improve -- that it will implement policies and

1 projects that will provide long-term added value to  
2 its existing services.

3 And also on new services, I don't see how TECO  
4 can fully justify asking the Commission for a rate  
5 increase at the present time based on recovering  
6 the cost of operating the utility based on the  
7 regular services it currently provides.

8 I would like to thank the members of the  
9 Commission for their time and patience to speak  
10 with you, and all the others speakers participating  
11 today.

12 Thank you.

13 CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Excellent. Thank you,  
14 Mr. Bone, for your testimony.

15 Next up we have Brittany Panton. Brittany  
16 Panton, you are recognized when you are ready.

17 MS. PANTON: Yes. Yes, sir.

18 So TECO proposing a rate hike is just such a,  
19 like, a downgrade, a disgrace to Hillsborough  
20 County. They want us to pay more for fossil fuels  
21 when they could have took the money that was given  
22 to the State of Florida instead of denying solar  
23 for all. Solar for all will not have fixed  
24 everything that's going on, but it could have  
25 helped, especially people of color, low-income,



1 middle class families.

2 I just want the Commissioners to listen to the  
3 people of the community that they are struggling.  
4 We are not making it. We are working people. Some  
5 of us are low middle class. We are doing what we  
6 can do to survive. We are doing what we can do.  
7 Right now, we are in a rent crisis, a health  
8 crisis. Now we are in an electricity crisis.  
9 Everything is a burden right now. Everything is  
10 going up besides our salaries.

11 Yes, we could pick a better career. Yes, we  
12 could go back to school and be in more debt. But  
13 sometimes we can't when we are a single parent like  
14 myself.

15 I just want you to know that please we do not  
16 approve this rate hike. It can help some of us.  
17 Our bills are already high. We are trying to  
18 struggle with that. The little money that do come  
19 in our county, it's swept away within days, so  
20 everybody is not able to be helped. So, like, for,  
21 like, one month or two month, like, hey, I got a  
22 little bit of help on my light bill. I just beg  
23 you, PSC, all five of you Commissioners, hear our  
24 cries and see where we are coming from even if you  
25 don't or you have never been without lights, water

1 or food, just put yourself in the mind of if I did,  
2 what would I do?

3 Thank you for your time.

4 CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Excellent. Thank you, Ms.  
5 Panton, for your testimony.

6 Next up is Ingrid Royster. Ingrid Royster.

7 MS. ROYSTER: Hello. My name is Ingrid  
8 Royster. I am calling in as a representative for  
9 my neighborhood, Bay Crest in Hillsborough.

10 I have been a resident in Hillsborough County  
11 for 22 years, and a customer of TECO for the same  
12 amount of time. I have seen the different rate  
13 changes over the years. And I am not going to  
14 reiterate specifics about their parent company and  
15 their current profit margin of their net revenue  
16 that was gone over by a speaker a couple before me  
17 that I found very accurate and did align with all  
18 of the research that I have done.

19 My point that I would like to make to the  
20 Commission, and I do thank you for doing these  
21 virtual meetings that allow those of us who are at  
22 work and limited in our time so that we could  
23 attend.

24 The point that I would like to make for our  
25 entire neighborhood is that we are an older

1 neighborhood. We are houses that were built in the  
2 '60s. We are right in the brunt of the storm  
3 surge. All of our electrical utilities are above  
4 ground. They go out, at a very minimum, two to  
5 three times a week we are experiencing outages.  
6 They are small. They will blink here and there.  
7 Sometimes they will go out for an hour or two.  
8 Sometimes for six to eight hours. This is  
9 repetitive and has gone on for years. I have  
10 friends that have lived in this neighborhood for 20  
11 plus years. And although, I have been in this  
12 neighborhood for less than one year, and I do not  
13 see anything done to improve the service that we  
14 have to our area.

15 I do think that the net revenues TECO  
16 currently has is more than enough to not only take  
17 care of the utilities that they feel that they need  
18 reimbursement for, but it is also enough that they  
19 need to show more improvement for the current  
20 system before any of us think about supporting  
21 higher rates.

22 They are essentially a monopoly in our area,  
23 and they have an obligation to provide our society  
24 with a sustainable and dependable utility, and I do  
25 not see that happenings currently. So I am very

1           unwilling to reward them with higher revenue when  
2           we have not seen the basic services that we  
3           currently have -- currently are supposed to have  
4           being met.

5           Also to piggyback off of the speaker prior to  
6           me. I am a nurse. I see lots of suffering and  
7           inequalities in our patients that are currently not  
8           able to cover the bills that they have. And I do  
9           think increasing rates further for anyone who is  
10          not able to make ends meet at the present time is a  
11          further burden that is completely unnecessary when  
12          they have a revenue stream that is dependable and  
13          grossly inflated in my opinion, and does not need  
14          to be increased at all.

15          So, again, as a whole, I totally disagree with  
16          increasing the rates for Hillsborough County at any  
17          time, and I would like to see a much better  
18          response from TECO in the improvement of the  
19          utilities that we currently have.

20          And according to TECO itself, the utilities  
21          that have been put underground for the protection  
22          of our hurricanes and our winds have all been done  
23          by new construction by the contractors. Not by  
24          TECO. And they have borne the brunt of the costs  
25          of burying these utilities. And I do think that

1           that is something that TECO has an obligation to  
2           take care of, especially in older neighborhoods  
3           like the one I'm currently in.

4           So I appreciate the opportunity to speak. I  
5           appreciate letting my neighborhood our voice heard,  
6           and I do hope the Commission significantly weighs  
7           our testimony heavily on the decision whether or  
8           not this rate increase is appropriate.

9           Thank you.

10           CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Thank you, Ms. Royster for  
11           your testimony. Before you go, Mr. Ponce, from the  
12           Office of Public Counsel, would like to ask a quick  
13           question.

14           Mr. Ponce.

15           BY MR. PONCE:

16           **Q     Hi, Ms. Royster. This is -- hi, Ms. Royster.**  
17           **This is Octavio with the Office of Public Counsel. I**  
18           **just had a quick question.**

19           **You mentioned that you had experienced outages**  
20           **in the past. Is this something that you've experienced**  
21           **recently?**

22           A     Oh, yes. Basically a couple times a week, I  
23           come home and my oven is flashing.

24           **Q     And is this something that ever filed a**  
25           **complaint with TECO before?**

1           A     People pretty much take turns around the  
2 neighborhood filing complaints.  Someone will say, hey,  
3 the power it out again.  I already called.  This is what  
4 they're saying?

5           MR. PONCE:  Nothing further.

6           MS. ROYSTER:  We take turns -- (inaudible) --

7           CHAIRMAN LA ROSA:  Hold on real tight, Ms.  
8 Royster.  TECO, you are recognized.

9           MR. MEANS:  Thank you, Mr. Chairman.  We just  
10 wanted to say that we are going to reach out to her  
11 about this topic.  Thank you.

12          CHAIRMAN LA ROSA:  Awesome.  Thank you.

13          All right.  Ms. Royster, thank you for your  
14 testimony and your answering of the questions.  
15 Much -- very much appreciated.

16          Office of Public Counsel, you are  
17 recognized --

18          MS. ROYSTER:  Have a good day.

19          CHAIRMAN LA ROSA:  Thank you.

20          You are recognized for the next three.

21          MR. PONCE:  The next three customers offering  
22 testimony are Mervin Sletten, Angelo Pimpinelli and  
23 Rhonda Deese-Pimpinelli.

24          CHAIRMAN LA ROSA:  Mervin Sletten, you are  
25 recognized when you are ready.  Mervin Sletten.

1 Mervin Sletten, if you're on the line, you are  
2 recognized.

3 Okay. Let's -- I'll come back to those, of  
4 course, that we don't hear from. Let's move onto  
5 Angino -- excuse me, Angelo Pimpinelli. Angelo  
6 Pimpinelli, are you on the line?

7 MR. PIMPINELLI: Yes. Yes, I'm here.

8 CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Sir, you are recognized for  
9 your testimony whenever --

10 MR. PIMPINELLI: Can you hear me?

11 CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Hear you loud and clear.  
12 Yes, sir.

13 MR. PIMPINELLI: If you don't mind, I will  
14 have my wife go first, Rhonda.

15 CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Okay. Excellent. Yeah,  
16 she's next, so yes, yes, as long as she identifies  
17 herself when she jumps on, no problem.

18 MR. PIMPINELLI: Okay. Here she is. Thank  
19 you.

20 MS. DEESE-PIMPINELLI: Can you hear me okay,  
21 because I'm on speaker? Is that acceptable?

22 CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Yes, as long as we can hear  
23 you, that's okay.

24 MS. DEESE-PIMPINELLI: Can you hear me?

25 CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Yes, we can hear you loud

1 and clear.

2 MS. DEESE-PIMPINELLI: Okay. Good afternoon.  
3 Rhonda Deese-Pimpinelli -- (inaudible) -- this  
4 meeting from the Office of Public Counsel, as TECO  
5 has breached tariffs in policy.

6 I have been a long-standing customer with  
7 TECO, all accounts paid timely. All accounts in  
8 excellent standing. On July 12th, 2022, my service  
9 was disconnected, not for non-payment, but for  
10 opting out three times in writing and multiple  
11 times telephonically.

12 Also, TECO withheld consecutive May, June and  
13 July bills 2022. They were also paid on time.  
14 Only by accepting the Smart Meter would I get  
15 reconnected.

16 Under coercion and under duress I allowed  
17 reconnection only after being assured by a  
18 supervisor, Natalie, ID No. 21109, if the meter was  
19 problematic, it would be changed out. It is  
20 problematic. Immediately after the install,  
21 entering my home was a high pitched ear-piercing  
22 sound that continues today, causing ear ringing,  
23 ear pain, headaches, nausea and insomnia.

24 My home, it is -- (inaudible) --  
25 uninhabitable. TECO refuses to remove the harming



1 device, an AMI Itron Centron two-way amplified open  
2 wave smart meter that causes microwaves -- excuse  
3 me, that pulse microwave radiation continuously  
4 into my home. A known carcinogenic. To date, TECO  
5 refuses to cure the problem. I have sent certified  
6 mail to Archie Collins, CEO of TECO, Tampa  
7 Electric.

8 No company should be granted monopoly, as I  
9 cannot move to another company for electricity. My  
10 household has suffered long enough. For nearly two  
11 years, I needed relief. No one should be held  
12 hostage to the company, especially in your home.  
13 Your respite. The very place you should have  
14 peace, privacy, be safe in your body, safe in your  
15 person.

16 Moreover, I think TECO should disclose the  
17 personal -- (inaudible) -- interest.

18 Thank you.

19 CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Thank you, Ms. Pimpinelli,  
20 for your -- for your testimony.

21 And just kind of a quick reminder to counsel  
22 that's in the room, if you do want to say  
23 something, just get my attention.

24 All right. Let's -- we're moving on now to  
25 the next group. You are recognized, OPC.

1           MR. PONCE: Well, before we move on, I think  
2 we had Angelo Pimpinelli. It was clear if he  
3 wanted to talk too.

4           CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Okay. So let's go back.

5           Ms. Pimpinelli, Rhonda, I know Angelo spoke  
6 initially. Does he have any further comments or --  
7 it sounds like you guys are in the same place at  
8 the same time.

9           MS. DEESE-PIMPINELLI: Yes. Yes. Yes, he  
10 wanted me to speak first, and he will now piggyback  
11 on me.

12          CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Okay. Sure. Go ahead --

13          MS. DEESE-PIMPINELLI: Thank you.

14          CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: -- whenever you're ready.  
15 No problem.

16          MR. PIMPINELLI: Yes. Thank you. Angelo  
17 Pimpinelli. I will follow on what Rhonda had  
18 stated.

19                 I agree in the manner in which TECO placed the  
20 Smart Meter on our home July 12, 2022, was  
21 threatening and coercive. I use a CPAP machine to  
22 maintain my oxygen level while sleeping, and stated  
23 that to the service technician that came out. He  
24 replied, he still had to turn the power off unless  
25 the current meter was replaced with the new Smart

1 Meter. We stated that the current meter was  
2 operating fine and did not want the new Smart Meter  
3 due to the increased levels of transmitted  
4 radiation needed for it to function, and along with  
5 my wife's electro hypersensitivity. The power was  
6 cut off for the sole reason of not accepting the  
7 new Smart Meter and requesting the opt-out meter.

8 After a few hours passed without power and  
9 reassurance from a TECO representative that if the  
10 new Smart Meter exacerbated my wife's symptoms,  
11 they would replace it with the opt-out meter.

12 To ensure we had power to maintain our home  
13 and my CPAP therapy, the current meter was replaced  
14 with the Smart Meter. Following the installation  
15 of the Smart Meter, my wife began to experience  
16 exacerbated symptoms of her electro  
17 hypersensitivity, which were the high pitch sound  
18 levels, headaches, nausea, sleep difficulties,  
19 anxiety and fatigue. All this -- (inaudible) --

20 This has been going on for almost two years  
21 regardless of numerous attempts of the getting the  
22 opt-out meter. All we are asking from the Public  
23 Service Commission is assistance obtaining the  
24 meter opt-out program provided by TECO.

25 Thank you very much.

1           CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Thank you, Mr. Pimpinelli,  
2           for your testimony.

3           Okay. Now, I think we are ready to move on to  
4           the next three. Hold on, Mr. Pimpinelli, don't go  
5           nowhere.

6           Commissioner Fay, you are recognized if you  
7           have got a question.

8           COMMISSIONER FAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

9           And thank you, Mr. Pimpinelli, and I commend,  
10          you are a wise man letting your wife speak first.  
11          I thought that was an appropriate thing to do.

12          CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Which I clearly did not  
13          catch.

14          COMMISSIONER FAY: I did want to ask you, so  
15          it does sound like you have been in contact with  
16          the utility. Would you be comfortable, there is  
17          representatives here today, if we were able to  
18          maybe get direct communication on the best way that  
19          he could contact -- someone with the utility could  
20          contact you, if it would be by phone or email?

21          MR. PIMPINELLI: Yes. That would be  
22          excellent.

23          COMMISSIONER FAY: Okay. Mr. Means.

24          MR. PIMPINELLI: You know, we have had  
25          numerous attempts with them, and nothing has

1           happened --

2           COMMISSIONER FAY:   Okay.

3           MR. PIMPINELLI:   -- even with certified mail,  
4           they don't receive it.

5           COMMISSIONER FAY:   Okay.  I appreciate that.

6           Our Chairman has made sure that they have  
7           representatives here today from the utility  
8           specifically to address customer issues, and so  
9           they will provide you with a direct contact here  
10          today so we can make sure that you receive that.  
11          And, of course, it will be part of our meeting  
12          today.

13          MR. MEANS:   Thank you, Commissioner.

14          MR. PIMPINELLI:   Very good.

15          MR. MEANS:   Yes.  The company has worked with  
16          these customers in the past, and Ms. Sparkman can  
17          provide the direct number for them to call today if  
18          they would like to speak to somebody today.

19          CHAIRMAN LA ROSA:   Yes, if you can do that,  
20          that would be great.  Are you ready?

21          MS. SPARKMAN:   The number is 1(800)272-3172.  
22          And I will repeat it 1(800)272-3172.

23          CHAIRMAN LA ROSA:   And your information is  
24          also collected, you have his information, or their  
25          information?  Okay.

1           Okay. I am going to go back to the Office of  
2           Public Counsel, Mr. Ponce may have a question for  
3           you, Mr. Pimpinelli.

4   BY MR. PONCE:

5           **Q    Hi, Mr. Pimpinelli. This is Octavio with the**  
6           **Office of Public Counsel. I just wanted to clarify, you**  
7           **mentioned you had been -- or maybe your wife mentioned**  
8           **you had been disconnected. Was it your understanding**  
9           **that you were disconnected because you did an opt-out of**  
10          **the meter change?**

11          A    Yes.

12          **Q    And did you -- oh, I'm sorry.**

13          A    They -- they actually -- they actually stated  
14          that the power would remain off unless we accepted the  
15          new Smart Meter.

16                MS. DEESE-PIMPINELLI: Plus it was  
17          disconnected --

18                MR. PIMPINELLI: Yeah, it was disconnected for  
19          at least an hour in the middle of the summer.

20                MR. PONCE: Okay. Thank you.

21                Nothing further.

22                CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Thank you -- thank you, Mr.  
23          and Mrs. Pimpinelli, for your testimony and  
24          answering of the questions that were here. So it  
25          looks like hopefully someone will be -- you have

1           been given the information to reach out to, so  
2           thank you.

3           MR. PIMPINELLI:   Excuse me, is there -- with  
4           that phone number, is there a specific person to  
5           ask for?

6           CHAIRMAN LA ROSA:   Sure, I can ask them to  
7           clarify that.

8           MS. SPARKMAN:   Yes.  Once you call the number,  
9           they will transfer you to Ms. Rhonda, so Ms. Rhonda  
10          is standing by and is prepared to take your call.  
11          Or if you prefer, we can direct call you instead.

12          MR. PIMPINELLI:   Which one would you prefer?

13          MS. DEESE-PIMPINELLI:  If they want to direct  
14          call.

15          MR. PIMPINELLI:   The direct call.

16          MS. SPARKMAN:   We would be glad to.

17          CHAIRMAN LA ROSA:   Excellent.  Thank you.

18          MR. PIMPINELLI:   And you have our number  
19          there?

20          MS. SPARKMAN:   Yes, we do.  Is the same number  
21          that we have on record?

22          MR. PIMPINELLI:   Yes.

23          CHAIRMAN LA ROSA:   Perfect.  Thank you.  I  
24          think we got that squared away.  Awesome.

25          Again, thank you for your testimony.

1           Let's move to the next three names. Mr.  
2 Ponce, you are recognized.

3           MR. PONCE: The next three customers offering  
4 testimony today are Sam Delgado, Phil Compton and  
5 Paul O'Byrne.

6           CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Delgado, if you are on the  
7 line, you are recognized to offer your testimony.  
8 Mr. Sam Delgado, are you on the line?

9           UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I am not Sam, he was to  
10 -- (inaudible) -- the line at 3:00, but they pushed  
11 it to 2:00, so he is not going to be able to get  
12 on. I am sorry.

13          CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Okay. So he had -- I am  
14 sorry, so he had to get off the line, is that what  
15 I am understanding? So he is no longer on the  
16 line?

17          UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Yes.

18          CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Okay.

19          UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Yes. He is no longer  
20 on the line.

21          CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Okay.

22          UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Sorry.

23          CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: All right. No -- no  
24 worries.

25                 So next up is Phil Compton. Phil Compton, if



1           you are on the line, you are recognized to give  
2           your testimony.

3           MR. COMPTON: Good afternoon.

4           CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Yes, sir, if you are ready,  
5           we are ready for you.

6           MR. COMPTON: Thank you. My name is Phil  
7           Compton. My TECO service address is 1430 East Park  
8           Circle, Tampa, 33604.

9           I object to TECO's requested base rate  
10          increase. My wife and I are retired and live on a  
11          fixed income. While we worked, we invested in  
12          making our home as energy efficient as possible.  
13          We chose to build it under mature oak trees that  
14          provide shade. We installed a better roof and  
15          triple pane windows, and chose the most efficient  
16          air conditioning there is, 7 SEER rated units.

17          Because we are shaded, we can't reduce our  
18          bill with solar, as many have. We do everything we  
19          can to keep our bill as low as possible, and as our  
20          reward, we will be punished by TECO as they raise  
21          our base rate which, with our efficient home, is a  
22          relatively higher percentage of our bill, while  
23          they ask to keep their base rate lower for  
24          businesses that may do none of the things we have  
25          done to reduce their demand.

1           You know, I am really tired of TECO's lame  
2           excuses. Tired of being one of one-third of  
3           Emera's customers but a source of two-thirds of  
4           Emera's profit. I am tired of TECO getting a  
5           guaranteed profit far higher than the nine percent  
6           national average, and they are now asking to  
7           increase that to 11.5 percent.

8           I'm tired of TECO still burning coal and  
9           getting three quarters of their energy from gas,  
10          which could tomorrow zoom back up in price, yet  
11          still wanting to build a new gas plant. And I am  
12          insulted by their request for half a billion  
13          dollars to build a new headquarters on high ground  
14          so they can escape the rising sea level that their  
15          coal and gas burning are helping create.

16          Please turn down TECO's request and tell them  
17          to get serious about reducing costs by investing  
18          more in the fuel with zero fuel cost, solar.

19          Thank you.

20          CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Thank you for your  
21          testimony.

22          Next up is Mr. Paul O'Byrne, O'Byrne, am I  
23          saying at that correctly?

24          MR. O'BYRNE: Yes. That's correct.

25          CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Okay. You are recognized,

1           sir, when you are ready.

2           MR. O'BYRNE:   Okay.   First of all, I have to  
3           -- I have to double down on what was just stated.  
4           I am in the same boat as their family is.

5           I am a customer for 30 years.   I have done  
6           everything I can to reduce my rate, and yet it  
7           still keeps going up because of the reasons that  
8           were stated.

9           CHAIRMAN LA ROSA:   Okay.   Great.   Thank you.  
10          Does that conclude your testimony?

11          MR. O'BYRNE:   I want to thank you for these --  
12          no.   I thank you for these meetings.

13          It's my understanding that the Public Service  
14          Commissions were created to protect the public from  
15          large power companies such as this, continually  
16          raising rates without good cause.   Instead of  
17          simply rubber stamping every increase rate that  
18          comes across from the companies' proposals, I am  
19          asking to decline this proposal for an increase.

20          For decades the oil and gas companies have  
21          lied to the public about the global warming.   They  
22          have never been held accountable.   The time has  
23          come to transition off of coal, off of oil and gas.  
24          And these power companies tell us that they are  
25          doing so, at a very slow pace.

1           The federal government has stepped up and made  
2           billions of dollars of our tax dollars available to  
3           help them pay for that transition, so why are we,  
4           the public, being asked to pay again for these same  
5           upgrades?

6           If we are using more and more free energy from  
7           the sun and the wind, then why are our power bills  
8           still going up? They should be decreasing instead  
9           of increasing. It sounds like someone is using  
10          funny math to keep their record profits coming into  
11          their pockets. This kind of corporate greed is out  
12          of control across the country, across many  
13          corporations and industries, particularly power.

14          The average American can't afford it anymore.  
15          The Public Service Commissioners, that is what we  
16          ask of you, please stop the unwarranted rate  
17          increases.

18          Thank you.

19          CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Thank you for your  
20          testimony.

21          MR. O'BYRNE: I look -- and again, I am sorry,  
22          I didn't speak up at the beginning. It's Paul  
23          O'Byrne. I live in Homasassa, Florida. I have  
24          been there over 30 years using TECO. Their service  
25          has been somewhat adequate. The power outages come

1 and go on a regular basis, and, you know, the rate  
2 increases just keep coming. It's got to stop  
3 sometime. Please.

4 Thanks.

5 CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Thank you, Mr. O'Byrne.

6 Hold on one second, Mr. Ponce has a -- may  
7 have a question for you.

8 MR. PONCE: Hello, Mr. O'Byrne. This is  
9 Octavio with the Office of Public Counsel.

10 You just mentioned that you have outages that  
11 come and go. Are these recent outages?

12 STAFF: I am sorry, he's left the conference.

13 MR. PONCE: In that case, we can move on to  
14 the next caller.

15 CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: I believe you guys have his  
16 contact information.

17 MR. PONCE: We will follow up.

18 CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Awesome.

19 MR. MEANS: Mr. Chairman, we are still going  
20 to reach out to Mr. O'Byrne.

21 CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Okay. Awesome. Thank you.

22 Yeah, let's move to the next -- the next  
23 list -- the next group on the list.

24 MR. PONCE: So there is one last name on this  
25 list, but there is another name that appears on the

1 old list that's not on this one.

2 CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Is it Lakevia Alexander?

3 MR. PONCE: That's correct.

4 CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Okay. Let's go ahead,  
5 we're into this one, this group, and then I will  
6 ask her to be sworn in.

7 MR. PONCE: Okay. So in that case, the next  
8 caller offering testimony is Mr. David Coleman?

9 CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: David Coleman, are you on  
10 the line?

11 MR. COLEMAN: Yes. Can you hear me?

12 CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: We can hear you loud and  
13 clear. We are ready for you when you are ready.

14 MR. COLEMAN: Okay. Thanks.

15 And I want to thank you for having this  
16 meeting, and also the second Commissioner who asked  
17 bad job, good job, so I quickly kind of wrote kind  
18 of, like, a summary.

19 I also did, before I start speaking, want to  
20 address that you have a built-in AC in the room and  
21 you are suffering a little bit. I have two window  
22 AC units that run pretty much constantly,  
23 especially with this heat that we have been having,  
24 and in the winter, I have no heat. So I do know  
25 what it's like to suffer under extremes.

1           I am an elder on Social Security. I do the  
2           best that I can. I turn the oven on in periods of  
3           time when it's really freaking cold, but I  
4           certainly can't leave that on at night when I go to  
5           bed, but anyway, here is my quick summary.

6           A major point on the purpose of the rate hike  
7           is responsibility to provide sustainably sourced,  
8           competitively priced power for Hillsborough County,  
9           which TECO does not, and has a history of greed.  
10          Big Bend should actually be a federal super fund  
11          site.

12          And then on the positive side, when we have  
13          locally sourced awesome employees that rise to the  
14          occasion of hurricanes, winds, et cetera,  
15          absolutely, that's also a part of the definition of  
16          the job.

17          I have been a resident here for 24 years. As  
18          I said, I am on disability, living on Social  
19          Security, and I have United Health Care. They give  
20          me a healthy food benefit, and it's called Utility  
21          Food Benefit, and what I actually do is I take  
22          money out of my healthy food benefit and I am able  
23          to pay a utility bill, and I pay my -- I pay my  
24          energy bill out of my food money.

25          Emera took over a mess called TECO, and I will

1 be bringing on Thursday, and I hope that you guys  
2 might procure copies of these documents that I am  
3 going to mention, at least look at or have at your  
4 disposal on the tables. One is the 2001 Consent  
5 Order that is to remove the coal ash pile. I will  
6 read more from that page in a moment. And also,  
7 the TECO Ash Pond Closure Plan of 2018.

8 There is also a document that was written in  
9 January 2015, it's called the Tampa Electric  
10 Company's Big Bend Utility Plant in Hillsborough, a  
11 Case Study. And it's by Lynn Hodalski,  
12 H-O-D-A-L-S-K-I, dash, Champagne.

13 The key words at the opening page of her  
14 thesis that she did from her criminology paper, the  
15 key words are coal-fired power plants, coal fly  
16 ash, environmental crime, environmental justice,  
17 environmental racism, corporate environmental  
18 violence. And she -- she does quite a job in the  
19 150 pages of defining all of those things that are  
20 created by this longstanding company called TECO.

21 Regarding the ash pond closure, at about 2019,  
22 I inquired my local Hillsborough EPC, which is in  
23 charge of monitoring it, and their response was a  
24 one-sentence response, and it said, we are visually  
25 monitoring the progress of closing down those



1 piles. And then I inquired again at the -- last  
2 year, at a regular BOCC meeting here in  
3 Hillsborough, and the EPC happened to be in the  
4 room, and one of the Commissioners directed to EPC  
5 would they please answer my question. And they  
6 answered me that 10 piles were moved to create one  
7 pile that is now lined, because the others were  
8 unlined, and -- but that -- this is what they  
9 added, and I didn't ask for this information but  
10 they volunteered it. They are currently monitoring  
11 the shifting toxic plume that remains below where  
12 the coal ash piles were. And everybody knows how  
13 TECO likes to brag about the 100 manatees that come  
14 in. I wonder how many people know that they are  
15 swimming directly adjustment to a shifting toxic  
16 plume in our estuary.

17 I would like to read a couple of excerpts from  
18 -- from her paper, and I will be brief and you can  
19 get on.

20 One of them here says that -- this is going  
21 back away, but TECO's monetary investment  
22 improvements in civil penalties assessed ed by the  
23 government amounted to just short of \$15 million.  
24 TECO's legal -- legal maneuvering included closure  
25 of the docket on its FDEP case. TECO was not held

1           respons -- accountable for the provisions of  
2           Florida FS -- I mean, CFJ, only the provisions of  
3           CFJ and the EPA included in their lawsuit.

4           In addition to this legal injustice to the  
5           state, TECO then filed for reimbursement of -- for  
6           all the pollution controls and monitoring equipment  
7           stipulated in the final settlement with the EPA.  
8           In October 2000, TECO filed for relief through the  
9           Environmental Cost Recovery Clause. The Court  
10          approved the request. TECO was allowed to pass the  
11          cost of all renovations, pollution controls and  
12          monitoring on to its customers through systemic  
13          rate increases.

14          The government's settlement agreement included  
15          a 10-year timeframe for all compliance issues, as  
16          well as an opt-out clause for TECO in the event  
17          they couldn't complete the necessary renovations  
18          and remain financially solvent. I mean, this is  
19          the kind of thing that has been going on forever.

20          And then here's a local paper article. It  
21          says: The Tampa Bay Times ranked Florida as the  
22          third worst in the nation for power plant generated  
23          toxic air, while Tampa's electric Big Bend Power  
24          Plant was listed by name in an article as one of  
25          the largest polluters in the state, even as the

1 industry continues to sanitize their environmental  
2 image with residents of Florida and environmental  
3 action groups around the United States. It lists a  
4 bunch of specifics.

5 And then it says: In 2000, only to the  
6 previous violations at the Big Bend facility, TECO  
7 and the U.S. EPA entered into agreement to settle  
8 prior environmental violations. The settlement had  
9 drawn public criticism. Environmental protests and  
10 rallies have occurred at the Big Bend facility  
11 since the EPA settlement in 2000. The most recent  
12 protest was in 2011 -- this is a dated article from  
13 2015 -- when 150 protestors blocked the main  
14 entrance into the Big Bend facility, Occupy Wall  
15 Street and Earth First, a small environmental group  
16 based in St. Petersburg, joined forces. Six  
17 protestors chained themselves to PVC pipe and  
18 clogged US 41 and Wyandotte Road near the entrance  
19 of the facility. TECO officials were quick to  
20 point out that the protest did not cause any  
21 disruption to the daily operation of the plant.  
22 The Apollo Beach Plant has become a rallying point  
23 for environmentalists who wish to see coal-fired  
24 plants shut down in the state of Florida, and  
25 across the United States.

1           And instead of switching over to sustainable  
2           solar and wind, TECO has chosen their longstanding  
3           ownership of their own gas plant, which they the  
4           relationship. They own -- first they purchased a  
5           company in New Mexico and they own their own gas  
6           plant. Why wouldn't they say no to solar when they  
7           are making money on their own product selling it to  
8           themselves. I just -- I will see you on Thursday.  
9           Thanks for letting me share.

10           CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Thank you, Mr. Coleman. Do  
11           you -- just -- so I'm going to kind of go back to  
12           rehash something that you mentioned early on. Were  
13           you anticipating to submit what you were  
14           referencing as an exhibit?

15           MR. COLEMAN: I gave -- I gave the names of  
16           these documents. Here is the department --

17           CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Well, I --

18           MR. COLEMAN: -- here is the 2001. It says:  
19           All --

20           CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Mr. Coleman, Mr. --

21           MR. COLEMAN: -- consent order --

22           CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Yeah, Mr. Coleman, rather  
23           than reference the documents, which I think you  
24           already have, I am just looking to kind of give you  
25           the opportunity, do you want to submit that --

1 MR. COLEMAN: No, here's the specific number.

2 Here's the --

3 CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: That's not what I am  
4 looking for.

5 MR. COLEMAN: Here's the specific number.

6 CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: I am trying to give you the  
7 opportunity --

8 MR. COLEMAN: I can't afford to copy them. I  
9 made copies. The answer to your question is, no.  
10 I have two copies. I will have them in a case that  
11 I carry with me --

12 CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Okay.

13 MR. COLEMAN: -- but I cannot afford to print  
14 out another 150 pages of documents. I have copies.  
15 I am not going to bring them to you.

16 This is the consent order, OGC case number  
17 1275, Tampa Electric versus Big Bend Station,  
18 Hillsborough County. And what else is on here?  
19 That's about it. That's -- that is the specific  
20 document that is being referred to in this  
21 environmental protection --

22 CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Okay. Perfect.

23 So if others want to reference that date, they  
24 certainly can.

25 Okay. Thank you, Mr. Coleman.

1           Are there any questions for Mr. Coleman? It  
2           doesn't look like there is any.

3           Thank you, Mr. Coleman, for your testimony  
4           today.

5           MR. COLEMAN: Thank you.

6           CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: No, thank you.

7           Next up, we have Lakevia Alexander. Ms.  
8           Alexander, if you are on the line, my records shown  
9           that you have not been sworn in. Lakevia  
10          Alexander. Not hearing her.

11          Okay. I am going to back to the folks that I  
12          did not hear from. Aslam Hayat. Mervin Sletten.  
13          I believe that's it.

14          MS. ALEXANDER: Lekevia Alexander is here.

15          CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Okay. All right. Great.

16          MS. ALEXANDER: How are you doing?

17          CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: I'm doing well. Lakevia,  
18          my records show that you have not been sworn in.  
19          Do you swear to affirm that you will present the  
20          truth in this matter and that you are a customer of  
21          TECO?

22          MS. ALEXANDER: Yes.

23          CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Great. You can begin your  
24          testimony when you are ready.

25          MS. ALEXANDER: I am sorry?

1           CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: You can begin your  
2 testimony when you are ready. You can begin your  
3 comments you would like to provide.

4           MS. ALEXANDER: Oh, to TECO?

5           CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Yeah, we're --

6           UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Yes.

7           CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Yeah, we are listening to  
8 you, so whatever you would like to provide as  
9 comments or commentary, please -- please do so.

10          Ms. Alexander, are you still there on the  
11 line?

12          Okay. I don't know if we lost her or she  
13 disconnected.

14          STAFF: She's still on the line, sir.

15          CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Still on.

16          Ms. Alexander, are -- do you want to offer any  
17 comments for today's meeting?

18          Okay. Is there anybody else that I have not  
19 called your name that has either joined the call or  
20 maybe signed up late that you did not make the  
21 official record, anyone that has not had a chance  
22 to speak today?

23          MR. HAYAT: Mr. Chairman, this is Aslam Hayat  
24 on the line.

25          CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Okay. All right.

1           Excellent. Aslam Hayat, you are recognized, sir,  
2           when you are ready. You are on the list.

3           MR. HAYAT: All right. So I am looking at --  
4           well, first of all, I do not support the rate  
5           increase for TECO. So thanks to TECO that they are  
6           servicing Hillsborough County. I am in  
7           Hillsborough County in Tampa. But, you know, the  
8           rate increase, it's the simple math that does not  
9           make sense to me, and it probably never will. I  
10          have been looking at this year after year.

11          So now I am looking into their filing for  
12          1,000 kilowatt hour consumption, the bill as of  
13          right now is \$136.44. After the rate increase, the  
14          same bill for 1,000 kilowatt hours will be \$153.90,  
15          that's about 12 percent increase. And I don't  
16          think Tampa Electric has done the significant kind  
17          of upgrades to anything that is justify that  
18          12 percent increase.

19          On the solar, you know, solar interconnected  
20          with Tampa Electric. When I tried to put the  
21          solar, you know, even the Hillsborough County,  
22          according to the codes, everything was okay, but  
23          Tampa Electric has extensive breakers requirement.  
24          I have, like, 12 breakers for batteries and solars.  
25          To me, it felt like they are trying to discourage



1 the solar -- solar of the customers who are willing  
2 to install the solar.

3 You know, solar, people are installing because  
4 of the tax credit, or they are trying to save the  
5 environment. Whatever reason. It should be -- we  
6 all understand that there is a risk when you  
7 connect your solar with the grid. We all  
8 understand that. And Tampa Electric requires \$1  
9 million insurance if it's more than 10 kW. But the  
10 process itself is so cumbersome, and on top of  
11 that, if you have extra energy, when you buy from  
12 Tampa Electric one kilowatt hour, you are paying  
13 roughly about 15.6 cents right now. It's going to  
14 be 15.3 cents after the rate increase. If you have  
15 X kilowatt hour that you are trying to sell to  
16 Tampa Electric, they will give you two cents. This  
17 is -- what kind of business model is that? That is  
18 a steal to me.

19 I mean, we all understand we have a  
20 transmission line. If you are producing your  
21 energy at home, it has to be transmitted to the  
22 grid. We understand that, and there is a cost to  
23 that. There is a transmission element. Tampa  
24 Electric owns the transmission line. We understand  
25 we have to pay. But two cents versus 15 or 13

1 cents, it doesn't make sense to me at all. I mean,  
2 there is no business I have seen in my life. I  
3 mean, this is the third highest rate in the  
4 country, which should not surprise me because the  
5 numbers are all, you know, does not make any sense.

6 Then I am looking at other charges. When I  
7 read the docket, it says, other charges include  
8 energy conservation, cost recovery charge, capacity  
9 charge, environmental cost recovery charge, clean  
10 energy transition mechanism, storm restoration  
11 surcharge and a storm protection charge. With all  
12 these charges, we don't see those itemized. How  
13 much they spend for clean energy transmission, for  
14 example. And if they do, there are federal  
15 subsidies.

16 I mean, as a homeowner, I get 30 percent tax  
17 credits for installing the solar. I'm pretty sure  
18 Tampa Electric has more than that. They are  
19 probably getting 50 percent, if not more.

20 So my question is, you know, when is this rate  
21 increase going to be reasonable? I am not saying  
22 there will not be a rate increase, because I  
23 understand the electric business, and they are  
24 doing great in my neighborhood. Thanks for that.  
25 It's a great service. But this rate increase does

1 not make sense to us. And I am pretty sure my  
2 neighbors here, they don't agree with it. It has  
3 to be reasonable. The inflation, we all know that,  
4 two, three, understandable, 12 percent does not  
5 make sense.

6 That's -- that's all the comments I wanted to  
7 do. Thank you, Chairman. Thank you, Commission,  
8 for preserving this public opinion. Thanks.

9 CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Thank you for your  
10 testimony.

11 All right. Is there anybody else on the line  
12 that you have either been skipped over or maybe  
13 weren't on when I called your name, or anybody new  
14 on the line that's joined us?

15 Okay. Not hearing any, I just kind of want to  
16 make some final comments.

17 Again, thank you for the opportunity today to  
18 join us, and for offering your comments and  
19 thoughts. Certainly, this is a big part of the  
20 hearing process, and, again, hearing directly from  
21 customers is important.

22 Commissioners, any other questions?

23 Mr. Ponce, from OPC, you are recognized.

24 MR. PONCE: I just had a quick question.

25 CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Yes, sir.

1           MR. PONCE: First, I wanted to thank you. I  
2 think some of our customers went over the five  
3 minutes, so I appreciate your patience for letting  
4 them speak.

5           I also wanted to say, we appreciate the  
6 company being willing to reach out to these  
7 customers again, the ones who mentioned specific  
8 problems. That actually is what my question is  
9 about. I wanted to ask if the company would be  
10 willing to go ahead and file a report of the  
11 results of these, every time they reach out to  
12 these customers in the docket in this matter?

13           CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: TECO?

14           MR. MEANS: The short answer -- sorry, we were  
15 having a discussion. The short answer is, yes, but  
16 to the extent that it would require customer  
17 specific information, we would have to have  
18 permission from the customer to share that, if that  
19 makes sense.

20           MR. PONCE: I mean, if it can be done. And if  
21 they don't give that permission, in way that keeps  
22 it anonymous, we would appreciate that.

23           MR. MEANS: Okay. We will see is what we can  
24 do then.

25           CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Great. Thank you.

1                   MR. PONCE: Thank you.

2                   CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Any other questions from  
3 the counsel? Commissioners?

4                   All right. Excellent. Well, then that  
5 concludes our service hearing today. And again,  
6 thank you everyone for partaking. Thanks.

7                   (Proceedings concluded.)

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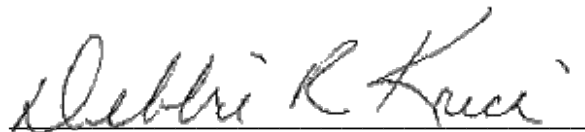
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