

**PALM BEACH COUNTY
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY

Meeting Date: March 12, 2019 ☒ Consent ☐ Regular
☐ Ordinance ☐ Public Hearing

Department: Administration

I. EXECUTIVE BRIEF

Motion and Title: Staff recommends motion to approve: the Mayor's signature on a letter supporting House Bill 797, related to Public Utility Storm Protection Plans.

Summary: For more than a decade, utilities have been investing to harden the electric grid, and it is indisputable that these investments have been effective. In Palm Beach County, we have seen significant improvements in restoring power to our residents during the most recent storm events. Currently, the state's investor-owned utilities are each required to have some sort of incremental hardening plan that is updated and reviewed every three years, but the Public Service Commission (PSC) and utilities do not have the authority to pursue a long-term, wide-ranging plan that would benefit all Floridians. HB 797 would allow them to do that.

Long-range planning will allow utilities to more efficiently and effectively implement infrastructure investments. The bill mandates that the long-range plan prioritize projects based on considerations such as historical reliability performance and the number of customers being served.

To ensure consistent enforcement of these plans and keep overall electric rates down for consumers, the bill will move the costs of hardening, vegetation management and undergrounding neighborhood lines out of utility base rates and into a new cost-recovery clause that the PSC will review every year.

Palm Beach County has been working with our community partners to ensure that our infrastructure is hardened and that we are prepared to respond during both pre and post storm to any natural disasters in our local community. This legislation will provide additional tools to assist community partners in ensuring they are ready to meet the needs of our residents during storm events. **Countywide** (AH)

Background and Justification: Historically, natural disasters have created intense disruption in the delivery of utility services to customers across the State of Florida. This bill will require the state's utilities to create robust long-range plans for making the electric grid more resilient to extreme weather, including flooding and high winds.

Attachments:

- ## 1. Letter of Support

Recommended by: N/A
Department Director _____ Date _____

Approved By: _____
Assistant County Administrator Date

II. FISCAL IMPACT ANALYSIS

A. Five Year Summary of Fiscal Impact:

Fiscal Years					
Capital Expenditures					
Operating Costs					
External Revenues					
Program Income(County)					
In-Kind Match(County					
NET FISCAL IMPACT					
#ADDITIONAL FTE					
POSITIONS (CUMULATIVE					

Is Item Included in Current Budget? Yes No
Does this item include the use of federal funds? Yes No

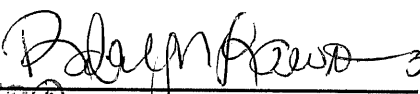
Budget Account No:
Fund Agency Organization Object


B. Recommended Sources of Funds/Summary of Fiscal Impact:

C. Departmental Fiscal Review:

III. REVIEW COMMENTS:

A. OFMB Fiscal and/or Contract Dev. and Control Comments:

 3/7/19
OFMB

 3/8/19
Contract Dev. & Control
3/7/19 TW

B. Legal Sufficiency

 3-8-19
Assistant County Attorney

C. Other Department Review

Department Director

(THIS SUMMARY IS NOT TO BE USED AS A BASIS FOR PAYMENT.)



MACK BERNARD
Commissioner, District 7



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March 12, 2019

Representative Randy Fine
222 The Capitol
402 South Monroe Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1300

Dear Representative Fine:

The Palm Beach County Board of County Commissioners supports HB 797 related to Public Utility Storm Protection Plans.

This legislation is much needed in the aftermath of Florida facing hurricanes Matthew, Irma, and Michael over the past three years. These storms cost Florida's economy billions of dollars and while we know storms will come, we also know that Florida will respond to the challenge better than anyone. Your legislation will help provide an opportunity for Florida to bounce back more quickly when faced with future storms. Investments in grid resiliency will help all Floridians by reducing overall power restoration times and costs.

The long-range plans that HB 797 requires will make the electric grid more resilient to extreme weather, including flooding and high winds. The hardening of infrastructure, replacement of wood structures with concrete and steel, and improvement of power poles to withstand major hurricane-force winds will provide reliable performance when Floridians need it most.

Hurricanes Matthew, Irma and Michael taught us that investing in the electric grid significantly speeds restoration, which gets communities back on their feet faster and saves Florida's economy billions. The Public Service Commission (PSC) confirmed this in a report issued last year that hardened infrastructure is more resilient and reduces restoration time and costs. We encourage a mechanism that will ensure that all Florida regulated utility customers receive the benefits of more robust hardening and undergrounding plans. This would be a significant improvement over the current practice



where the investor-owned utilities file and the PSC approves varying degrees of storm hardening every three years.

We greatly appreciate your help, and offer our support to the legislative initiative that you and Rep. Jacobs have filed.

Sincerely,

Mack Bernard, Mayor
Palm Beach County Commission
District 7