



Consumer Connection NEWSLETTER

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March 2025

Keynote Speaker at 52nd Annual PURC Conference



Chairman Mike La Rosa opened the second day of the 52nd Annual Public Utility Research Center (PURC) Conference on February 20 with a keynote address on Embracing Change, reinforcing the conference's theme:

Resilient Infrastructure in a Changing World: Technology, Policy, and Preparedness.

"Don't resist evolution - embrace it. Surround yourself with excellence."

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Chairman Mike La Rosa: Delivers Keynote Address at PURC

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Chairman Mike La Rosa opened the second day of the 52nd Annual Public Utility Research Center (PURC) Conference on February 20 with a keynote address on Embracing Change, reinforcing the conference's theme: *Resilient Infrastructure in a Changing World: Technology, Policy, and Preparedness*.

Acknowledging that change is inevitable, Chairman La Rosa highlighted technology as the driving force shaping the future of the utility industry. He emphasized that embracing change goes beyond adopting new technologies—it's about cultivating the right mindset and industry culture to navigate transformation effectively.

"In a changing world, we have the opportunity to foster productivity, competition, and investment," Chairman La Rosa stated. "We can balance reliability with progress and stability with innovation."

Chairman La Rosa said, "Don't resist evolution—embrace it. Surround yourself with excellence. Accountability breeds success. And above all, keep your purpose at the center." Chairman La Rosa reinforced that while technology continues to evolve, the mission remains the same—to provide safe, reliable, and consistent service to the communities we serve. He closed with a challenge to industry leaders:

"Don't just observe change—be the driver of change. Pave the path for the next generation."



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Chairman Mike La Rosa Sworn-In for Second Commission Term

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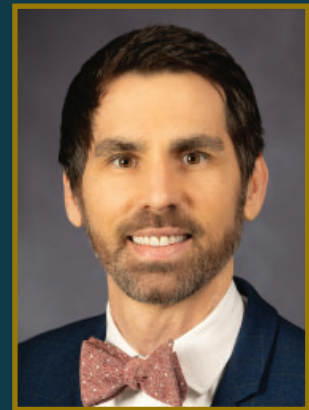
Governor Ron DeSantis re-appointed Chairman Mike La Rosa to serve a second four-year term on the Florida Public Service Commission, beginning January 2, 2025.

Before presiding over the January 7, 2025 Commission Conference, the Chairman took his Oath of Office in the Commission's hearing room at the Betty Easley Conference Center in Tallahassee.

Chairman La Rosa's family attended and participated in the ceremony, with his oldest son holding the Bible used for the Oath. PSC Executive Director, Braulio Baez, provided the Oath, as the Chairman's wife and two younger sons observed the special ceremony.

Chairman La Rosa, who also began his second year as Chairman in 2025, was first appointed to the Commission 2021.

Commissioner Fay Discusses Regulatory Training and Development with NARUC Subcommittee on Education and Research



Commissioner Andrew Fay participated in NARUC's Subcommittee on Education and Research session on February 23 at its Winter Policy Summit. Commissioner Fay contributed to discussions on regulatory training programs and initiatives to strengthen professional development within the utility regulatory sector.

As part of NARUC's ongoing efforts to enhance regulatory expertise, the Subcommittee addressed key training programs and educational opportunities for Commissioners, commission staff, and other members of the utility industry.

The session provided updates on several critical training programs, including:

- ◆ NARUC Rate School, where Commissioner Fay is the lead faculty member. The Rate School is the nation's premier utility rate development program for Commission Staff, and other stakeholders.
- ◆ Regulatory Training Initiative (RTI), a live online and pre-recorded training designed to deepen participants' understanding of utility regulation, regulatory accounting and finance, cost-benefit analysis, and utility law fundamentals.
- ◆ NARUC New Commissioner Regulatory Orientation (NCRO), a two-day specialized training seminar for recently appointed state commissioners.

During the session, Commissioner Fay emphasized the importance of continued education for utility regulators, "Effective regulation depends on a strong knowledge foundation and continuous learning. Investing in robust training programs ensures that regulators are well-equipped to make informed decisions that serve the public interest."



Commissioner Passidomo Smith Moderates General Session Panel at NARUC Winter Policy Summit

Commissioner Gabriella Passidomo Smith played a pivotal role at the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners (NARUC) Winter Policy Summit, moderating the General Session panel on "Peering into the DC Crystal Ball." Held on February 26, the session provided valuable insights into the evolving federal regulatory landscape and its impact on state utility oversight.

The session focused on the intersection of state and federal energy policies. With a new Congress and shifting priorities in agencies such as the Department of Energy and the Environmental Protection Agency, the discussion addressed critical questions about how regulatory changes will impact consumer affordability, capital investment, and grid reliability.

Commissioner Passidomo Smith led a panel of energy industry executives who shared their perspectives on regulatory and legislative challenges for the coming year, including:

- ◆ Michelle Bloodworth, President & CEO, America's Power
- ◆ Marty Durbin, President, Global Energy Institute, U.S. Chamber of Commerce
- ◆ Jason Grumet, CEO, American Clean Power Association (ACP)
- ◆ Karen Harbert, President & CEO, American Gas Association (AGA)
- ◆ Maria Korsnick, President & CEO, Nuclear Energy Institute (NEI)
- ◆ Robert Powelson, President & CEO, National Association of Water Companies (NAWC)

Emphasizing the importance of collaboration between state and federal entities, Commissioner Passidomo Smith said, "As we navigate the evolving federal regulatory landscape, it's imperative that state and federal entities collaborate effectively to ensure that policies not only drive innovation but also safeguard consumer interests, particularly in maintaining affordability and reliability."



Assessing Security of Electric and Natural Gas Facilities Against Cyber Attacks

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Florida's utilities recognize the importance of these key areas and have dedicated substantial resources to prepare for and respond to cyberattacks, natural disasters, and other threats to maintain security and service reliability.

Large utilities maintain a defense-in-depth strategy by deploying cyber technology professionals and cooperating with relevant federal agencies to comply with rules and statutes. Utilities are also scrutinizing supply chain vulnerabilities, making use of smart technology and performing ongoing self-assessments.

You can read the complete plan recommendations, background and perspective, current oversight and protections, and analysis of confidentiality issues [here](#).



In 2024, the Legislature directed the Florida Public Service Commission to recommend a plan for assessing “the security and resiliency of the state’s electric grid and natural gas facilities against both physical and cyber threats,” in consultation with the Division of Emergency Management and the Florida Digital Service.

Completed in January 2025, recommendations for an assessment plan—should the Legislature decide to require one—focus on five essential functions of a comprehensive cyber and physical security program:

- 1. Risk Assessment and Mitigation** – Identifying potential threats and implementing strategies to reduce vulnerabilities.
- 2. Self-Evaluation and Internal Controls** – Ensuring utilities continuously review and improve their security measures.
- 3. Regulatory Compliance** – Monitoring adherence to federal and state security regulations.
- 4. Technology System Protection** – Strengthening protections for information and operational technology.
- 5. Readiness Planning and Testing** – Conducting regular tests and emergency response exercises.

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You Have a Voice in Your Utility Rates

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Prices of all goods and services seem to be rising. It's both frustrating and concerning, especially since it feels like there's nothing you can do about it. While this may be the case in many instances, there is something you can do when your electric, natural gas, or water utility company requests a rate increase.

This summer, the Florida Public Service Commission (FPSC) will be holding customer service hearings for the customers of two investor-owned utility (IOU) companies that have petitioned the Commission for a rate increase. Customer service hearings are an important part of the FPSC's rate case process, allowing customers of the utility requesting a rate change to talk—or testify—directly to FPSC Commissioners about the utility's request and its quality of service.

Customer comments are considered official testimony and are entered into the case record. The record of testimony is reviewed and considered by FPSC staff when writing a recommendation on the case and by FPSC Commissioners when deciding the case. It's important for utility customers to take advantage of this opportunity to have their voice heard.

To encourage customer participation, the hearings are held in the utility's service territory at different locations and at various times to accommodate customer schedules. Customers register to speak on a first-come, first-served basis upon arrival at the venue. All customers wishing to speak to FPSC Commissioners are provided the opportunity; there is no limit set on the number of customers allowed to provide testimony.

*If a customer cannot attend a service hearing,
there are other ways to get his/her comments on the record.*

- ◆ The FPSC holds at least one virtual customer service hearing per case. Registration to speak at virtual hearings is easily found on the FPSC's website, www.FloridaPSC.com, and is available for two weeks prior to the scheduled virtual hearing. Customers speak in the order of registration. A telephone is all that's needed to participate in a virtual hearing.
- ◆ Written comments from customers are accepted by the FPSC Office of Commission Clerk. Customers can email comments to clerk@psc.state.fl.us, or mail comments to the FPSC Clerk at 2540 Shumard Oak Blvd., Tallahassee, Florida 32399. Customer comments must include the docket number for the utility's rate case, so that they can be filed as part of the official record.

Florida Power & Light Company (FPL), the state's largest electric IOU, petitioned the FPSC for new rates, effective in January 2026. The FPSC has scheduled seven customer service hearings—at locations from Pensacola to Miami—and two virtual service hearings in late May and early June. FPL's rate case docket number is [20250011](#).

Peoples Gas System, Inc. (PGS), the state's largest natural gas IOU, also petitioned the FPSC for a rate increase, effective in January 2026. Two customer service hearings—in Pembroke Pines and in Orlando—and one virtual service hearing are scheduled in July. PGS's rate case docket number is [20250029](#).

For more information, visit www.FloridaPSC.com or call 800-342-3552.