

RESOLUTION NO. 17-2473

**A RESOLUTION OF THE TOWN COMMISSION OF THE TOWN OF SURFSIDE, FLORIDA, URGING THE FLORIDA LEGISLATURE AND THE FLORIDA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION TO REQUIRE THE EXPEDITIOUS CONVERSION OF OVERHEAD ELECTRIC DISTRIBUTION FACILITIES TO UNDERGROUND FACILITIES; FURTHER URGING THE FLORIDA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION TO CONDITION ANY HURRICANE IRMA COST RECOVERY SOUGHT BY THE STATE'S POWER COMPANIES ON SUCH COMPANIES' REQUIRED CONVERSION OF THEIR OVERHEAD ELECTRIC DISTRIBUTION FACILITIES TO UNDERGROUND FACILITIES; PROVIDING FOR IMPLEMENTATION; AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.**

**WHEREAS**, all Florida residents, businesses, and institutions require reliable electric service and a reliable electric distribution infrastructure; and

**WHEREAS**, in September 2017, Hurricane Irma made landfall in Florida, causing widespread property and tree damage throughout much of the state and also leaving about 9 million people without power, including 90 percent of South Florida residents; and

**WHEREAS**, the widespread power outage occurred even though south Florida encountered mostly tropical-storm-force winds instead of the anticipated hurricane-force winds, according to the National Weather Service; and

**WHEREAS**, felled trees, flying debris, hurricane wind gusts and some flooding caused most of the power damage, according to Florida Power & Light Company ("FPL"); and

**WHEREAS**, numerous published studies indicate that warming by the end of the 21st century will likely cause tropical cyclones globally to be more intense on average, implying an even larger percentage increase in the destructive potential per storm, assuming no reduction in storm size; and

**WHEREAS**, numerous published studies indicate that warming by the end of the 21st century will likely cause tropical cyclones globally to be more intense on average, implying an even larger percentage increase in the destructive potential per storm, assuming no reduction in storm size; and

**WHEREAS**, it is generally recognized that underground electric distribution facilities are significantly more reliable and less subject to wind damage than overhead facilities, not only in tropical storms and hurricanes but also day-to-day; and

**WHEREAS**, wide-area conversions of overhead electric distribution facilities to underground facilities are reasonably expected to provide significant reliability, cost savings as described below and other benefits both to customers in the areas converted and also to the utility's general body of customers, including, without limitation: greatly reduced storm restoration costs in many hurricane, tropical and other storm events, greatly reduced vegetation management (tree-trimming) costs, and the substantial economic benefits attributed to faster restoration of economic activity due to faster recovery from electric service outages; and

**WHEREAS**, wide-area underground conversions, often referred to as "undergrounding," will improve traffic safety by keeping street lights and traffic signals functioning and lead to fewer accidents involving vehicles striking utility poles along our roadways, and will also enhance environmental and aesthetic values; and

**WHEREAS**, FPL provides electricity to approximately 10 million people - or roughly half the population - in the State of Florida, including the majority of Miami-Dade County and Town of Surfside residents; and

**WHEREAS**, following Hurricane Wilma in 2005, FPL began providing incentives to communities to initiate more undergrounding, and since then completed projects around South Florida include those in Coconut Creek, Pompano Beach, Sunny Isles, Golden Beach and Jupiter Island, according to an FPL filing with state regulators; and

**WHEREAS**, according to FPL, 37 percent of its distribution system is currently underground, with several underground installation projects under way, including one on the island of Palm Beach; and

**WHEREAS**, while some progress towards achieving widespread undergrounding has certainly been made in the past decade since Wilma, much work still remains to be done, especially in lower and middle income communities that cannot afford to self-fund undergrounding; and

**WHEREAS**, given the substantial benefits of underground electric distribution facilities compared to their overhead counterparts, this Commission would like to urge the Florida Legislature and the Florida Public Service Commission ("PSC") to require - to the maximum extent possible - the expeditious conversion of overhead electric distribution facilities to underground facilities; and

**WHEREAS**, following Hurricane Matthew in October 2016, FPL filed a petition for cost recovery with PSC to cover the costs of restoring power after the storm; and

**WHEREAS**, PSC approved the petition, resulting in an additional "storm charge" being placed on FPL customers' monthly bills until March 2018; and

**WHEREAS**, FPL recently announced that it plans to file another petition for cost recovery with PSC to recoup an estimated \$1.3 billion from customers to cover the costs of restoring electricity after Hurricane Irma; and

**WHEREAS**, investing in undergrounding will help avoid these expenses incurred by ratepayers in the future; and

**WHEREAS**, this Commission would like to further urge PSC to condition any Hurricane Irma cost recovery sought by the state's power companies, including FPL, on such companies' required conversion of their overhead electric distribution facilities to underground facilities.

**NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE TOWN COMMISSION OF THE TOWN OF SURFSIDE, FLORIDA, AS FOLLOWS:**

**Section 1. Recitals.** The above recitals are true and correct and incorporated into this Resolution by this reference.

**Section 2. Call to Action.**

**A.** The Town of Surfside urges the Florida Legislature and the Florida Public Service Commission to require - to the maximum extent possible - the expeditious conversion of overhead electric distribution facilities to underground facilities.

**B.** The Town further urges the Florida Public Service Commission to condition any Hurricane Irma cost recovery sought by the state's power companies, *including FPL*, on such companies' required conversion of their overhead electric distribution facilities to underground facilities.

**Section 3. Direction to the Town Clerk.** The Town Clerk is directed to transmit a certified copy of this resolution to the Governor, Senate President, House Speaker, the Chair, members of the Miami-Dade State Legislative Delegation, and the members of the Florida Public Service Commission.

**Section 4. Direction to the Town's Lobbyists.** The Town's state lobbyists are directed to advocate for the actions set forth in this Resolution, and to include this issue in the Town's Legislative agenda.

**Section 5. Effective Date.** This Resolution shall become effective immediately upon adoption.

**PASSED AND ADOPTED** this 13th day of December, 2017.

Motion by: Commissioner Karukin

Second by: Commissioner Paul

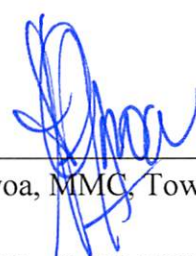
**FINAL VOTE ON ADOPTION**

Commissioner Daniel Gielchinsky	<u>YES</u>
Commissioner Michael Karukin	<u>YES</u>
Commissioner Tina Paul	<u>YES</u>
Vice Mayor Barry Cohen	<u>YES</u>
Mayor Daniel Dietch	<u>YES</u>



\_\_\_\_\_  
Daniel Dietch, Mayor

**ATTEST:**



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Sandra Novoa, MMC, Town Clerk

**APPROVED AS TO FORM AND  
LEGAL SUFFICIENCY FOR THE TOWN OF SURFSIDE ONLY:**

L. Serota  
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Weiss Serota Hellman Cole & Bierman, P.L.  
Town Attorney