



FROM THE DESK OF:

*Chairman*  
**Mike La Rosa**

**On November 9, 2023, Commissioner Mike La Rosa's fellow Florida Public Service Commissioners elected him to serve as the Commission's Chairman for a two-year term beginning January 2, 2024.**

In electing Commissioner La Rosa to the Chairmanship, his fellow Commissioners praised his leadership abilities, citing his experience as a former State Representative serving in the Florida Legislature. Commissioner Art Graham said, Mike has a "reputation of being a serious and diligent legislator. He can get a lot of things done that some of us can't."

**Chairman La Rosa presided over his first Commission Conference on January 10, where he shared his vision and priorities for his term:**

- ◆ Reaching the next generation to bring and build career awareness—be it in government or the broader energy sector. The up-and-coming workforce can bring new ideas, processes, and skills that are needed to move us forward. It is important to me to be intentional in reaching young people who may not know how rewarding this work is.
- ◆ Looking for ways to increase accountability and credibility with customers, by leveraging new technologies to become as transparent as possible. I want to aide customers in understanding the regulatory process, find creative ways to reach Florida customers and help them to participate in a meaningful way.
- ◆ Enhancing economic development in Florida. Improving reliability and approving reasonable rates are just a few areas where the PSC can help align the priorities of the state with our utility providers. Be it natural gas infrastructure; clean, safe drinking water; or new utility services that weren't previously available – all of our regulated industries play a part in creating a friendly environment to attract new business and expand opportunities to improve the quality of life for all Floridians.

*Chairman La Rosa has made some positive changes at the Commission that encourage casual conversation and even include fun and meaningful music.*

## INTERNAL AFFAIRS: Song of the Day & Informative Presentations

A **Song of the Day** now begins the monthly Internal Affairs meetings. Since each featured song is chosen from those submitted by PSC staff or interested individuals, there is some good-natured competition involved. Not just any song will do: the selection must reflect the Commission's work.

- ◆ Appropriately, the January Internal Affairs meeting featured *Electric Avenue* by Eddy Grant as the **Song of the Day**, and February's IA meeting opened with *Electric* by Katy Perry. In March, *Mr. Telephone Man* by New Edition opened the meeting. Stay tuned for future **Songs of the Day**, as song submitters compete for a winning selection!
- ◆ Internal Affairs meetings also include informative presentations. Dr. Mark Jamison, Director of the Public Utility Research Center (PURC) at the University of Florida, not only provided an annual report on PURC Research and Outreach, he also introduced two students who each offered valuable insight into education efforts to build career awareness.
- ◆ Justin Brock, a senior studying environmental science and working with PURC, talked about his education experiences and asked Commissioners for advice on entering and succeeding in all aspects of the utility industry.
- ◆ Benjamin Morris, a Doctor of Business Administration student, discussed his dissertation proposal, Abnormal Shareholder Returns Around United States Regulated Utility Rate Case Filing and Decision Events.
- ◆ In February, Robert F. Powelson, President and CEO of the National Association of Water Companies (NAWC), highlighted the Association's priorities including emergency preparedness, water quality, affordability, combatting forever chemicals, and cybersecurity. Industry-related informational presentations are also planned for future IA meetings.

## Coffee Talks!

To spend time with all PSC employees on a more casual and personal level, Chairman La Rosa initiated **Coffee Talks!**. Every month, the Chairman meets with a PSC Division, bringing coffee and doughnuts, to visit with staff informally to learn more about the individuals who keep the Commission running each and every day.

So far, **Coffee Talk** visits have included the Division of Administrative & Information Technology Services and the Office of Consumer Assistance & Outreach. Coffee Talks offers a relaxed setting, encouraging easy conversation outside of Commission business.

## CONSUMER EDUCATION & OUTREACH

Florida's utility customers are central to the PSC's work, and we strive to reach them in a variety of ways to promote consumer education.

Since becoming Chairman, the Commission has traveled the state during **National Consumer Protection Week** (March 3-9), visiting with consumers to share utility-related scam awareness and protection tips, conservation strategies to help lower utility bills, as well as our many publications that assist consumers. We also highlighted **Fix a Leak Week** (March 18-23), a federal initiative to encourage water conservation and help lower utility bills.

In January, the Jacksonville area's 904 area code customers were alerted that **mandatory 10-digit dialing** was being implemented to prepare for the February 26 addition of the 324 area code overlay to accommodate the rapidly growing area.

Customer input is an important part of the Commission's rate case process. In January, the PSC held Customer Meetings for two water and wastewater utilities that have petitioned the Commission for a rate increase. Customers can provide testimony at these meetings on the utility's request and its customer service. Customer testimony is considered when making a decision on utility petitions.

## Chairman La Rosa's Participation at National Meetings

### 2024 NARUC Winter Policy Summit

During the Electricity Committee meeting at the 2024 NARUC Winter Policy Summit, Chairman La Rosa discussed the impact of upcoming federal environmental rulemaking on greenhouse gas emissions in Florida. There, they passed a resolution asking the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to, "Recognize the primacy of states, and to rely on both state utility and environmental regulators to lead the creation of emission performance systems that reflect the policies, energy needs, resource mix, and economic conditions of each state and region."

### DOE Workshop: Innovative Grid Deployment: Pathways to Commercial Liftoff

Additionally, while in Washington, D.C. this past February, Chairman La Rosa attended a workshop hosted by the U.S. Department of Energy's Grid Deployment Office and the Office of Technology Transitions focused on identifying priorities to accelerate the near-term deployment of commercially-available, innovative grid modernization technologies. There he provided his perspective on the challenges and opportunities of modernizing Florida's grid to best serve its customers.

### Energy Bar Association Southern Chapter 2024 Annual Conference

Chairman La Rosa participated on a panel with other Southeastern State Commission Chairmen and energy experts at the Energy Bar Association Southern Chapter's 2024 Annual Conference. His state-of-the-state speech provided an overview of the 2024 legislative session and highlighted how Florida has been impacted by national policies and changes within Florida's utility industry.

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*will be published online quarterly. Look here for future issues.*