



January 21, 2020

Representative Delores Hogan Johnson, District 84
100 North US Highway 1
Fort Pierce, Florida 34950

Dear Representative Hogan Johnson:

HB 653 introduced by Representative Caruso, would prohibit municipal electric utilities from using specified revenues to finance general government functions. It's early days in the 2020 Legislative session, but I wanted you to know we strongly oppose HB 653.

HB 653 preempts Florida's constitutional home rule provision for municipalities. It is a direct attack on local government and local decision-making.

The Fort Pierce Utilities Authority (FPUA) is our city's municipal owned utility and provides about \$6 million per year to the general revenue, or about 15% of the total city budget. This distribution to the city can be likened to the franchise fees that investor owned utilities pay to cities, where there is no city owned utility.

Municipal owned utilities, or public power, in Florida is highly reliable, efficient and serves more than 3 million Floridians. In Fort Pierce alone, we serve about 28,000 electric customers. We employ around 285 people, while our city (including enterprise funds) employs about 380. We provide a valuable service to our citizens and to ratepayers in our expanded service territory and we are a major employer. The revenue, expenditures and operations of the FPUA, along with the City of Fort Pierce, are fully transparent to the public.

Our company is locally operated and controlled by a Board appointed by our City Commission. Revenues stay in our local community, and fund maintenance and improvements in the utility system infrastructure, and support essential municipal services such as public safety and public works in city government. Our ratepayers have a say in our company's operations and our citizens have a say in our city government. The two entities work hand in hand to provide reliable electric service and help fund vital public services.

As Mayor, I sit on the FPUA Board because our city considers the utility (electric, water, waste water, and gas, as well as fiber optic and bandwidth services) an economic engine that helps drive and grow our city. We strongly oppose this legislation that would severely curtail the ability of the City of Fort Pierce and the FPUA to work together to best serve our customers and citizens.

Sincerely,

Linda Hudson
Mayor



January 21, 2020

Senator Gayle Harrell, District 25
215 SW Federal Highway, Suite 203
Stuart, Florida 34994

Dear Senator Harrell:

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