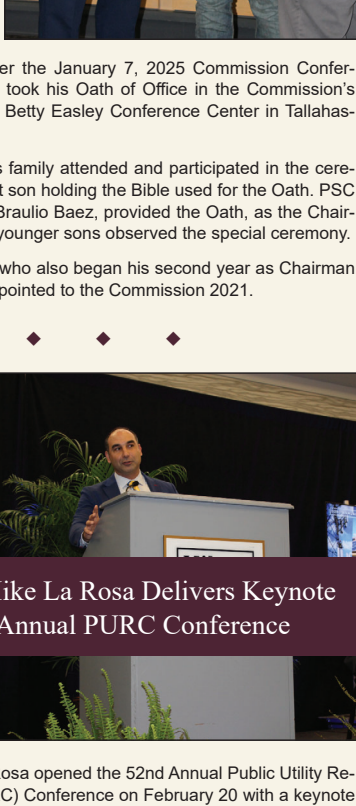


FROM THE DESK OF:

Chairman
Mike La Rosa

Chairman Mike La Rosa Sworn-In for Second Commission Term

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.



Chairman Mike La Rosa Delivers Keynote at 52nd Annual PURC Conference

Chairman Mike La Rosa opened the 52nd Annual Public Utility Research Center (PURC) Conference on February 20 with a keynote address focused on Embracing Change, reinforcing the conference 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."*

Public Utility Research Center at UF Discusses 2024 Annual Report

Located in the University of Florida's (UF) Warrington College of Business, PURC updated the PSC on its research and outreach projects over the last year on February 18. PURC is an internationally recognized academic center dedicated to research and training in utility regulation and strategy, as well as leadership development in infrastructure policy.

"PURC's leadership in utility industry education, training, and research is unmatched," said PSC Chairman Mike La Rosa. "Student engagement is an important part of PURC's education strategy, and it aligns with my workforce and economic development initiative. We were pleased to hear from two UF students who are benefiting from PURC's academic programs to build careers in infrastructure industries."

Students making brief presentations before PSC Commissioners were:

- Lily Padgett, a pre-doctoral student, who double-majored in Economics and Mathematics, and is studying renewable energy at PURC.
- Lily Haak, a senior majoring in Economics, who is studying technology policy and examining how European regulations impact digital businesses.

For more information on PURC and its research and training programs to help public utilities and regulatory agencies better understand issues confronting the energy, telecommunications, and water sectors, visit www.purc.ufl.edu.

Florida PSC Proposes to Host Gubernatorial Fellow

For the first time, the Florida PSC proposes to host a Florida Gubernatorial Fellow as part of the agency's internship program. The fellow will be a graduate or undergraduate student currently enrolled in a Florida public or private university who is interested in a public service career.

"We are excited to submit a proposal to host a Florida Gubernatorial Fellow at the PSC," said PSC Chairman Mike La Rosa. "As our industry expands into new frontiers driven by technological advancements, we have a unique opportunity to inspire and empower the next generation of leaders in Florida. By showcasing the impact and innovation within the utility sector, we can help them understand how they can play a pivotal role in its policy development and implementation."

Established in 2004 by Governor Jeb Bush, the Florida Gubernatorial Fellows program provides invaluable experience for students interested in public policy and government process. Look here for more information on the program.

Storm Restoration Recovery Costs Decided for TECO and DEF

On February 4, the PSC approved interim storm restoration recovery costs related to Hurricanes Idalia, Debby, Helene, and Milton for Tampa Electric Company (TECO) and Hurricanes Debby, Helene, and Milton for Duke Energy Florida, LLC (DEF). The Commission also approved both utilities' requests to replenish its storm reserve.

The approval of an interim storm restoration charge is preliminary in nature and is subject to refund, with interest, pending further Commission review once final audited costs are known. Final costs will be determined following a future Commission hearing.

TECO

TECO's approved interim recovery is \$463.6 million and meets the parameters of its 2021 Settlement Agreement. TECO requested recovery of \$34.5 million for Idalia, \$4 million for Debby, \$52 million for Helene, and \$358.9 million for Milton. The recovery total includes replenishment of TECO's \$55.8 million storm reserve.

The monthly bill impact per 1,000 kWh for a TECO residential customer is \$19.95. The surcharge will appear on a customer's bill for 18 months, beginning in March 2025-August 2026.

TECO serves over 850,000 customers in Hillsborough and portions of Polk, Pasco, and Pinellas counties.

DEF

DEF's approved interim recovery is \$1.09 billion and meets the provisions of its 2024 Settlement Agreement. DEF requested recovery of \$61 million for Debby, \$372.5 million for Helene, and \$769.7 million for Milton. The recovery total includes replenishment of DEF's \$131.9 million storm reserve.

The monthly bill impact per 1,000 kWh for a DEF residential customer is \$32.40. The surcharge will appear on a customer's bill for 12 months, beginning March 2025-February 2026.

DEF serves more than 2 million customers in Florida.

Hurricane Idalia hit Keaton Beach as a Category 3 hurricane in August 2023, Hurricane Debby made landfall as a Category 1 hurricane near Steinhatchee in August 2024. Hurricane Helene hit the Big Bend region, near Perry, as a Category 4 hurricane in September 2024. It was the strongest hurricane on record to strike the Big Bend region. Hurricane Milton landed near Siesta Key as a Category 3 hurricane in October 2024.

Assessing Security of Electric and Natural Gas Facilities against Cyber Attacks

In 2024, the Legislature directed the PSC 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.

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

CONSUMER EDUCATION & OUTREACH

PSC PROMOTES EDUCATION & PARTICIPATION FOR NATIONAL CONSUMER PROTECTION WEEK

Consumer education and public participation are important to the public interest process. National Consumer Protection Week (NCPW), March 2-8, 2025, stresses consumer rights each year, making this week the perfect time for the PSC to reach out to Florida's consumers.

"Public input in our decision-making process is essential, and there are many ways to participate. NCPW is a great opportunity for the PSC to educate Florida's consumers on how to make their voices heard," said PSC Chairman Mike La Rosa. "The PSC's outreach team is always available to assist; and this week, the Commission is focused on promoting NCPW's national consumer education and protection message."

For the 27th Annual NCPW, the Commission collaborated with senior and community centers in Hillsborough, Pinellas, and Broward Counties to host in-person and virtual events. PSC information was discussed, delivered, and distributed to consumers at the events. Consumers were also reminded how the PSC can assist them with utility issues. Information is a powerful tool to help protect them when making choices that affect their bottom line.

THE PSC STRIVES TO KEEP CONSUMERS INFORMED THROUGH:

Awareness/Education

The PSC coordinates information outreach to promote energy efficiency, water conservation, and scam prevention education with community agencies and senior centers. We also provide information on Lifeline Assistance, a federal program to make telecommunications/broadband services more affordable for low-income households.

Free Resources

The PSC's website provides information on hurricane preparedness, state social service agencies, and even a children's conservation activity book. PSC educational brochures may be accessed and printed directly from the website, ordered free online, or requested by mail or phone (1-800-342-3552). Consumers can also learn about docketed or emerging utility issues by visiting <https://www.floridapsc.com/>.

Hearings, Meetings, and Workshops

Public participation at the PSC's in-person and virtual hearings, meetings, or workshops is encouraged. Docketed items can register to speak at scheduled meetings on specific docketed items from our homepage. Customer meetings provide an inclusive process, allowing consumers to share their views with Commissioners. The PSC also [live streams](#) all its meetings.

The PSC's consumer analysts are available Monday-Friday at 1-800-342-3552 to assist consumers with possible scams, utility bills, or other utility matters. Consumers can also email the PSC at contact@psc.state.fl.us.

To learn more about NCPW, sponsored by the Federal Trade Commission, visit the [2025 NCPW website](#).

Commission Initiatives

Chairman La Rosa Recognizes PSC Staff on

Employee Appreciation Day

Dear Colleagues,

Did you know that the first Friday in March is designated as Employee Appreciation Day? This day was created to recognize and celebrate the hard work and dedication of employees in the workplace.

On this special day, my fellow Commissioners and I would like to take a moment to express our deepest gratitude for all that you do. Your hard work, dedication, and positive attitude make the Florida Public Service Commission the leader it is. Every task you take on, every challenge you tackle, and every effort you put forth doesn't go unnoticed. We are truly lucky to have such a talented and committed staff at the FPSC.

Thank you for your passion and energy you bring to the table each and every day. Enjoy this well-deserved recognition, and know that we appreciate you today and every day!

Employee of the Month

Lorena Hollet, with the Office of Commission Clerk, was January's Employee of the Month. Lorena was recently promoted to a Commission Deputy Clerk II and serves as the Commission's Confidential Document Coordinator. Lorena is always willing to go above and beyond her job duties to assist her co-workers. Lorena is an excellent communicator and is the go-to resource for both Commission staff and outside parties on the procedures for filing and handling confidential documents.

Thelma Crump, with the Office of Consumer Assistance & Outreach, was February's Employee of the Month. Thelma is an expert at engaging the public with "all things PSC." As the Commission's outreach coordinator, Thelma travels the state of Florida to meet with senior and community centers, area community action agencies, and housing authorities, among other venues, to educate residents about the PSC and how we can help them, from offering free publications to resolving a utility complaint.

Suzie Sapoznikoff, with the General Counsel's Office, was March's Employee of the Month. Suzie joined the Commission in September of 2022 as an appellate attorney in GCL's Appeals, Rules, and Ethics Section. Her attributes are many and her commitment to public service is deep. She mentors less experienced lawyers, and her communication skills, both oral and written, are exceptional. She relates well with others, has great vision, and is a wonderful, natural listener.

IA Song of the Month

January's Internal Affairs Song of the Month was "Private Eyes" by Hall and Oats, submitted by Cristina Slaton of COM.

For the first time, the February IA Song of the Month was submitted by the Employee of the Month. Many thanks to Thelma Crump for suggesting "Electricity" by Midnight Star.

The Internal Affairs Song of the Month for March was "The Future's So Bright" by Timbuk3, submitted by Katherine Flemming of COM and Jon Rubottom of GCL.

This year, the Chairman began a new series called **Coffee Talks 2.0**. Instead of meeting with each division separately, the Chairman's Office randomly selects 15-20 employees to have coffee and doughnuts in the Commission Suite each month. This format gives staff an opportunity to meet people that they may not have a chance to interact with in the course of their daily work.

On January 15, attending staff didn't have the opportunity to attend a previous **Coffee Talks** event or were recent hires; and therefore, they were not an employee when their division originally met with the Chairman. On February 28 and on March 21, attendees were literally drawn from a hat! No matter how employees were invited, all attending **Coffee Talks 2.0** had a great time.

FROM THE DESK OF:

Chairman **Mike La Rosa**

will be published online quarterly. Look [here](#) for past issues.