



FROM THE DESK OF:

*Chairman*  
**Mike La Rosa**

### Chairman La Rosa Appreciates Hurricane Helene Response

*Before Hurricane Helene made landfall in Taylor County on September 26, FPSC staff were already stationed at Florida's Emergency Operations Center supporting utility customer electric outages reports and coordinating information flow from the state emergency personnel and utilities. Florida's utilities restored power in record speed, with only a few very hard hit areas still without power. As Helene's response and recovery efforts continue, I thank and appreciate FPSC employees for their ongoing dedication.*



### Chairman La Rosa Launches Workforce Development Series

In August, Chairman La Rosa initiated a new presentation series highlighting Florida's Workforce Development programs during the Florida Public Service Commission's (FPSC) monthly internal affairs meetings.

*"Reaching the next generation to bring and build career awareness is one of my priorities," Chairman La Rosa said. "The up-and-coming workforce can bring new ideas, processes, and skills to move us forward. The workforce development series will showcase the excellent programs in Florida's college and university systems that are shaping tomorrow's careers and leaders."*

Valencia College President Dr. Kathleen Plinske began the series by presenting, "Preparing the Next Generation Workforce." Valencia established its Advanced Manufacturing Training Center in 2016, and Dr. Plinske said that the Center works with industry partners to design programs that meet industry employment demands. Students can graduate with an industry certificate to immediately begin a career or transfer the certificate to college credit to continue their education.

Workforce Development in Florida will be further explored at future FPSC internal affairs meetings.

### FPSC Holds Nuclear Power Technology Workshop

On September 5, the FPSC held a Nuclear Power Technology Workshop. Topics included economic and technology updates on advanced nuclear power technologies, policy and regulatory issues related to advanced nuclear development, and opportunities for Florida.

Presenters included:

- ◆ Dr. Mary Lou Dunzik-Gougar, Professor of Nuclear Engineering, Idaho State University (on sabbatical to Idaho National Laboratory)
- ◆ Steve Swilley, Vice President of Nuclear, Electric Power Research Institute
- ◆ Florida Electric Power Coordinating Group
  - Jacob Williams, Chair, Board of Directors
  - Lauren Sher, Chair, Next Generation Nuclear Workgroup

The agenda also included an opportunity to hear from the public and interested stakeholders.

House Bill 1645, passed in the 2024 legislative session, requires the FPSC to study and evaluate the technical and economic feasibility of using advanced nuclear power technologies, including small modular reactors (SMRs), to meet the State's electrical power needs. The Bill also states that the PSC should evaluate ways to encourage and foster the installation and use of such technologies at military installations in the State, in partnership with public utilities. This evaluation is to be conducted in consultation with the Department of Environmental Protection and the Division of Emergency Management, concluding with a report submitted to the Governor and the Legislature by April 1, 2025.

Stakeholders were invited to file comments with the FPSC on the workshop and nuclear options for Florida. Workshop presentations are available on the FPSC [website](#) under Hot Topics.

### DEF Rate Case Settlement Agreement and TECO's Rate Case Hearing

After months of discovery, depositions, and testimony were conducted by FPSC staff and intervenors to Duke Energy Florida, LLC's (DEF) rate increase request, a settlement agreement on the case was filed by DEF and the Office of Public Counsel—representing customers—in July.

The FPSC held a hearing on the settlement on August 21. Commissioners unanimously approved the settlement, effective January 2025–December 2027, citing that it provides rate stability, increases clean solar energy production, and assists vulnerable customers during extreme weather conditions.

Over the settlement term, DEF will increase base rates by \$203 million in 2025 and \$59 million in 2026, for a cumulative rate increase of \$262 million. DEF's Return on Equity is set at 9.3 percent–11.3 percent, with a midpoint of 10.3 percent. Solar base rate adjustments (SoBRAs) are allowed as 12 new solar facilities, totaling 900 MW, come online.

Customers will also receive relief from reconnect fees after disconnection for non-payment through the settlement term, as well as relief from being disconnected for non-payment when the actual temperature is 95 degrees or higher, or when the heat index is 105 degrees or higher. To benefit customers, DEF will increase its participation goal for the Neighborhood Energy Saver program by 10 percent and increase smart thermostat installations from 10 percent to 40 percent.

Parties joining the settlement, in addition to DEF and the Office of Public Counsel, include Florida Retail Federation, Florida Industrial Power User's Group, Nucor Steel Florida, Inc., and White Springs Agricultural Chemicals, Inc. Other parties to DEF's rate case do not oppose the settlement or took no position.

An [FPSC hearing](#) on Tampa Electric Company's (TECO) rate increase request was held on August 26-30. More than 30 witnesses provided testimony and were cross-examined by intervenors, FPSC staff, and Commissioners throughout the week. After parties file briefs on the case (due October 16), Commissioners will decide TECO's revenue requirement and final rates in December.

### FPSC Holds Annual Ten-Year Site Plan Workshop

On September 10, the Commission held its annual 10-Year Site Plan Workshop to review Florida electric utilities' system upgrades and modifications to maintain adequate reliability over the next ten-year planning horizon.

Vince Ordaz, Senior Director of Planning for the Florida Reliability Coordinating Council, Inc. provided a comprehensive overview and stated that Florida utilities continue to coordinate at FRCC to ensure reliability through studies of the transmission system, natural gas infrastructure, and solar and battery impacts to operations and planning. FERC Order 1920 was also discussed.

The Commission is required by Florida Statute to perform an annual review of the utilities' plans and classify them as "suitable" or "unsuitable." Commission findings are provided to the Florida Department of Environmental Protection for consideration at power plant and transmission line siting certification proceedings.

### Chairman La Rosa Opens NARUC Summer Policy Summit

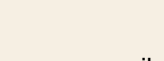
West Palm Beach was the host city for the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioner's (NARUC) 2024 Summer Policy Summit, July 14-17. It's not often that NARUC chooses a Florida destination for a meeting, so the FPSC was pleased to help make the Summit a success.

Chairman Mike La Rosa opened Monday's General Session by welcoming all conference attendees to the free state of Florida. In the interest of time, Chairman La Rosa provided a Florida "flyover," highlighting what draws millions of visitors to our state every year, from beautiful beaches, to the Everglades, the Space Coast, theme parks, and much more. Of course, the Chairman highlighted how the Commission helps keep Florida great, in part, by reviewing plans for additional electric and water resource capacity. He also touched on how Florida strives to be the Gold Standard in both hurricane response and recovery.

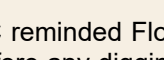
### CONSUMER EDUCATION & OUTREACH

To make FPSC information more inclusive to all Floridians, Chairman La Rosa initiated the translation of many Commission publications into Spanish. The Commission's Rate Case Overviews—a publication that outlines a utility's rate increase request—were the first to be translated. This is especially helpful to Spanish-speaking customers who attend customer meetings and service hearings so they can learn the FPSC rate case process and how their utility's request could impact them. RCOs are available on the FPSC [website](#) and at in-person service hearings and customer meetings.

A complete list of FPSC publications now available in Spanish can be found [here](#).

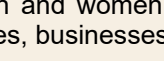


On August 11, or 8-11, the FPSC reminded Floridians to practice safe digging by calling 811 to locate gas lines before any digging project. **National 811 Day** is led by the U.S. Department of Transportation.



On August 26, the FPSC celebrated **Florida Lineworker Appreciation Day**, recognizing these hard-working men and women who brave adverse conditions to quickly restore power to our homes, businesses, and communities.

#ThankALineworker



September 9-13, the FPSC raised awareness on the federal Lifeline Assistance telecommunications discount program by participating in **Lifeline Awareness Week**. The FPSC visited with customers at several events in Northeast Florida during the week.



September is **National Preparedness Month** and the FPSC promoted readiness to raise awareness about the importance of preparing for disasters and emergencies.

### Commission Initiatives

Chairman La Rosa continued his *Coffee Talks!* visits to learn first-hand about different FPSC Divisions and Offices, and, more importantly, FPSC staff. In July, the Chairman's Office shared coffee, donuts and conversation with the Office of Auditing and Performance Analysis in Tallahassee and also with APA's field office. Conversation recounted "days of old" from veteran employees, which let the Chairman know how much the "present day" FPSC is appreciated. In September, the Chairman's Office met with the General Counsel's Office to celebrate a busy August, filled with workshops and hearings, and the successful implementation of the new digital hearing management system, Case Center.

All attending the FPSC's Internal Affairs meetings now look forward to the Song of the Day. Not to disappoint, the *Song of the Day* was Takin' Care of Business by Bachman-Turner Overdrive in June and Telephone Line by Electric Light Orchestra in July. ABC by the Jackson 5 began the August meeting, the perfect segue for the launch of the Chairman's Workforce Development series. Recognizing the impending storm, September's meeting was started by Riding the Storm Out by REO Speedwagon.

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