

## Hillsborough County Businesses Oppose Utility Rate Hikes

Dear Chair Ken Hagan & Hillsborough County Commission,

We, the Hillsborough Affordable Energy Coalition and our undersigned business allies, write to urge you to oppose utility rate hikes and promote an affordable clean energy plan. Local businesses in Hillsborough County are suffering as large corporations like Tampa Electric prioritize profit over the financial well-being of their customers. On top of rising inflation, skyrocketing utility bills pose a significant challenge that threatens the viability of small businesses and undermines our community's economic stability.

Florida continues to experience record-breaking heat and more intense and frequent hurricanes each year. As Florida's reliance on fossil fuels exacerbates the climate crisis, local residents and businesses in Hillsborough County are feeling the financial strain of volatile energy prices. Tampa Electric has proposed a rate hike that would see the average residential customer paying over \$200 more a year in electricity bills. Additionally, the rate request would raise the utility base rate for small businesses by 69%, from \$22.50 to \$38.10. This does not include an anticipated 35% rise in fuel costs, which could add an additional \$50 to \$100 to monthly utility bills for businesses already struggling with rising operation costs. Hillsborough County residents and businesses cannot afford these rate increases especially as energy consumption and bills soar in the hot summer months. Furthermore, 96% of small business employers [polled nationally](#) reported that higher gas and fuel prices have a negative impact on their business.

Hillsborough County residents and businesses deserve better. Increasing energy efficiency measures and phasing out fossil fuels will not only have positive climate impacts but will result in reduced power bills. The City of Tampa has adopted a [Climate Action and Equity Plan](#) that demonstrates how increasing access to solar energy could eliminate increased rate charges and outlines ways local governments can bypass the utility monopoly to transition off costly, climate-killing fossil fuels. Building on this momentum, the Hillsborough County Commission must promote a comprehensive policy plan endorsing clean and affordable energy solutions, ultimately reducing electricity bills and improving the financial security and well-being of the entire county.

The business community is struggling, and we need your help. Prosperity is only possible if we ensure fair and reasonable utility rates that support the well-being of our community and local businesses. We implore you to act in the best interests of your constituents and pass an Affordable Energy & Climate Plan for a more sustainable and economically stable Hillsborough County.

Signed,

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Burger Monger  
John Scott  
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Caffeine Roasters  
Luklecija Vaicekauskas  
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Cali  
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Play It Again Sports  
JD Eder  
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Running Center  
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Sea Maids Creamery  
Idannis Vera  
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