

Florida Public Service Commission Consumer E-Newsletter

April 2008



Net Metering

The Florida Public Service Commission (PSC) recently revised its rules to require the state's five investor-owned electric utilities (IOUs) (Florida Power & Light Co., Florida Public Utilities, Gulf Power Co., Progress Energy, and Tampa Electric Company) to offer net metering.

Net metering allows a resident who generates electricity using renewable resources, such as wind or solar energy systems, to offset residential electric use. Credit for excess energy sent to the grid during any billing period will be carried forward and applied to the next billing period to offset the resident's consumption. At the end of the year, any remaining excess energy credits will be purchased by the IOUs at their avoided cost rate, which is higher than the wholesale rate.

"This rule is expected to increase the development of renewable generation in Florida, which will enhance fuel diversity and reliability," said PSC Chairman Matthew M. Carter II. "Customer-owned renewable generation also effectively acts as a conservation measure by reducing the amount of electricity purchased from utilities."

The revisions to [Rule 25-6.065](#), Florida Administrative Code, took effect on April 7, 2008. The IOUs have 30 days to file tariffs with the PSC regarding implementation of the rule. The PSC will then review the tariffs to make sure that they conform to the requirements of the rule. Once the PSC approves the tariffs, customers will be informed of the interconnection requirements.



Earth Day - April 22

Since its start in 1970, Earth Day has served to review our stewardship of the Earth and commit to preserving a healthy environment. As part of its role, the PSC strives to adopt cost-effective conservation measures that help reduce our impact on the state's natural resources while allowing residents to enjoy the comforts of modern life at a fair price.

Recent PSC actions that have also encouraged conservation and efficient use of electricity, natural gas, and water, include:

- Approved a net metering rule which will encourage residential use, and development, of renewable energy sources.
- Conducted workshops to develop information on state renewable portfolio standards.
- Approved agreements for two Florida utilities to purchase renewable energy.
- Approved a conservation program for Tampa Electric Company that allows consumers to make energy use decisions based on energy price signals.
- Established conservation rates for water utilities to encourage less water use.

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- Continued working to reduce the growth rate of electricity consumption. (See the [Annual Report on Activities Pursuant to the Florida Energy Conservation Act.](#))

Earth Day activities are taking place all over America. For a list of Earth Day activities in Florida, check out the [Florida Department of Environmental Protection](#) Web page. Other Earth Day resources can be found online at:

- <http://www.epa.gov/earthday/>
- <http://www.earthday.gov>
- <http://www.cfearthday.org/>

Recycling Fun Facts:

- Recycling one ton (2,000 pounds) of paper saves 17 trees; 6,953 gallons of water; and 463 gallons of oil.
- An average person in the United States uses 650-680 pounds of paper each year.



April is Water Conservation Month

The Florida Governor and Cabinet have designated April as Water Conservation Month. April is usually Florida's driest month, and it also begins the time of year when demand for water is highest.

Florida is fortunate to have the country's largest underground freshwater reserves. Since Florida's aquifers hold so much potable water, many residents view the supply as endless. Unfortunately, the water supply is limited. In many parts of our state, there is visible evidence of the severe depletion occurring within our underground aquifer system due to population growth, development, and saltwater intrusion.

The Florida Public Service Commission is committed to helping educate and activate residents to conserve Florida's limited water supply. And, reduced water consumption also means lower water bills.

Water Conservation Month is even more important this year, as the drought continues to affect much of Florida. While recent rains have increased our river levels, recharging Florida's groundwater will take a long time. Now is not the time to relax our water conservation efforts.

More information about the drought and strategies for both homeowners and businesses to conserve water are available at the Florida Department of Environmental Protection's (DEP) drought page at <http://www.dep.state.fl.us/Drought/>.

Find water conservation tips on the PSC's [Conserve Your World](#) Web page, and also at the PSC's Conservation House at <http://www.floridapsc.com/consumers/house/>.

Each of the five water management districts' Web sites contain local watering restrictions and water conservation ideas specific to its region:

- [Northwest Florida Water Management District](#)
- [South Florida Water Management District](#)
- [Southwest Florida Water Management District](#)
- [Suwannee River Water Management District](#)
- [St. John's River Water Management District](#)

- The most commonly recycled plastics are HDPE (#1) and PET (#2), usually used for all kinds of containers.

- Recycled plastic can be made into many items, including plastic lumber, clothing, carpet, flower pots, car bumpers, and insulation for sleeping bags.

- Each person uses about 392 aluminum cans in a year, but only about 63.5% of the cans are recycled.

- An aluminum can may be recycled and back on the shelf as a new container in as few as 60 days.

- Recycling aluminum saves about 95% of the energy needed to produce the metal from bauxite, its original source.

Reasons to recycle:

- conserve natural resources
- save energy
- keep air and water clean
- reduce landfill space
- save money
- create jobs

Top items to recycle:

- aluminum

Vampire Electronics



The U. S. Department of Energy estimates that as much as five percent of all electricity used in the United States is consumed by vampire electronics and that figure could rise to 20 percent by 2010. Vampire electronics are devices that continue to use electricity even when they are turned off.

You may not be baking a cake, but that digital clock on the oven is still using electricity. So is the clock on your microwave oven, VCR, and DVD player. Your television may be off, but the electronic sensor in the television that picks up the remote control signal is still using a small amount of electricity. Your cordless phone is using electricity while it is plugged into the charger, even when fully charged.

Here are some tips for reducing electric use by vampire electronics:

- Unplug the charger once a rechargeable battery or appliance is fully charged.
- Unplug as many electronics or appliances as possible when not in use.
- Plug televisions, VCRs, DVD players, computers, and computer peripherals into surge protectors or power strips that you can turn off when the device is not in use.



The water meter is usually housed in a box in the ground in front of your residence.

Each time the large arrow completes a revolution, 100 gallons have passed through the meter, and the last digit on the right advances. The last two zeros, showing hundreds of gallons, never change.

Water readings are cumulative, and the meter is not reset after each meter reading. Subtract last month's numbers from the current reading to show how much water has been used.

The small triangle is a low-flow indicator. To check for leaks, turn off all the faucets inside and outside the house. Inspect the water meter. If the low-flow triangle is moving, water is flowing through the meter, indicating a leak in the system.

- #1 and #2 plastic bottles
- newspapers
- magazines
- mixed paper
- cardboard
- glass
- steel cans
- computers

For more recycling information, check out these Web sites:

- American Forest & Paper Association:
www.afandpa.org
- Institute of Scrap Recycling Industries:
www.isri.org
- American Plastics Council:
www.americanchemistry.com/plastics
- The Aluminum Association:
www.aluminum.org/ACBHHome.cfm