

March 8, 2016

Alissa Schafer representing Southern Alliance for Clean Energy

**Re: Full Prepared Comments on Item 2B1 (COOLING CANAL STUDY AT THE FLORIDA POWER AND LIGHT TURKEY POINT POWER PLANT DIRECTIVE 151025) to the Miami-Dade Board of County Commissioners**

Thank you Commissioners. My name is Alissa Schafer and I am the solar communications and policy manager for the Southern Alliance for Clean Energy. As we've heard already today, we have a major problem on our hands. As a resident who loves South Florida, from the Everglades to the ocean and everything in between, I'm here today asking for a transparent and thorough analysis of this situation, and appropriate action. There are far too many people in Florida who do not even realize that their national parks and their drinking water is at risk. The facts and truth must be made available to all community members in a timely way. The second step, however, is what should be done about it. We're here today asking for action to be taken, but I also want to talk about a zero emission, zero water-usage solution that is literally right over our heads - solar power.

Solar is something that I am very passionate about because not only does it make economic sense, but it is also a solution to the very real problems that we are facing today. Solar energy is way that we can stop adding to the mess that our current energy sources, such as Turkey Point, are continuing to create.

Every time an issue such as the one being discussed today comes up, I am reminded of the importance of continuing to develop and support truly clean and renewable energy sources such as solar. Nuclear power proponents and the utilities pushing to build more water-intensive reactors misleadingly tout it as a clean energy technology, but obviously, as we are learning today, it is not. Solar, on the other hand, from equipment production to fully functioning generation, is a truly clean energy solution. Solar has zero emissions when producing energy and, even more relevant to today's conversation, uses zero water.

Florida has one of the highest potentials for solar energy in the whole country, 3rd nationally and 1st east of the Mississippi, and yet currently less than 1% of our energy generation is coming from solar. The cost of solar continues to decrease, while new nuclear costs skyrocket. And yet our power companies are spending millions of dollars to prevent the development of solar in Florida.

In the last year alone, Florida power companies, including Florida Power and Light, spent over 6 million dollars to stop a grassroots solar initiative called Floridians for solar choice that would have opened up the solar market in the Sunshine State.

The Floridians for Solar Choice ballot initiative did not make it onto the 2016 ballot, largely because of the multi-million dollar campaign that the power companies ran against it, but the potential for solar energy remains unchanged. The coalition continues to collect petitions for Solar Choice, and there were two good solar policy bills introduced in the current Florida legislative session.

In December of last year, the Miami-Dade commissioners passed a resolution in support of the Floridians for Solar Choice ballot initiative, so I know that this principle is something that you believe in. **Thank you!** Your voices need to continue to be a part of that conversation.

As we enter into the last few days of the Florida legislative session, our elected officials in Tallahassee will be voting on one of the good solar policies that could end up on the ballot for the general election in November. This bill is a tax abatement measure that would help continue to lower the cost of solar in Florida and is a step in the right direction. It is crucial that we continue to support legislation and proposals such as this.

Florida is already in the spotlight when it comes to climate change, whether or not everyone in this state chooses to use that exact phrase. When we are presented with facts, proof of wrong-doing, proof of damages, it is our responsibility to act accordingly. In this situation, I believe that means a transparent and public analysis of those facts, appropriate action taken against Florida Power and Light, and the continued promotion of energy solutions such as solar.

Thank you.