



Op-Ed

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# FPL's nuclear-power plan regressive, harmful

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Florida Power & Light argues that its new nuclear project is environmentally friendly, that it will benefit us economically, and that its future plans at Turkey Point are safe. Unfortunately, none of these claims are accurate.

FPL is currently seeking approval from the federal Nuclear Regulatory Commission for two new nuclear reactors at Turkey Point and miles of 10-story transmission lines in residential Miami-Dade County and downtown Miami.



FPL's project would reduce the availability of fresh water for our communities, it would commit South Florida to antiquated and expensive nuclear technology from last century, and it would render our electric system vulnerable to storm surges from rising seas. FPL ignores these difficult facts.

Nuclear plants consume vast amounts of water to keep reactors cool. FPL currently accounts for less than 1 percent of the water used in Miami-Dade County, but a nuclear expansion would raise

that to 10 percent of water usage. In two decades, the demands on our limited water supply are already projected to skyrocket. FPL emphasizes that the primary cooling system will use reclaimed wastewater. But it ignores the inconvenient fact that its backup cooling system will also draw over 7 billion gallons of water a year from Biscayne Bay and the Biscayne Aquifer, our only source of drinking water, threatening the coastal Everglades, Biscayne National Park, and South Dade well fields. Given the anticipated demands on our shrinking water supply, FPL's water grab is an irresponsible use of resources.

When the Turkey Point expansion was first proposed, the projected cost was about \$7 billion. The latest projections are \$20 billion. Nuclear expansion might make sense for FPL's shareholders but it doesn't for us.

FPL's project commits us to expensive nuclear power for the next 60 years without fairly evaluating more cost-effective energy that does not require local storage of radioactive waste. The cheapest, cleanest and safest way to meet our energy needs is through energy conservation and efficiency. Conservation is one-fifth the cost of nuclear generation, yet FPL opposes conservation standards and presses for nuclear, the most expensive and risky investment available. Given the falling prices of solar power and new batteries, we question the wisdom of committing customers to \$20 billion worth of last century's technology, while closing the door on cheaper, safer and more environmentally responsible options.

Florida law allows FPL to charge its customers for the licensing and construction costs for this project. In the past three years, FPL has charged

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**FPL's nuclear-power plan regressive, harmful**

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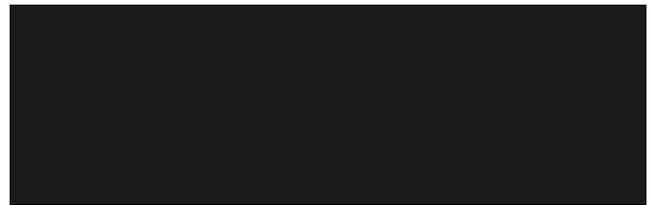
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us \$209 million. Even if FPL never completes the new reactors, it keeps our money. These charges include new transmission lines in Everglades National Park and the heart of Miami-Dade's dense commercial and residential neighborhoods. Massive 105-foot tall towers along Dixie Highway would cut through Pinecrest, South Miami, Coral Gables, Coconut Grove, and then Brickell, on their way into downtown Miami, carving tens of millions annually from the county's tax base and killing thousands of jobs in the process. The proposed transmission lines will not be built to Florida hurricane safety standards. If a tower buckles during a storm, it could destroy the Metrorail and surrounding homes.



The original decision to build nuclear reactors at Turkey Point, on a hurricane-swept coastline vulnerable to storm surge, was made a half a century before we understood climate change and sea-level rise. FPL's new reactors would operate until 2080, during which, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) recommends that power plants account for three feet to 6.6 feet of sea-level rise. FPL's application accounts for only one foot of sea-level rise for that period, clearly unrealistic given the five inches of sea-level rise measured locally in the past five years.

Even one foot of sea-level rise will inundate the area surrounding Turkey Point and turn the power plant into a remote island. A difference of two feet of sea-level rise will dramatically affect the height of future storm surges. FPL's assertion that new reactors will be safe from a storm surge because they are 26-feet above "sea level," overlooks the facts that FPL's "sea level" standard is 27 years old; and the project does not properly account for realistic storm surge projections. FPL ignores

these facts to double down on a dangerous position based on yesterday's science.

Join us by expressing your objection to FPL's project as proposed. Contact the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission at TurkeyPoint.COLEIS@nrc.gov. This federal agency has the most authority over FPL's project and is required by law to account for public comments submitted before May 22.

*TOMÁS REGALADO IS MAYOR OF MIAMI; CINDY LERNER IS MAYOR OF PINECREST; PHILIP STODDARD IS MAYOR OF SOUTH MIAMI; AND JOSÉ JAVIER RODRÍGUEZ IS THE STATE REPRESENTATIVE OF DISTRICT 112.*



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