

ACRE Cookout

March 22, 2023

For those of you that plan to have office meetings at the Capitol before our ACRE cookout, **please do not leave this, or any, position papers with the legislator's office.** We encourage you to give your legislator(s) materials relating to your co-op and invitations to the cookout.

• CO-OP 101

With the rapid turnover in the legislature, it is always good to ask legislators and staff if they know about electric co-ops. Many times, this will lead to an opportunity to explain the electric co-op model, emphasizing our not-for-profit status, our service in underserved areas, democratically elected Boards and strong ties to the community.

- Not-for-profit, private, independent electric utility businesses
- Established to provide at-cost electric service
- Revenues beyond the cooperative's operating expenses go back to consumers over time
- Owned by the consumers they serve
- Governed by a board of Trustees elected from the membership
- There are 16 Distribution and 2 Generation & Transmission cooperatives serving Florida. Florida electric cooperatives serve an estimated **2.7 million people in 57 of Florida's 67 counties.**
- Electric cooperatives serve an average of **13** consumers per mile of line, while investor-owned utilities (IOUs) average **62** consumers per mile of line, and municipal electric utilities average **67** consumers per mile of line.

Some of you may opt to voice concerns against SB 626/HB 1221 regarding electric cooperatives providing broadband services. If you choose to do so, or if a legislator asks you specifically about SB 626/HB 1221, we have provided high level talking points below.

Currently, we do not see a reason to advocate for or against any of the other legislation below. If you get a question regarding a bill not listed here or if Statewide needs to follow-up with any Legislators, please let Drew Love know, 863-698-9936.

Rural Electric Cooperatives / Broadband Internet Service Providers

SB 626 / HB 1221, Sen. DiCeglie/Rep. Tomkow

The bill would put up barriers to broadband expansion into rural, underserved and unserved areas and deprive citizens of essential internet access.

- Co-ops currently have the authority to provide broadband services.
- The bill discourages cooperatives from providing Internet access to their consumer members in rural areas who have long been ignored by traditional broadband companies.
- The bill would subject electric co-ops offering broadband to unnecessary and costly, regulations.
- Congress has specifically exempted co-ops from pole attachment regulation under the FCC and the state has never regulated co-op pole attachments.

ACTION RECOMMENDED: OPPOSE

Other Bills We Are Monitoring:

Energy Equity Task Force

(SB 680 / HB 293)

Sponsors: Sen. Davis / Rep. Hinson

Summary:

This bill would create the Energy Equity Task Force who would provide recommendations to Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services for fostering a fair and equitable transition of the state's energy infrastructure to renewable technologies within minority, underserved, rural and low-income communities.

ACTION RECOMMENDED: NEUTRAL

Renewable Energy Cost Recovery

(SB 1162/ HB 821)

Sponsors:

Sen. DiCeglie / Rep. Yeager

Summary:

The bill authorizes an IOU to recover in rates prudently incurred renewable natural gas and hydrogen fuel infrastructure project costs through the proper PSC cost-recovery procedure.

ACTION RECOMMENDED: NEUTRAL

State Renewable Energy Goals

(SB 970 / HB 957)

Sponsors: Sen. Berman / Rep. Eskamani

Summary:

The bill modifies the definition of "renewable energy" to exclude energy produced using high quality synthetic gas produced from waste petroleum coke with CO2 capture and sequestration. In addition, the bill would prohibit the drilling or exploration of, or production or transportation of, oil, gas, or other petroleum products on the land and waters of the state. The Office of Energy would be directed to develop a plan to have 100% of the state's energy generated from renewable resources by 2050.

ACTION RECOMMENDED: NEUTRAL (The bill is not expected to move. If the bill gains traction, staff will recommend opposing it)