**Proposal 51 Background**

The Constitution is Florida’s foundational legal document. It embodies the guiding principles of our state government and outlines fundamental rights of citizens.  Using the constitution revision process as a tool to manipulate a market is neither fair nor appropriate. Yet Prop 51 does just that.

Prop 51 originated as a [publicly](https://www.flcrc.gov/Proposals/Public/700366) filed proposal to the Constitution Revision Commission (CRC), and was submitted by business owner Rich Blaser, CEO of Infinite Energy to deconstruct Florida’s electricity market in a fashion that bolsters the business interest of his company[[1]](#footnote-1).

In late October, Mr. Blaser’s proposal was picked-up by appointed CRC member Rich Newsome who filed Mr. Blaser’s submission under the “miscellaneous” category of the Florida Constitution.

**Proposal 51 Talking Points**

Currently, the Florida Public Service Commission oversees Florida’s coordinated power grid which assures that electricity services are safe, reliable and provided at the lowest possible cost.

Prop 51 would do away with that long-standing model without a comprehensive plan to replace the coordinated electric power grid.  Not only is Mr. Blaser’s proposal self-serving, it jeopardizes the reliability of Florida’s electric grid and could cause electricity prices to increase.

To date, no state has effectively deconstructed the electric market through the Constitution.

Since the 1990’s, only 16 states have disassembled their electric markets. Of these 16 states, per the EIA, the average residential electric rate is 15.7 cents per kWh[[2]](#footnote-2).  Florida’s current residential average is 11.23 cents[[3]](#footnote-3).

Florida electric cooperatives invest in storm hardening and are committed to quick restoration after a storm event.  As not-for-profit entities, cooperatives’ focus is always member satisfaction.  ([ref graphic](https://www.touchstoneenergy.com/co-op-business-resources/brand-news/seven-years-showcasing-cooperative-difference-action/)) If Prop 51 were adopted, it is unknown which entities will be responsible for storm restoration which in turn could place our members in dangerous and unsafe conditions.

Surveys show that electric cooperative consumer members are satisfied with their energy provider.  Members want to contact a local call center, elect a local board representative and know their cooperative supports the community.  ([ref graphic](https://www.touchstoneenergy.com/co-op-business-resources/brand-news/seven-years-showcasing-cooperative-difference-action/))

Proposal 51 is a solution in search of problem that doesn’t exist. Unfortunately, it harms the ability of Florida co-ops to locally serve their members and communities in a safe, reliable, and low-cost manner.

1. “In turn, Infinite Energy, a natural gas utility, could stand to gain from deregulation, as it has in Texas.” <http://www.gainesville.com/news/20171120/proposal-could-allow-more-choice-in-utility-providers> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. APPA Rate Comparison based on Energy Information Agency (EIA) data <https://appa2-my.sharepoint.com/:x:/r/personal/pzummo_publicpower_org1/_layouts/15/WopiFrame.aspx?sourcedoc=%7B2b4bc9d5-4aa9-4d0a-9b78-39e1717e65ea%7D&action=view> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. APPA Rate Comparison based on Energy Information Agency (EIA) data <https://appa2-my.sharepoint.com/:x:/r/personal/pzummo_publicpower_org1/_layouts/15/WopiFrame.aspx?sourcedoc=%7B2b4bc9d5-4aa9-4d0a-9b78-39e1717e65ea%7D&action=view> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)