

Commission Approves Agreements on **Utility Storm Protection Plans**

The Florida Public Service Commission (FPSC) on August 18 approved Agreements that encourage future investments in storm protection for Florida Power & Light Company (FPL) and Gulf Power Company (Gulf); Duke Energy Florida, LLC (DEF); and Tampa Electric Company (TECO). The Agreements resolve all issues in the companies' storm protection plan (SPP) dockets.

“The storm protection plans outlined in the Agreements follow the policy set out by the Legislature to further ‘mitigate restoration costs and limit outage times for customers.’”

“The FPSC determined the Agreements are in the public interest because the programs continue to strengthen Florida’s grid and improve recovery times from severe weather events.”

- FPSC Chairman Gary Clark

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- ◆ FPL and Gulf jointly reached agreement with the Office of Public Counsel—representing customers—and Walmart, Inc.
- ◆ DEF reached agreement with the Office of Public Counsel—representing customers—White Springs Agricultural Chemicals, Inc. d/b/a PCS Phosphate, and Walmart, Inc.
- ◆ TECO reached agreement with the Office of Public Counsel—representing customers—the Florida Industrial Power Users Group, and Walmart, Inc. The Agreement resolves TECO’s storm protection plan and all issues in the SPPCRC.

Following legislation passed in 2019, new FPSC rules require Florida’s investor-owned utilities (IOUs) to file 10-year SPPs outlining initiatives to strengthen infrastructure to withstand extreme weather for FPSC approval. The FPSC is also required to provide an annual report on the status of the IOU’s storm protection activities to the Governor and the Legislature.

Florida’s IOUs already have storm hardening programs financed through a utility’s rate base. The new rules established a separate cost recovery mechanism for storm protection activities, as required in the new storm protection law. IOUs may seek FPSC approval to recover incremental costs annually—in a separate recovery clause—similar to their request for fuel cost recovery. A FPSC hearing in the SPPCRC docket is scheduled for October 13-15, 2020.

In April, the FPSC granted Florida Public Utilities Company a one-year delay in filing a storm protection plan. The utility requested an extension due to its system damage from Hurricane Michael in 2018.

FPL serves nearly 5 million customer accounts in Florida, and Gulf serves approximately 463,000 customers in Northwest Florida. DEF serves approximately 1.8 million customers in Florida.

TECO serves more than 750,000 customers in Hillsborough, Polk, Pinellas, and Pasco counties.