

## PRESS RELEASE

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Contact:

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Dave Kraft, NEIS (773)342-7650

### **Florida Power and Light Billion+-Dollar Rate Hike Denied -- Death Knell for Nuclear Power?**

**CHICAGO**—The Florida Public Service Commission (PUC) denied Florida Power and Light (FPL) Company's \$1.27 billion rate-hike request, granting instead a minuscule \$75.5 million in a decision that could be the death knell for not only two proposed nuclear reactors in Florida, but several elsewhere in the U.S.

"FPL's outrageous attempts to jam their \$10 billion square nuclear peg down the round hole of fiscal responsibility, environmental protection, and public health concerns was judged by the Florida PUC for what it truly was -- a greedy, irresponsible energy boondoggle," asserts David Kraft, Director of Nuclear Energy Information Service (NEIS) of Chicago, an Illinois safe-energy advocacy and nuclear power watchdog group.

"The facts against uneconomic nuclear power spoke volumes for themselves, and the public and the environment of Florida were spared irreparable harm," Kraft states.

The Florida PUC awarded a mere \$75.5 million to FPL, only 6% of the \$1.27 billion requested. As a result FPL announced it would halt work on over \$10 billion in projects, including two nuclear reactors it had proposed building at the current Turkey Point nuclear power station.

While the economic downturn certainly played a role in lowering demand for the additional power in Florida, many of FPL's demands for advance payments, higher guaranteed profit margin, and less public scrutiny in constructing nuclear plants were beyond the level of outrageous even the Florida PUC would tolerate.

"The reality is that [FPL](#) is going to have to make due in these difficult economic times," stated Public Utility Commissioner Nathan Skop. Just like the rest of Florida residents have to, and would have had to do moreso had FPL gotten the larger rate hike request.

The decision may have negative repercussions nationally for the handful of other

newly proposed nuclear reactors, as the long-moribund nuclear industry has tried to market a self-proclaimed "nuclear renaissance." Nuclear power advocates in Congress have had the temerity to seek unlimited taxpayer guaranteed construction loans for new nuclear reactor projects in some versions of recent energy legislation. Pro-nuclear advocates in state government in Georgia have seen to it that consumers will be forced to pay for construction of newly proposed reactors before they are completed, whether they get finished or not.

"The only way that nuclear plants can be built in the U.S. is if government officials behave as if they were from Belarus or China," Kraft asserts, "forcing fiscally irresponsible projects like Turkey Point FL and Plant Vogtle GA on captive taxpayers and ratepayers against their will.

"Fortunately, the Florida PUC's recent trip to Oz paid off handsomely for Florida ratepayers. Their decision required considerable brains, heart and courage to stand up against typical nuclear utility bullying and unreasonable demands," Kraft notes.

"We can only hope that members of Congress show more brains, heart and courage, and evolve more backbone to fight off similar unreasonable nuclear utility demands for billions in loan guarantees the nuclear industry seeks in upcoming climate and energy legislation," Kraft says.

"If this Florida mutiny -- or is it an 'enlightenment'? -- spreads, it could be the death-knell for the other nuclear reactor projects," Kraft concludes.

[Source: <http://www.sun-sentinel.com/business/fl-psc-increase-vote-20100113,0,5320042,full.story> ]

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*Nuclear Energy Information Service is a non-profit nuclear power watchdog and safe-energy education organization.*

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David A. Kraft, Director  
Nuclear Energy Information Service (NEIS)  
Mail & Street Address:  
3411 W. Diversey, Ste. 16  
Chicago, IL 60647 USA  
(773)342-7650; -7655 fax  
[neis@neis.org](mailto:neis@neis.org)

[www.neis.org](http://www.neis.org)

SKYPE: davekhamburg

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