# STATE OF FLORIDA

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DIVISION OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS CHARLES H. HILL DIRECTOR (850) 413-6800

# **Public Service Commission**

June 14, 2002

#### VIA ELECTRONIC FILING

The Honorable Magalie R. Salas Federal Energy Regulatory Commission 888 First Street, NE Washington, DC 20426

RE: Docket No. RM02-1-000, Standardizing Generator Interconnection Agreements and Procedures Notice of Proposed Rulemaking

Dear Ms. Salas:

Forwarded herewith are comments of the Florida Public Service Commission on proposed rules in the above-captioned proceeding regarding Standardizing Generator Interconnection Agreements and Procedures.

Should you have questions, you may contact Melinda Butler, the primary staff person on this matter, at (850) 413-6875.

Sincerely,

/s/

Cynthia B. Miller, Esquire Bureau of Intergovernmental Liaison

CBM:tf

PSC Website: http://www.floridapsc.com Internet E-mail: contact@psc.state.fl.us

# UNITED STATES OF AMERICA BEFORE THE FEDERAL ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION

Docket No. RM02-1-000

Standardizing Generator Interconnection Agreements and Procedures
Notice of Proposed Rulemaking

#### COMMENTS OF THE FLORIDA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

The Florida Public Service Commission (FPSC) supports the FERC in its efforts to standardize generator interconnection and commends the FERC on its significant progress toward that end which is reflected in the Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NOPR), Standardization of Generator Interconnection Agreements and Procedures. The FPSC welcomes this opportunity to provide input on standardizing generator interconnection. However, on a broader level, the FPSC continues to support the development of a mechanism that would expand the opportunities for the FPSC to serve in a consultative and advisory capacity to the FERC on all issues related to bundled electric service, approval of generation interconnection agreements, and other matters affecting Florida retail consumers.

In regard to the proposed Interconnection Agreement, the FPSC offers recommendations to accommodate regional differences, among other things. The FPSC recommends that the FERC modify the Interconnection Agreement (IA) as set forth in Attachment A.

The FPSC is recommending that the FERC acknowledge and memorialize states as regulatory partners in the following areas:

- (1) reliability;
- (2) network upgrade cost allocation; and
- (3) indemnification for taxes imposed on Transmission Providers.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>The FPSC notes that we have a pending docket on the GridFlorida RTO, which may have overlapping issues. The State docket is paramount to the State Commission. These comments must necessarily be preliminary in nature.

The FPSC is also recommending that any unrefunded amounts paid by Generators for network upgrades be retained by a Transmission Provider after ten years from the date the network upgrades are placed in service.

Finally, the FPSC is recommending a period for NOPR reply comments to allow for a more thorough analysis of the queuing issue and the issues surrounding Network Resource Interconnection Service before final adoption of the rule.

# **Regulatory Partnership**

Although the IA and the Interconnection Procedures (IP) do not explicitly accommodate regional differences, the FERC gives recognition to the legitimacy of such differences. On page 16 of the NOPR, FERC states that,

While the Transmission Providers, state regulators and others may have raised legitimate concerns regarding regional differences, they have not specifically identified the modifications that need to be made to the IA and IP to accommodate these differences. In some instances, parties have raised concerns that are outside the standard terms and conditions of the NOPR IA and IP. The Commission proposes to adopt the approach used in Order No. 888: however, if commenters identify legitimate concerns about a need for regional variations in specific provisions in the NOPR IA and IP, the Commission will consider revisions to these provisions that would permit regional variations as appropriate.

# Reliability

As we have pointed out in our comments of January 8, 2001, states have engaged in various approaches to maintaining reliability in response to state-specific circumstances. For instance, in Peninsular Florida the utilities have developed a sophisticated system that is responsive to being vulnerable to a separation of the transmission system from the rest of the interconnected grid. Within this system, generator tripping points are coordinated with a scheme of load under-frequency

relaying. Thus, reliability is enhanced by preventing premature tripping of generators which, in turn,

could result in possible statewide blackouts.

Section 9.7.3 of the IA provides an example of how reliability would be enhanced in Florida

if the FERC were to acknowledge and memorialize state commissions as regulatory partners. As

the section currently reads, it does not adequately set forth the requirements that would perpetuate

the sophisticated system that is already in place.

As set forth in Attachment A, the FPSC is recommending that, for states with statutory

requirements to plan, develop and maintain a coordinated electric power grid, the parties to the IA

be subject to any modifications to the IA which are ordered by the state commission concerning

reliability. By acknowledging and memorializing state commissions as regulatory partners on

matters concerning reliability, FERC can facilitate states' efforts to fulfill their statutory

requirements to plan, develop, and maintain a coordinated electric power grid throughout their state.<sup>2</sup>

FERC can also promote competition by fostering a well managed, well functioning and coordinated

grid.

Network Upgrade Cost Allocation

Contained on page 3 of the NOPR are the issues that need to be resolved to properly

implement an interconnection agreement. Included on the list are how to allocate costs and benefits

and how to assign cost responsibility of system upgrades for interconnection. The FPSC believes

that there can be some serious drawbacks to states with "bundled" retail service to socialize

interconnection upgrade costs, as proposed.

<sup>2</sup>For instance, Florida has "grid bill authority" as set forth in Sections 366.04, 366.05, and 366.055, F.S.

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**Timeliness of FPSC Request.** Through a series of cases dating back to Public Service Company of Colorado and through more recent cases involving Tampa Electric and Florida Power & Light, the FERC has developed its incipient policy with respect to who pays and what is allocated. Along the way FERC has eliminated nearly all aspects of the "but for" test and through these cases has socialized interconnection costs to all users of the transmission system. Even though the NOPR expresses that proper implementation includes making an overt decision as to how to allocate costs and benefits and how to assign cost responsibility, there is no direct attention paid to these issues.

The FPSC believes that this is the opportune time for the FERC to re-examine its current cost assignment procedures with respect to interconnection facilities upgrades. Historically, when a generator (an incumbent or an independent) interconnected to the transmission system, that generator, in most cases, would be serving load of the incumbent utility. This incumbent utility was generally a transmission provider or was serving load for transmission customers of that utility. Thus, there was an approximate nexus of those causing the interconnection upgrades and those receiving the benefits. The advent of multi-regional and multi-state RTOs is likely to significantly exacerbate the problems created by the current cost assignment model being used by the FERC.

The FPSC strongly urges that the FERC follow its own directive to consider how to allocate costs and benefits and how to assign cost responsibility in order to properly implement standardization of generator interconnection agreements and procedures. The FPSC is recommending offering an option to states with bundled retail service to allocate certain network interconnection upgrade costs. Due to the unique features of this proposal, the FPSC believes that Generators can continue to receive credits which can help encourage their market participation. At the same time, costs can be properly allocated in order to reap the benefits that emanate from properly tracking cost causality.

**Drawbacks of Cost Socialization.** As was stated in our comments of January 8, 2002, in the instant docket, the FPSC continues to be concerned that the socialization of interconnection upgrade costs, as proposed, may provide a perverse incentive to locate generating units in places where the overall costs for fuel delivery, transmission, and other associated power plant costs, are not minimized. If plants are not located in the most efficient manner, costs to retail customers will increase unnecessarily.

The FPSC is concerned with the equity impacts of the elimination of direct cost assignments for facilities. One instance where there is a potential equity impact is where retail electric service is bundled. Another instance, can be drawn directly from Article 4, Scope of Service of the Standard Generator and Operating Agreement, of the NOPR. This agreement defines two types of interconnection services - Energy Resources (ER) and Network Resources (NR). In this instance the equity impacts may have a large financial consequence.

The problem with equity impacts arises with the NR service level. Section 4.1.2.1 of the Interconnection Agreement reads,

The Transmission Provider must conduct the necessary studies and construct the Network Upgrades needed to integrate the Facility (1) in a manner comparable to that in which the Transmission Provider integrates its generating facilities to serve native load customers; or (2) in an ISO or RTO with market based congestion management in the same manner as all other Network Resources.<sup>3</sup> [emphasis added]

This requirement under the NOPR appears to create an open checkbook allowing all generators to ask for the highest level of interconnection service knowing that these costs will be borne by all users of the system. Florida has a statutory requirement to add transmission lines that

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>The FPSC recognizes a further confusing result of this section. While the Transmission Provider is required to construct to a Network Resource designation level, the NOPR states that this does not mean that the generator must be designated a network resource in the future. This requires a standard of service be constructed that in fact may never be requested.

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meet a least-cost planning criteria. The FPSC is concerned that this proposal would violate such

practices.

It is possible that these costs will be significant. Section 4.1.2.1, as written, could potentially

require the Transmission Provider to construct extensive transmission backbone facilities that would

permit the generator to be designated a Network Resource. In essence, except for the up-front out-

of-pocket costs paid by the generator which will be reimbursed through the credit, the generator can

request premium interconnection service knowing that they will be fully reimbursed for such

upgrades. An unintended consequence of this NOPR could be that transmission facilities are over

built to the point that customers are not benefitted.

Although there are several states that have instituted retail competition, there are many states

in which that action has not yet been taken. The FPSC is most concerned about the equity impacts

in states with bundled retail service. In these instances, the socialization of network upgrade costs

has the greatest potential of being disproportionately borne by those customers that are receiving

minimal benefits.

Any benefits of competition, whether they be in the electric industry or elsewhere, arise

mainly from cost causers paying their fair share. All else being equal, proper price signals are

always preferable to costs being spread indiscriminately.

**FPSC Recommendation.** The FPSC recommends that the FERC allow states with bundled

retail service to have the opportunity to ensure that system upgrade costs are properly allocated.

Because Florida, as well as other states, has jurisdiction over retail rates, the state commission has

the ability to address issues such as cost separation, allocation and socialization. Therefore, to

promote effective wholesale competition, it is advisable for the FERC to acknowledge and

memorialize states as regulatory partners on matters pertaining to network upgrade cost allocation.

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Consistent with the FPSC's endorsement of an ongoing consultative and advisory role for state

commissions, the FPSC urges the FERC to institute a consultative process for receiving and

incorporating recommendations by states with bundled electric service into the development of FERC

approved transmission rates.

In the context of a FERC filing for changes in rate schedules by a Transmission Provider

operating in a state with bundled retail service, the respective state commission should be

acknowledged as appropriately recommending network upgrade cost responsibility allocations to the

FERC. The purpose of these allocations would be to set customer-specific transmission delivery

service rates that more closely track cost causality. The FERC would institute a consultative process

for receiving and incorporating the state recommendations into the development of approved

transmission rates. In no instance shall the total amount (total revenue requirement) designed to be

collected in transmission rates be modified as a result of using state commission cost responsibility

allocations.

By properly allocating the costs to the wholesale customers, the Generators can still receive

credits which can help encourage their market participation while the proper market signals can be

preserved.

If the FERC is unwilling to adopt the recommended findings in Attachment A, the FPSC

recommends that instead of eliminating the "but for" test, it be reinstated in states where electric

service is still bundled. The alternative recommendation is that the "but for" test would be in

existence until such time that unbundling occurs.

Indemnification for Taxes Imposed on Transmission Providers

In Section 5.14.3 of the IA, the FERC addresses the uncertainty surrounding whether

contributions by Generators to Transmission Providers in connection with interconnection and

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network facility construction will be considered non-taxable by the IRS. The FERC includes

language in the IA that provides Transmission Providers with a generator reimbursement obligation

in the form of an indemnification.

There appears to be some ambiguity in the last sentence of Article 5.14.3. The FPSC does

not understand what the FERC intended by the clause that begins ". . . provided however, that

Transmission Provider may require Generator to provide security . . . . " Our confusion starts with

the beginning part of the sentence which seems to point to instances in which gross-up are allowed

to be included in the amounts charged. We cannot discern how both grossing up the amount charged

and requiring securitization at the same time makes sense. A clarification would be appreciated.

In some instances, for certain Generators and certain Transmission Providers, an

indemnification will be enough to guarantee that retail ratepayers will not bear the ultimate

responsibility for paying for this. For other Generators, an indemnification may not be adequate.

Letters of credit, parental involvement or other forms of guarantees may be required to adequately

protect retail ratepayers from becoming the default responsible party.

Because this has elements of a local issue with local consequences, the FPSC recommends

that the indemnification treatment in the IA be subject to further review by the state, on a case by case

basis, in the event that the Transmission Provider petitions the state commission for a more stringent

standard (See Attachment A). The state should be able to best judge the acceptable risk to the

ratepayer and weigh it against the harms of placing a more stringent financial requirement on the

Generator.

**Treatment of Unrefunded Amounts Paid by Generators for Network Upgrades** 

In Section 11.4.1 of the IA, the FERC addresses the treatment of unrefunded amounts paid

by Generators for network upgrades. The FERC proposal includes the Transmission Provider

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refunding all unrefunded amounts 5 years from the date the Network Upgrades are placed in service.

The FPSC's modification of this section would change the 5 years to 10 and shift the risk to the

Generator by requiring them to forego any unrefunded monies. The FPSC believes that this treatment

is more appropriate because it recognizes that it can be reasonable to expect the pay back of this

investment to take longer than 5 years and that the ultimate responsibility for the risk should lie with

the Generator.

**NOPR Reply Comments** 

Prior to the issuance of the NOPR, the FERC indicated that interconnection pricing issues

would be addressed in a subsequent rulemaking. The FPSC strongly supports the FERC's decision

to address interconnection pricing issues at this time because clearly, interconnection products, terms,

and conditions cannot be divorced from the underlying pricing assumptions.

At the time the NOPR was being developed, many participants apparently did not fully

explore the resolution of some issues because of a concern about violating the FERC's "non-price

directive." One such issue may be queuing as discussed below. Solutions to the fundamental issues

surrounding queuing are not fully fleshed out in the NOPR even though the queuing procedures are

critical to the success of competition.

The queuing procedures in the NOPR perpetuate many uncertainties. For instance, in Section

4.4.5 of the IP, extensions of less than three cumulative years are not considered material. However,

extending the commercial operation date for a Generator that is higher up in the queue may lead to

the need for restudies for the Generators that are lower down in the queue. Thus, the number of times

a Generator can be required to "buy" a study seems to be open-ended.

Extending these commercial operation dates can also cause Generators' network upgrade cost

calculations to vary for significant periods of time without ever "locking in" until the Generator

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moves to the top of the queue. These uncertainties could undermine the financial viability of

Generators' projects and inadvertently cause a barrier to entry.

Because the queuing issue has not been fully explored up to this point (due to perceptions of

it possibly being intertwined with pricing issues) and because of its importance, the FPSC expects

that the parties will more fully address this issue in the current comment period. Therefore, it would

be very helpful to add a round of reply comments to allow for a thorough analysis of any proposed

refinements to the queuing procedure before final adoption of the rule.

Another area, Network Interconnection Service, is likely to be addressed by the comments

and would benefit from an additional round of input to the FERC. There is at least one very

important question about this new type of service which has yet to be addressed: What assumptions

are to be used in the Interconnection Study of this kind of service? In other words, which generators

or combinations of generators would appropriately be backed down in order to calculate what

upgrades would be needed at times of peak or otherwise? Depending on the assumptions used in the

studies, there may be a potential for overbuilding the transmission system when upgrades are made

to allow every Generator to reach every delivery point with its maximum output.

In the event that the parties set forth their positions regarding the issues surrounding Network

Interconnection Service, the FPSC would appreciate a reply comment period. The FPSC would like

the opportunity to be able to intelligently weigh-in on whether there is a serious potential for

overbuilding the transmission system and if so, what to do about it. At this point, the FPSC believes

that there is not enough information available to make an informed judgement.

Conclusion

The FPSC is urging the development of a mechanism that would expand the opportunities for

the FPSC to serve in a consultative and advisory capacity to the FERC on all issues related to bundled

electric service, approval of generation interconnection agreements, and other matters affecting

Florida retail consumers. The FPSC is specifically promoting the adoption of such a process to

accommodate state commission input on the important issue of cost allocation of interconnection

upgrades in states where electric service remains bundled.

The FPSC is also recommending that the FERC accommodate regional differences by

acknowledging and memorializing states as regulatory partners in the areas of reliability and

indemnification for taxes imposed on Transmission Providers. We believe that by embracing state

commissions as partners, FERC can fortify its efforts to promote competition while giving

recognition to the importance of reliability, efficiency and fairness.

The FPSC is also recommending that the FERC recognize that it is reasonable to expect the

payback of the interconnection upgrade investment to take as much as ten years and that the ultimate

responsibility of the risk should be borne by the Generator.

Finally, the FPSC is recommending a period for NOPR reply comments before final adoption

of the rule. In this way, the FERC can ensure that the full ramifications of at least the queuing and

the Network Resource Interconnection Service issues have been thoroughly analyzed before final

action is taken.

The FPSC continues to support the FERC in its endeavor to standardize generator

interconnection agreements and procedures although the FPSC has reservations concerning the

socialization of network interconnection upgrade costs in bundled retail states. While the FPSC

questions the wisdom of codifying a policy that socializes these costs among the general body of

ratepayers who did not directly cause the costs, the FPSC offers a unique compromise in which states

with bundled retail service could review the cost allocation matter and provide input to the FERC.

On this matter as well as others, we hope our comments will assist the FERC in its efforts to identify

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pro-competitive methods to address the unique needs of states and regions. We continue to value working with FERC in a collaborative manner on these and other important issues.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/

Cynthia B. Miller, Esquire Bureau of Intergovernmental Liaison

DATED: June 14, 2002

# - Proposed Modifications to the NOPR IA -

#### ARTICLE 3. REGULATORY FILINGS

- 3.1 Filing. The Transmission Provider shall file this Agreement (and any amendment hereto) with the state commission within which transmission service is provided and with any other appropriate Governmental Authority, if required. In states with statutory requirements to plan, develop, and maintain a coordinated electric power grid, the parties to this Agreement shall be subject to any modifications to the Agreement which are ordered by the state commission concerning reliability. In addressing reliability issues, states should give due consideration to the guidelines of the appropriate reliability council.
  - 3.1.1 Confidentiality. Any information related to studies for interconnection asserted by Generator to contain competitively sensitive commercial or financial information shall be maintained by the Transmission Provider and identified as "confidential" under seal stating that Generator asserts such information is Confidential Information and has requested such information be kept under seal. If requested by the Transmission Provider, Generator shall provide the Transmission Provider, in writing, with the Generator's basis for asserting that the information referred to in this Article 3.1 is competitively sensitive information, and the Transmission Provider may disclose such writing to the appropriate Governmental Authority. Generator shall be responsible for the costs associated with affording confidential treatment of such information.
  - 3.1.2 Cooperation. If the Generator has executed this Agreement, or any amendment thereto, the Generator shall reasonably cooperate with Transmission Provider with respect to such filing and to provide any information reasonably requested by Transmission Provider needed to comply with applicable regulatory requirements. If the Generator has executed this Agreement or any amendment thereto, unless the Parties agree otherwise, Generator shall not protest the filing of this Agreement or any amendment which Generator executed.

# Attachment A - Proposed Modifications to the NOPR IA (Continued)

#### 11.4 Transmission Credits.

- 11.4.1 Refund of Amounts Advanced for Network Upgrades. Generator shall be entitled to a cash refund, equal to the total amount paid to Transmission Provider for the Network Upgrades, including any tax gross-up or other tax-related payments, and not refunded to Generator pursuant to Article 5.14.7 or otherwise, to be paid to Generator on a dollar-for-dollar basis, as payments are made under the Transmission Provider Tariff for transmission services with respect to the Facility. Notwithstanding the foregoing, Transmission Provider shall refund all amounts paid by Generator for the Network Upgrades, together with interest, within five (5) years from the date the Network Upgrades are placed in service, so long as Transmission Provider continues to receive payments for transmission service with respect to the Facility during such period. Any amounts paid by Generator for the Network Upgrades and unrefunded after ten years from the date the Network Upgrades are placed in service shall be retained by Transmission Provider. Any refund shall include interest calculated in accordance with the methodology set forth in FERC's regulations at 18 C.F.R. §35.19a(a)(2)(ii) from the date of any payment for Network Upgrades through the date on which the Generator receives a refund of such payment pursuant to this subparagraph. Generator may assign such refund rights to any person.
- 11.4.2 Allocation of Network Upgrade Costs. In the context of a FERC filing for changes in rate schedules by Transmission Provider operating in a state with bundled retail service, the respective state commission may recommend network upgrade cost responsibility allocations to the FERC. The purpose of these allocations is to set customer-specific transmission delivery service rates that more closely track cost causality. The FERC shall institute a consultative process for receiving and incorporating the state recommendations into the development of approved transmission rates. In no instance shall the total amount (total revenue requirement) designed to be collected in transmission rates be modified as a result of using state commission cost responsibility allocations.
- 11.4.23 Reservation of Rights. Notwithstanding any other provision of this Agreement, nothing herein shall be construed as relinquishing or foreclosing any rights, including but not limited to firm transmission rights, capacity rights, transmission congestion rights, or transmission credits, that the Generator, shall be entitled to, now or in the future under any other agreement or tariff as a result of, or otherwise associated with, the transmission capacity, if any, created by the Network Upgrades, including the right to obtain refunds or transmission credits for transmission service that is not associated with the Facility.

# Attachment A - Proposed Modifications to the NOPR IA (Continued)

# ARTICLE 5. INTERCONNECTION FACILITIES ENGINEERING, PROCUREMENT, AND CONSTRUCTION

5.14.3 Indemnification for Taxes Imposed Upon Transmission Provider. Notwithstanding Article 5.14.1, Generator shall protect, indemnify and hold harmless Transmission Provider from income taxes imposed against Transmission Provider as the result of payments or property transfers made by Generator to Transmission Provider under this Agreement, as well as any interest and penalties, other than interest and penalties attributable to any delay caused by Transmission Provider. On a case-by-case basis, Transmission Providers shall be afforded the opportunity to contest the financial adequacy of indemnification by petitioning the state commission within which the Generator requesting interconnection is located. State commissions may make findings regarding the appropriate form(s) of security in proceedings that afford all affected parties the benefits of due process. Transmission Provider shall not include a gross-up for income taxes in the amounts it charges Generator under this Agreement unless (i) Transmission Provider has determined, in good faith, that the payments or property transfers made by Generator to Transmission Provider should be reported as income subject to taxation or (ii) any Governmental Authority directs Transmission Provider to report payments or property as income subject to taxation; provided, however, that Transmission Provider may require Generator to provide security, in a form reasonably acceptable to Transmission Provider (such as a parental guarantee or a letter of credit). in an amount equal to Generator's estimated tax liability under this Article 5.14. Generator shall reimburse Transmission Provider for such taxes on a fully grossed-up basis, in accordance with Article 5.14.4, within thirty (30) Calendar Days of receiving written notification from Transmission Provider of the amount due, including detail about how the amount was calculated.

# UNITED STATES OF AMERICA FEDERAL ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION

Standardizing Generator Interconnection	) Docket No. RM02-1-000	
Agreements and Procedures	)	

# **CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE**

I HEREBY CERTIFY that the foregoing Comments of the Florida Public Service Commission will be sent by U.S. Mail to all parties on the attached service list.

/ s /

Cynthia B. Miller, Esquire Bureau of Intergovernmental Liaison

FLORIDA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION 2540 Shumard Oak Boulevard Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0850

DATED: June 14, 2002

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