

July 1, 2019

To [Florida Public Service Commission Clerk],

Energy Efficiency reduces pollution, improves human health, and lowers energy burdens. The Florida Energy Efficiency Conservation Act (FEECA) is an opportunity to set strong energy savings targets for Florida utilities and deliver these benefits to all Floridians.

Reducing energy demand in buildings avoids the need to generate electricity and to build additional power plants, thereby reducing greenhouse gases and other pollutants emitted through the combustion of fossil fuels. The air pollution caused by burning fossil fuels damages major organ systems in the human body, contributing to the leading causes of death in the US: cancer, chronic lung disease, heart disease, and stroke. Deploying energy efficiency can help to mitigate these health harms.¹ Energy efficiency in buildings can also help to alleviate respiratory ailments and asthma triggers by improving indoor air quality for building occupants.²

Floridians could realize significant health benefits from ramping up utility energy efficiency programs. If utility energy savings targets increased to 1% of retail sales, pollution avoided from utility energy efficiency programs could generate over \$12 million in annual health benefits to Floridians, preventing hospital admissions due to respiratory and cardiovascular illnesses and avoiding restricted activity and costly lost work days. Investing in utility energy efficiency programs as part of a broader energy efficiency strategy could generate even bigger health benefits. Based on the total dollar value of health harms avoided from reducing energy consumption by only 15% in a single year, Florida would see some of the greatest health benefits. In fact, the benefits place it among the top seven states nationwide. Tampa, Miami, Orlando, Jacksonville are ranked among the top 35 cities that would see the greatest health benefits from energy efficiency.³ These benefits offer a powerful argument for moving forward on energy efficiency.

Energy efficiency is also a key tool for reducing energy burdens, the portion of a household income spent on utility bills that is often higher for low-income and rural residents. The national average is 3.5%, yet half of the low-income households in Jacksonville, Tampa, Orlando, and Miami have an energy burden greater than 7.2%, with a quarter of residents as high as 12%. Energy efficiency can eliminate over one third of this burden, and strong utility energy savings targets can even guide these investments to those who need them most.⁴

Florida utilities' historic energy efficiency spending and savings fall well below that of fellow Southeast utilities, yet they have proposed even lower targets for the 2020-2029 period.⁵ Florida can look to tried and true energy efficiency models in neighboring states such as Arkansas and North Carolina, where utilities regularly meet electricity savings targets set by state regulators. FEECA is an opportunity for utilities and regulators to deliver meaningful environmental, health, and economic benefits to Floridians. We urge the Florida Public Service Commission to increase energy savings targets for the utilities.

Sincerely,
Florida Clinicians for Climate Action members

¹ American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy (ACEEE), *Energy Efficiency and Health* (2015): [aceee.org/fact-sheet/ee-and-health](https://www.aceee.org/fact-sheet/ee-and-health)

² ACEEE, *The Next Nexus: Exemplary Programs that Save Energy and Improve Health*: [aceee.org/research-report/h1802](https://www.aceee.org/research-report/h1802)

³ ACEEE, *Saving Energy, Saving Lives: The Health Impacts of Avoiding Power Plant Pollution with Energy Efficiency*: [aceee.org/research-report/h1801](https://www.aceee.org/research-report/h1801)

⁴ ACEEE, *How energy efficiency can help low-income households in Florida*: [aceee.org/sites/default/files/pdf/fact-sheet/ses-florida-100917.pdf](https://www.aceee.org/sites/default/files/pdf/fact-sheet/ses-florida-100917.pdf)

⁵ ACEEE, *Utility-Sector Energy Efficiency Performance in Florida*: [aceee.org/fact-sheet/florida-utility-performance](https://www.aceee.org/fact-sheet/florida-utility-performance)