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April 2, 2024

**ELECTRONIC FILING**

Mr. Adam J. Teitzman, Commission Clerk  
Office of Commission Clerk  
Florida Public Service Commission  
2540 Shumard Oak Boulevard  
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0850

Re: Docket 20240026-EI; Petition for Rate Increase by Tampa Electric Company

Dear Mr. Teitzman:

Attached for filing on behalf of Tampa Electric Company in the above-referenced docket is the Direct Testimony of Karen Sparkman and Exhibit No. KKS-1.

Thank you for your assistance in connection with this matter.

(Document 3 of 32)

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'J. Jeffrey Wahlen', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

J. Jeffrey Wahlen

cc: All parties

JJW/ne  
Attachment



**BEFORE THE  
FLORIDA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION**

**DOCKET NO. 20240026-EI  
IN RE: PETITION FOR RATE INCREASE  
BY TAMPA ELECTRIC COMPANY**

**PREPARED DIRECT TESTIMONY AND EXHIBIT  
OF  
KAREN SPARKMAN**

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**OF**  
**KAREN SPARKMAN**

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1                                   **BEFORE THE FLORIDA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION**

2                                   **PREPARED DIRECT TESTIMONY**

3                                   **OF**

4                                   **KAREN SPARKMAN**

5  
6   **Q.**   Please state your name, address, occupation, and employer.

7  
8   **A.**   My name is Karen Sparkman. My business address is 702 North  
9           Franklin Street, Tampa, Florida 33602. I am employed by  
10          Tampa Electric Company ("Tampa Electric" or the "company")  
11          as Vice President Customer Experience.

12  
13   **Q.**   Please describe your duties and responsibilities in that  
14          position.

15  
16   **A.**   I am responsible for leading Tampa Electric's Customer  
17          Experience team; developing and implementing our customer  
18          experience strategy; operating our Customer Experience  
19          area in a way that balances customer satisfaction with  
20          operational efficiencies and regulatory compliance; and  
21          making decisions to enhance the experience our customers  
22          have when they interact with the company, *i.e.*, our  
23          customer experience. My duties include (1) ensuring the  
24          company understands our customers' evolving expectations;  
25          (2) developing strategies to provide excellent service to

1 our customers; and (3) delivering an excellent customer  
2 experience through Customer Experience Centers, Digital  
3 Experience, Billing and Payment Services, Credit and  
4 Collections, and Customer Communications.

5  
6 **Q** Have you previously filed testimony or testified before the  
7 Florida Public Service Commission ("Commission")?  
8

9 **A.** Yes. I filed testimony adopting the direct testimony of  
10 Peoples Gas System witness Monica A. Whiting in Docket No.  
11 20200051-GU. I also filed direct testimony in Docket No.  
12 20230023-GU, Petition for Rate Increase by Peoples Gas  
13 System.  
14

15 **Q.** Please describe your educational background and business  
16 experience.  
17

18 **A.** I have a bachelor's degree in business management and a  
19 master's degree in business administration from Colorado  
20 Technical University.  
21

22 I began my utility career nearly 24 years ago with Colorado  
23 Springs Utilities in their contact center. Since then, I  
24 have held positions in different functional areas with  
25 increasing responsibilities and leadership expectations at

1 three national utilities providing natural gas,  
2 electricity, water, and wastewater services.

3  
4 I have experience in all areas of customer experience,  
5 including call centers, customer communications, workforce  
6 management, billing and payment, meter operations, revenue  
7 protection, technology integration, cross-functional  
8 collaboration, regulatory compliance, and strategic  
9 planning.

10  
11 I joined Tampa Electric in June 2017 as Director of  
12 Customer Experience Operations. I assumed my current role  
13 in October 2020.

14  
15 **Q.** What are the purposes of your direct testimony?

16  
17 **A.** The purposes of my direct testimony are to (1) describe  
18 Tampa Electric's Customer Experience area and the company's  
19 focus on excellent customer service; (2) summarize changes  
20 in the Customer Experience area since our last rate case;  
21 (3) present and explain the company's customer service  
22 results; (4) outline the company's plans to enhance the  
23 customer experience it provides; and (5) demonstrate that  
24 the company's Customer Experience area rate base amounts  
25 and operations and maintenance ("O&M") levels for the 2025

1 test year are reasonable and prudent. I will also briefly  
2 discuss the company's programs for low-income customers  
3 and proposed miscellaneous tariff changes, which are  
4 discussed in greater detail in the direct testimony of  
5 Tampa Electric witness Jordan Williams.

6

7 **Q.** Is the quality of service provided by Tampa Electric  
8 adequate?

9

10 **A.** Yes. My testimony shows that Tampa Electric provides  
11 excellent service to its customers.

12

13 **Q.** Have you prepared an exhibit to support your direct  
14 testimony?

15

16 **A.** Yes. Exhibit No. KKS-1, entitled "Exhibit of Karen  
17 Sparkman," was prepared under my direction and supervision.  
18 The contents of my exhibit were derived from the business  
19 records of the company and are true and correct to the best  
20 of my information and belief. It consists of six documents,  
21 as follows:

22 Document No. 1 List of Minimum Filing Requirement  
23 Schedules Sponsored or Co-Sponsored by  
24 Karen Sparkman

25 Document No. 2 Tampa Electric JDP Study Highlights -

1 Residential  
2 Document No. 3 Tampa Electric JDP Study Highlights -  
3 Business  
4 Document No. 4 Customer Contact Center Metrics  
5 Document No. 5 Statistics of Commission Escalated  
6 Calls  
7 Document No. 6 Customer Experience Capital Expense  
8 Summary 2022-2025  
9

10 **Q.** Do you sponsor or co-sponsor any sections of Tampa  
11 Electric's Minimum Filing Requirement ("MFR") Schedules?  
12

13 **A.** Yes. I sponsor or co-sponsor the MFR Schedules listed in  
14 Document No. 1 of my exhibit. The data and information  
15 contained in these schedules were taken from the business  
16 records of the company and are true and correct to the best  
17 of my information and belief.  
18

19 **(1) TAMPA ELECTRIC'S CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE AREA**

20 **Q.** What is Tampa Electric's overall customer service goal?  
21

22 **A.** Tampa Electric is committed to being a trusted energy  
23 partner for our customers now and in the future. To achieve  
24 this goal, we must consistently give our customers  
25 excellent customer experiences.



1 **Q.** What are the elements of an excellent customer experience?

2

3 **A.** Providing an excellent customer experience means  
4 delivering superior electric service focused on the  
5 customer's evolving needs and expectations.

6

7 It involves providing safe, reliable, and affordable  
8 electricity, and providing operational excellence in our  
9 Energy Supply and Electric Delivery areas. It also involves  
10 personalized interactions, providing efficient and  
11 responsive support across multiple communication channels,  
12 and a seamless user experience when interacting with the  
13 company. Consistency, proactive engagement, valuing  
14 customer feedback, and ensuring team members are trained  
15 and empowered to prioritize customer satisfaction are also  
16 key. When we interact with our customers, we want them to  
17 feel valued and understood, and to exceed their  
18 expectations.

19

20 Tampa Electric has an entire Customer Experience group  
21 dedicated to maintaining and improving the customer  
22 experience; however, every Tampa Electric team member plays  
23 a role and is responsible for delivering excellence to our  
24 customers.

25

1 **Q.** Does the company have a strategy for delivering excellent  
2 customer experiences?

3

4 **A.** Yes. The company's Customer Experience strategy focuses on  
5 six pillars of customer satisfaction: (1) power quality  
6 and reliability; (2) billing and payment; (3) price; (4)  
7 corporate citizenship; (5) communication; and (6) customer  
8 care - digitally, by phone, and in the field. We seek to  
9 deliver excellent customer service by simplifying and  
10 personalizing the customer experience and working with  
11 customers to meet their unique needs and circumstances.  
12 These strategies and goals have been integrated into the  
13 recurring customer commitment training that we provide to  
14 our team members.

15

16 **Q.** Have customer expectations for electric service changed in  
17 the last decade?

18

19 **A.** Yes. When I began working in the utility industry,  
20 customers communicated with their utility by phone or in  
21 person, meters were read by visiting the customer premises,  
22 and customer billing systems were relatively simple and  
23 lasted for years without major upgrades. Those days are  
24 over. Changing customer expectations and rapid changes in  
25 technology put significant pressure on utilities like Tampa

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Electric to stay current and provide the kind of experience customers expect.

Customers now expect more than just safe, reliable, and affordable electric service. This change has been largely driven by technology and the advancement of customer service standards in other industries.

Our customers live in a digital world and expect an experience from their electric utility that is similar to what they receive from companies like Amazon and Uber.

Customers want to self-serve using their "channel" of choice - whether telephone, email, text, or web via mobile or desktop website - whenever and wherever they want.

Customers want faster service, which raises service level expectations, and a consistent and personalized experience that is simple to use, convenient, and innovative.

Customers also want information specifically related to services that impact their account, power quality and reliability, and billing and payment.

Our company and the members of its Customer Experience team

1 are committed to meeting these changing and increasing  
2 customer expectations, but doing so requires resources,  
3 innovation, and effort.

4  
5 **Q.** How many people are employed in the Customer Experience  
6 area and what major functions do they perform?

7  
8 **A.** As of the end of 2023, Tampa Electric employed  
9 approximately 393 team members in the Customer Experience  
10 area. These team members serve customers of Tampa Electric  
11 and our affiliate, Peoples Gas System, Inc. ("Peoples"),  
12 and work in ten major functional areas.

13  
14 1. Customer Experience Centers: Team members in our  
15 Customer Experience Centers support residential and  
16 business customers through call center activities and our  
17 digital customer experience communication pathways.

18  
19 2. Billing Operations: This team delivers accurate,  
20 timely billing information and coordinates with Energy  
21 Delivery to receive meter reading information and resolve  
22 meter-related issues.

23  
24 3. Payments: This team processes, researches, and  
25 balances customer payments.

1           4.    Credit and Collections: This team supports Tampa  
2    Electric by verifying the identity of customers, and it  
3    assists with fraud investigation, bad debt collection,  
4    research or maintenance of customer deposits and other  
5    forms of payment security and filing claims in customer  
6    bankruptcy cases.

7  
8           5.    Customer Assistance: This team partners with social  
9    service agencies to assist customers who qualify for local,  
10   state, and federal funds and directs customers to available  
11   payment assistance resources.

12  
13          6.    Operational Support: This team (1) provides quality  
14   monitoring, training, and improvement programs for the  
15   Customer Experience team members; (2) resolves customer  
16   complaints; (3) develops policy and procedures; (4)  
17   monitors compliance with applicable laws, rules,  
18   regulations, and policies; and (5) provides workforce  
19   management services for the Customer Experience area.

20  
21          7.    Customer Experience Strategy, Research, and Digital  
22   Solutions: This team (1) conducts research on customer  
23   experience issues; (2) develops strategies for improving  
24   the customer experience; and (3) delivers digital customer  
25   solutions including customer portal, Interactive Voice

1 Response ("IVR"), and digital outbound communications and  
2 preference management.

3  
4 8. Business Solutions: This team works with the company's  
5 Information Technology department to support the company's  
6 use and enhancement of its Customer Relationship Management  
7 and Billing ("CRB") system and other information technology  
8 systems.

9  
10 9. Optional Customer Programs: This team is responsible  
11 for the design, development, implementation, and  
12 management of optional customer programs designed to  
13 provide renewable energy options, encourage customer-side  
14 efficiency improvements, and facilitate the integration  
15 and optimization of customer-owned distributed energy  
16 resources (e.g., solar, electric vehicles, and battery  
17 storage).

18  
19 10. Communications: This team is responsible for both  
20 internal and external customer communications - including  
21 customer education, content creation, market research,  
22 outage communications, crisis communications, and  
23 regulatory compliance messaging.

24  
25 **Q.** How do these ten functions benefit customers?

1     **A.**    The functions listed above and the teams that perform them  
2            are the foundation of our customer experience efforts. They  
3            directly benefit customers because they establish how we  
4            directly interact with our customers.

5  
6     **Q.**    How are the rate base and O&M expenses associated with the  
7            activities and functions described above apportioned or  
8            allocated between Tampa Electric and Peoples?

9  
10    **A.**    Rate base and O&M expenses are incurred by Tampa Electric  
11            and allocated to Peoples based on the key operational  
12            services provided to customers. These key operational  
13            services reside in the meter to cash lifecycle and include  
14            activities such as calculating and producing bills,  
15            collecting payments, and answering customer queries.  
16            Please see the testimony of Tampa Electric witness Richard  
17            Latta for more details around the allocation of rate base  
18            and O&M expenses.

19  
20    **(2)    CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE AREA CHANGES SINCE LAST RATE CASE**

21    **Q.**    When was the company's last general base rate increase  
22            proceeding?

23  
24    **A.**    Tampa Electric last filed a rate case on April 9, 2021, in  
25            Docket No. 20210034-EI. The issues in that case were

1 resolved by a unanimous Stipulation and Settlement  
2 Agreement ("2021 Agreement") by and between Tampa Electric  
3 and the consumer parties that participated in the case.  
4 The Commission approved the 2021 Agreement by Order No.  
5 PSC-2021-0423-S-EI, issued on November 10, 2021. The  
6 company has been operating under its terms since then. The  
7 term of the 2021 Agreement expires on December 31, 2024; I  
8 will refer to the period from approval of the agreement to  
9 the end of its term as the "settlement period."

10  
11 **Q.** How has the Customer Experience area changed during the  
12 settlement period?

13  
14 **A.** Since 2021, Tampa Electric improved the customer experience  
15 to meet changing customer expectations by making  
16 investments in new technology, developing new processes,  
17 and implementing new training. I will explain these changes  
18 in this portion of my testimony.

19  
20 (A) CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE MAJOR CAPITAL EXPENDITURES

21 **Q.** Please describe the major capital expenditures made by the  
22 company in the Customer Experience area during the  
23 settlement period.

24  
25 **A.** The company has made technology investments since 2021 to



1 improve the customer experience. These technology  
2 investments are grouped as follows: (1) Customer  
3 Digitalization; (2) Operational Excellence; (3) Optional  
4 Customer Programs; (4) Outage Enhancements; and (5) Voice  
5 of the Customer and Data. The company used its normal  
6 procurement processes to ensure the assets and services  
7 needed to execute these projects were secured at the lowest  
8 reasonable cost.

9  
10 **Q.** What are the normal processes to ensure the assets and  
11 services needed to execute projects are secured at the  
12 lowest reasonable cost?

13  
14 **A.** Tampa Electric ensures investments are implemented at the  
15 lowest reasonable cost by focusing on cost efficiency  
16 without compromising the quality of the outcome. The  
17 company's normal process includes effective project  
18 planning, budget development, vendor selection, and  
19 project monitoring and reporting. Additionally, the  
20 company focuses on the projects that will provide the most  
21 value for the organization and the customer.

22  
23 **Q.** How much did Customer Experience invest in Customer  
24 Digitalization during the settlement period?

25

1 **A.** Customer Experience invested \$13.8 million for the period  
2 2022 through 2024.

3

4 **Q.** Please explain the Customer Digitalization technology  
5 investments and why they were necessary.

6

7 **A.** During the settlement period, Tampa Electric invested in  
8 digital platforms that make it easier for customers to  
9 interact with the company. These include the development  
10 of mobile applications, enhanced online portals for account  
11 management and customized communication preferences, new  
12 digital payment methods, and the use of chatbots for  
13 instant customer support.

14

15 One example of a project included in this category is Tampa  
16 Electric's new Interactive Bill function in the customer  
17 portal, which was launched in 2023. This function uses  
18 interval billing data obtained from the implementation of  
19 Advanced Metering Infrastructure ("AMI") to enable  
20 customers to view their daily usage data. With this  
21 foundational functionality, we will be able to provide a  
22 more personalized experience to customers with additional  
23 bill insights and proactive notifications.

24

25 We also listened to feedback from customers that the

1 company's bill was too difficult to understand and  
2 simplified the paper bill through the Paper Redesign  
3 project. This included adding a QR code function in our  
4 redesigned bills that links customers to our customer self-  
5 service portal for additional features and insights.

6  
7 This project was a logical extension of our AMI project  
8 and was contemplated when the company invested in AMI  
9 technology. To achieve economies of scale and more  
10 efficiently allocate resources, the company implemented  
11 the simplified paper bill and the interactive billing  
12 experience at the same time so that customers wanting  
13 additional usage details can find them online. The company  
14 spent approximately \$6.3 million for the interactive  
15 billing project, with additional enhancements planned for  
16 2024 and beyond. It did not require the company to hire  
17 additional team members.

18  
19 **Q.** Why were the Customer Digitalization investments needed  
20 and how do they benefit customers?

21  
22 **A.** These investments are necessary to meet evolving customer  
23 expectations. A growing number of our customers want to  
24 engage with us on their terms. Specifically, the  
25 Interactive Billing project was needed to address feedback

1 from customers on our bills and to set the foundation for  
2 how interval billing data is shared with our customers.  
3 With this foundation, the company plans to implement  
4 additional enhancements to Interactive Billing such as  
5 proactive usage alerts, delivery of key insights about  
6 customers' usage, and enhanced trending and reporting of  
7 usage data. As customers' expectations continue to evolve,  
8 more customers are wanting a more dynamic, smart billing  
9 experience that integrates their usage data with other key  
10 data points such as weather and disaggregated appliance  
11 data to help manage their usage more effectively. The  
12 Customer Digitalization investments meet these customer  
13 needs.

14  
15 **Q.** What steps did the company take to ensure these investments  
16 were completed at the lowest reasonable cost?

17  
18 **A.** The company used its normal process I previously described  
19 to ensure that the assets and services needed to execute  
20 these projects were secured at the lowest reasonable cost.

21  
22 **Q.** How much did Customer Experience invest in Operational  
23 Excellence Projects in the settlement period?

24  
25 **A.** Tampa Electric invested \$10.4 million in Operational

1 Excellence Projects during the settlement period.

2

3 **Q.** Please explain the Operational Excellence technology  
4 investments, why they were needed, and how they benefit  
5 customers.

6

7 **A.** Since the last rate case, Tampa Electric has made  
8 investments in technology that have helped the company  
9 improve operational efficiency. One example of a project  
10 included in this category is our investment in our customer  
11 management and billing system ("CRB") for managing customer  
12 accounts, billing, payment, credit, and collection  
13 services.

14

15 The CRB system integrates with over 60 other application  
16 systems. Enhancements to the system included improvements  
17 and enhancements, both small and mid-size, that focus on  
18 the meter to cash process, and are a typical part of a  
19 critical system life cycle.

20

21 The enhancements to our CRB system were necessary to adapt  
22 to changing technology, which includes compliance with  
23 regulations around data security and privacy, and to  
24 improve efficiency and streamline business processes,  
25 continue the facilitation of strategic initiatives (such

1 as our digital transformation), and to continue meeting  
2 evolving customer expectations. The project did not require  
3 the company to add new team members.

4  
5 These enhancements will benefit customers because they  
6 incorporate lessons learned from interacting with our  
7 customers and will allow us to improve operational  
8 efficiencies and enhance the customer experience.

9  
10 **Q.** What steps did the company take to ensure these investments  
11 were completed at the lowest reasonable cost?

12  
13 **A.** All enhancements are prioritized based on what brings the  
14 highest value and benefit to the customer. We negotiate  
15 contracts with vendors and service providers to secure the  
16 lowest cost with the best terms. The company has been  
17 successful in reducing the costs of goods and services by  
18 exploring competitive options.

19  
20 **Q.** How much did Tampa Electric invest in Optional Customer  
21 Programs during the settlement period?

22  
23 **A.** Tampa Electric invested \$7.2 million in Optional Customer  
24 Programs during the settlement period 2022 through 2024.

25

1 **Q.** Please explain the Optional Customer Program technology  
2 investments, why they are necessary, and how they benefit  
3 customers.

4  
5 **A.** Tampa Electric improved the company's portfolio of optional  
6 programs by providing customers more choice and flexibility  
7 in how they use our services. Such programs are intended  
8 to cater to the diverse needs and preferences of our  
9 customer base, enhancing their overall experience and  
10 satisfaction with our services.

11  
12 **Q.** What steps did the company take to ensure these investments  
13 were completed at the lowest reasonable cost?

14  
15 **A.** The company used its normal process described above to  
16 ensure that the assets and services needed to execute these  
17 projects were secured at the lowest reasonable cost.

18  
19 **Q.** How much did Tampa Electric invest in Outage Enhancement  
20 projects during the settlement period?

21  
22 **A.** Tampa Electric invested \$1.8 million in Outage Enhancement  
23 projects during the settlement period.

24  
25 **Q.** Please explain the Outage Enhancements technology

1 investments, why they were necessary, and how they will  
2 benefit customers.

3  
4 **A.** Tampa Electric's outage map experienced a surge in traffic  
5 during Hurricane Ian in 2022. This resulted in periods of  
6 inaccessibility for some customers. Based on lessons  
7 learned from this experience, the company replaced its  
8 outage map with a modern cloud-based system in 2023. This  
9 new outage map is necessary to ensure that we maintain a  
10 transparent, reliable and resilient map during periods of  
11 increased traffic, so that we can continue to update  
12 customers during critical times such as during storms. It  
13 will also benefit customers by providing a foundation for  
14 new features and a more personalized experience for  
15 customers during an outage.

16  
17 To provide these benefits, the new outage map is hosted on  
18 remote, third-party servers, which results in a more stable  
19 and resilient map that can handle increased customer  
20 traffic during a large weather event. Additionally, Tampa  
21 Electric formed a strategic partnership with a vendor to  
22 enhance support and ensure business continuity during  
23 outages.

24  
25 This project did not require new team members; rather, it



1 allowed the company to enhance support allowing for an  
2 enhanced experience during a storm. The company invested  
3 approximately \$1.3 million for enhancements to the outage  
4 communication process in 2022 and 2023.

5  
6 **Q.** What steps did the company take to ensure these investments  
7 were completed at the lowest reasonable cost?

8  
9 **A.** The company implemented the new outage map with functions  
10 that provide the most value to customers. This resulted in  
11 a scalable, stable, more reliable outage map, and created  
12 a foundation for future enhancements to the overall outage  
13 experience.

14  
15 **Q.** How much did Tampa Electric invest in Voice of the Customer  
16 ("VOC") and Data projects during the settlement period?

17  
18 **A.** Tampa Electric invested \$1.6 million in VOC and Data  
19 projects during the settlement period.

20  
21 **Q.** Please explain the VOC and Data technology investments,  
22 why they were needed, and how they will benefit customers.

23  
24 **A.** The VOC platform was designed to systematically gather data  
25 regarding our customers' needs, wants, perceptions,

1 preferences, and expectations. Our VOC platform stores this  
2 data and feedback in a central location and provides  
3 integration with other key systems. The main benefit of a  
4 VOC program is its ability to measure the experience of a  
5 customer at key points of interaction with the company, in  
6 real time. This allows us to draw more meaningful insights  
7 to improve the customer experience.

8  
9 During the settlement period, we created several automated  
10 transactional surveys that are sent to customers based on  
11 their interactions with us (e.g., outage, net metering,  
12 move-in/out, new construction, and many others). The  
13 company also organized a customer panel with over one  
14 thousand customers actively participating in monthly  
15 engagement surveys focused on topics designed to enhance  
16 their experience. Tampa Electric is planning additional  
17 investments over the next few years to continue to capture  
18 valuable customer feedback with the goal of improving the  
19 customer experience.

20  
21 In 2022 and 2023, the company invested approximately \$0.8  
22 million in the VOC platform. It did not require the company  
23 to add additional team members.

24  
25 This project was needed to create a central platform for

1 customer feedback that provides a more holistic view of  
2 our customers. The project also collects data which the  
3 company can use to address points of customer concern and  
4 determine the right initiatives to improve the customer  
5 experience. For example, the company implemented an outage  
6 survey that automatically is sent to customers when they  
7 experience an outage. This allows us to get direct feedback  
8 from customers on how to improve the outage process which  
9 includes: outage reporting, outage communications, status  
10 updates, and user overall outage experience. Implementing  
11 a single platform allowed the company to solicit feedback  
12 in an organized, centralized, and consistent way without  
13 over-surveying customers.

14  
15 **Q.** What steps did the company take to ensure these investments  
16 were completed at the lowest reasonable cost?

17  
18 **A.** We negotiate contracts with vendors and service providers  
19 to secure the lowest cost with the best terms. The company  
20 has been successful in reducing the costs of goods and  
21 services by exploring competitive options.

22  
23 **(B)** CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE PROCESS IMPROVEMENTS

24 **Q.** Has Tampa Electric made any improvements to its customer  
25 service processes since 2021?

1 **A.** Yes. Tampa Electric made process improvements for our  
2 business customers and in our Customer Experience Center.  
3 I will describe the process improvements the company  
4 implemented in each of these areas.

5  
6 **Q.** What are Customer Experience Centers?  
7

8 **A.** Customer Experience Centers are the company's central  
9 customer connection hubs that handle all incoming customer  
10 communications, including telephone, email, and social  
11 media. The Customer Experience Centers handle emergency  
12 and non-emergency requests 24 hours a day, seven days a  
13 week. Tampa Electric has three physical Customer Experience  
14 Centers located in downtown Tampa, Ybor City, and Miami.

15  
16 Tampa Electric has separate teams of Customer Service  
17 Professionals ("CSP") that are specially trained to assist  
18 with residential customers, business customers, new  
19 construction requests, and demand side management  
20 programs.

21  
22 **Q.** What process improvements were implemented in Customer  
23 Experience Centers during the settlement period?  
24

25 **A.** Tampa Electric made the following changes at the Customer

1 Experience Centers.

2  
3 1. Customer Commitment Training: Tampa Electric expanded  
4 the customer commitment training program that began  
5 in 2018 to include external contractors that directly  
6 serve customers. The company also implemented an  
7 annual refresher course for existing team members.  
8 This expansion includes helping our team members  
9 better understand improvements made to the customer  
10 experience and the value that the company provides to  
11 all customers.

12  
13 2. Speech Analytics: Tampa Electric now uses speech  
14 analytics to improve quality of services. Speech  
15 analytics transcribes calls to searchable text and  
16 provides the ability to query single words and phrases  
17 used by either team members or customers. By doing  
18 so, the company can monitor, identify, and analyze  
19 customer issues, thereby understanding the underlying  
20 factors affecting performance and overall business  
21 results. Furthermore, categorizing the data allows  
22 for targeted analysis based on the nature or purpose  
23 of the calls.

24  
25 3. Customer Champion Network: The company established a

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Customer Champion Network as part of our greater Customer Experience Strategy. This team member-led network works to ensure customer feedback is evaluated, considered, and utilized to determine short- and long-term customer needs and identify points of customer concern and opportunities for improvement. The network members also serve as brand ambassadors that share the many things the company is doing to serve customers and the community.

- 4. Consistent Outbound Communication Process: This process improvement created a standard methodology and formal documentation to ensure consistency for all outbound customer requests. Centralizing requests allows Tampa Electric to (1) utilize a consistent methodology of completing requests for outbound communications; (2) ensure the message was appropriately vetted, approved, and aligned with other requests; (3) internally communicate the message being sent (especially to our frontline team members); (4) ensure consistent messaging across all communication channels; (5) ensure the communications covered all key components and reached our customers in a timely manner; and (6) ensure our customers are not overwhelmed with multiple communications within a

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short timeframe.

**Q.** What business customer process improvements has Tampa Electric made during the settlement period?

**A.** Tampa Electric has enhanced the experience for our business customers through several changes I describe below.

1. We developed an automated rate calculator that can compare optional rates and project bills based on a customer's forecasted load profile. This tool reduces calculation time, improves accuracy, and provides our customers with a better graphical presentation of projected cost savings.
  
2. The New Construction Portal is an improved digital experience that provides customers with self-service technology to create and manage their construction projects and to provide all supporting documentation in an efficient manner. This portal streamlined the new construction process, decreased the timeline to energize, and delivers an experience customer have come to expect based on experiences with other industries or providers.

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- 3. We developed a mass move in-move out processing system for customers who require recurring seasonal turn on and turn offs with 10 or more accounts. It can also be used on non-recurring turn on and turn offs. This enhancement reduces administrative and phone time.
  
- 4. We began conducting bi-annual key account management surveys to gather customer feedback with the goal of identifying opportunities for improvement.
  
- 5. The company implemented and began tracking key metrics (e.g., number of large account site visits) to ensure we are serving business customers appropriately.
  
- 6. The outage map, as described above also helps business customers by making the outage map more informative and easier to use and by improving outbound communications for outages.
  
- 7. We enhanced our Statement of Account tool, which allows customers with multiple accounts to see amounts transferred between accounts. This tool has reduced manual review and helps customers reconcile their bill.



1 Q. Did Tampa Electric implement any additional training in  
2 the Customer Experience area during the settlement period?

3  
4 A. Yes. In addition to the Customer Commitment Training  
5 mentioned earlier, Tampa Electric launched the "Creating a  
6 Memorable Customer Experience" instructor led course in  
7 2022. This course is for frontline agents as a refresher  
8 course and focuses on the importance of each customer  
9 interaction. In 2023, we launched "Powering Your Future  
10 With Value" programs that educate all Tampa Electric team  
11 members on the many programs and services we provide.

12  
13 **(3) RESULTS: MEASURING THE CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE**

14 Q. How does Tampa Electric measure its performance in the  
15 customer area?

16  
17 A. The company measures its performance in the customer area  
18 based on customer satisfaction scores as measured by J.D.  
19 Power, internal performance metrics, and by tracking  
20 Commission complaints.

21  
22 Q. In general, how has the company's performance in the  
23 Customer Experience area trended since 2021?

24  
25 A. During 2023, customers experienced unprecedented summer

1 heat in our service territory, and the resulting higher  
2 usage, the impact of storm and fuel cost recovery on  
3 customers' bills, and overall increases to the costs of  
4 living due to inflation were difficult to manage. Even  
5 though the company has no control over the weather and  
6 inflation, and a limited ability to influence fuel prices  
7 and storm damage, our customers' unhappiness with economic  
8 conditions in general and their electric bills in  
9 particular was reflected in the increased call and emails  
10 volume at our Customer Experience Centers, more customers  
11 requesting bill payment assistance or accommodations, more  
12 customer calls to the Commission, and in our performance  
13 measures.

14  
15 **Q.** Was Tampa Electric's experience in 2023 unique to the  
16 company?

17  
18 **A.** No. Warm weather, higher usage, storm and fuel cost  
19 recovery, and general economic conditions were challenging  
20 for customers of all electric utilities in Florida, not  
21 just Tampa Electric.

22  
23 **Q.** How did the company perform in J.D. Power surveys during  
24 the settlement period?

25

1 **A.** In 2022, Tampa Electric was recognized by J.D. Power as  
2 the most improved electric residential brand in the nation  
3 over the past five years. As measured by J.D. Power, Tampa  
4 Electric's overall customer satisfaction has increased by  
5 60 points for residential and 14 points for business since  
6 2017.

7  
8 In 2023, the company's overall residential customer  
9 satisfaction (measured by J.D. Power) decreased by 27  
10 points from our 2022 final score, which is consistent with  
11 other Florida utilities who also experienced declines  
12 between 2022 and 2023. However, Tampa Electric scored  
13 better than the industry average for every residential  
14 customer satisfaction criteria (Power Quality &  
15 Reliability, Corporate Citizenship, Communications,  
16 Customer Care, Billing & Payment, and Price), and remained  
17 22 points above the industry average.

18  
19 On the business customer side, Tampa Electric's 2023 final  
20 satisfaction score decreased 19 points from our 2022 final  
21 score but was seven points above the industry average. This  
22 decrease is again consistent with other Florida utilities  
23 such as FPL; Florida utilities declined an average of 30  
24 points between 2022 and 2023.

25

1 Document Nos. 2 and 3 of my exhibit contain highlights from  
2 the J.D. Power Residential and Business surveys,  
3 respectively.

4  
5 **Q.** Has the company won any Customer Experience awards since  
6 2021?

7  
8 **A.** Tampa Electric was awarded the "Customer Champion" award  
9 in 2022, and the "Easiest to Do Business With" award in  
10 2023 in the Cogent Residential Utility Trusted Brand and  
11 Customer Engagement Study. Tampa Electric was also awarded  
12 the "Trusted Business Partner" award in 2022 in the Cogent  
13 Business Utility Trusted Brand and Customer Engagement  
14 Study. Both studies span all electric and gas utilities in  
15 the nation and are included in my Exhibit as Document Nos.  
16 2 and 3.

17  
18 **Q.** What internal performance metrics does the company use to  
19 measure its performance in the Customer Experience area?

20  
21 **A.** The main performance metrics the company uses to measure  
22 performance are as follows.

23  
24 1. Telephone service level refers to the percentage of  
25 calls answered within a specified time frame, usually

1           expressed as "X percent of calls answered within Y  
2           seconds."

3

4           2.    Email service level refers to the percentage of email  
5           responses completed within a specified time frame.

6

7           3.    Average speed of answer refers to the average amount  
8           of time it takes for a Contact Center to answer a  
9           phone call from a customer. The time it takes to  
10          navigate through the IVR is not factored into average  
11          speed of answer.

12

13          4.    Average handling time refers to the average length of  
14          time it takes to complete a customer phone call.

15

16          5.    Call volume and abandonment rate refers to the number  
17          of incoming calls received (offered) over a period.  
18          The Abandonment Rate refers to the percentage of  
19          inbound phone calls made to the Contact Center that  
20          are abandoned by the customer prior to speaking to an  
21          agent.

22

23    **Q.**    How has the company performed against its own internal  
24    performance metrics since the last rate case?

25

1 **A.** Our internal performance metrics from 2021 to 2023 are  
2 shown on Document No. 4 of my exhibit. Overall, our  
3 internal metrics significantly improved through 2021 due  
4 to substantial improvements to training, processes, and  
5 technology impacting the customer experience. However,  
6 beginning in late 2022, Tampa Electric began to see a  
7 decline in these metrics due to the weather, usage, storm,  
8 fuel, and inflation dynamics described above, and the  
9 resulting increases in call volumes and other customer  
10 contacts.

11  
12 **Q.** Did other factors contribute to these company metric  
13 changes?

14  
15 **A.** Yes. Current labor market conditions have made and are  
16 continuing to make it difficult to recruit, hire, and  
17 retain the right skillsets for our Customer Contact  
18 Centers. This is especially true as the technology  
19 landscape continues to evolve rapidly, requiring us to  
20 adapt quickly not only to evolving customer expectations  
21 but also to this shifting technology landscape.

22  
23 **Q.** What actions did the company take in late 2022 and 2023 to  
24 address these changing metrics?

25

1 The company took a combination of short- and long-term  
2 steps to deal with the pressures we experienced in 2023.  
3 The short-term and immediate measures included the  
4 following actions.

5  
6 1. Establishing walk-in customer service stations in our  
7 corporate office. We created temporary customer  
8 service stations at our corporate office, which were  
9 staffed with experienced customer service  
10 representatives to address customer issues, mainly  
11 related to high bills.

12  
13 2. Outsourcing contact center functions. We added more  
14 outsourced staffing to augment our contact center and  
15 assist with the additional call volume related to high  
16 bills.

17  
18 3. Enhanced customer assistance options. We provided  
19 more assistance opportunities because of the  
20 company's donations to Share. Share is a program where  
21 team members, customers and community partners can  
22 donate monetary contributions towards customer bill  
23 assistance. These donations are matched dollar for  
24 dollar, up to \$500,000 annually. In 2022 and 2023,  
25 Tampa Electric donated over \$1 million in shareholder-

1 funded assistance through the Share program. In  
2 partnership with our program administrators, Salvation  
3 Army and Catholic Charities, we expanded guidelines  
4 to allow more customers to receive assistance.  
5 Additionally, we expanded our customer assistance  
6 team to address the higher demand.

7  
8 Longer term, the company is re-engineering its processes  
9 to ensure they are efficient and can be more easily  
10 followed by the available labor force, increasing the use  
11 of automation and information technology resources, and  
12 increasing our training activities for Customer Experience  
13 team members.

14  
15 To do this, we are organizing a specialized team in  
16 Customer Experience focused on enhancing the operational  
17 efficiency of our organization. This team aims to  
18 streamline processes, elevate service quality, and  
19 ultimately, improve the overall customer and employee  
20 experience. The team will dedicate the next 24 to 30 months  
21 to this program, working diligently to achieve these  
22 objectives.

23  
24 **Q.** How are the company's metrics trending so far since late  
25 2023?



1 **A.** The company's metrics in the contact center have improved  
2 slightly in early 2024 primarily due to cooler weather.  
3 However, we are looking to the specialized team focused on  
4 improving the operational efficiency of our organization  
5 to identify ways we can make it easier for our customers  
6 to do business with us as we approach the summer months.

7

8 **Q.** How has the company performed in Commission customer  
9 complaints since 2021?

10

11 **A.** The company had its lowest ever number of Commission  
12 escalations in 2021. Since 2021, escalations increased,  
13 but remain below 2019 numbers. Increased rates, fuel  
14 adjustments, and record high temperatures have contributed  
15 to higher energy costs, which in turn caused increased  
16 escalations. These statistics are shown in my exhibit on  
17 Document No. 5.

18

19 **Q.** How do you rate the company's overall level of customer  
20 service?

21

22 **A.** Tampa Electric provides excellent customer service. As  
23 noted by our President and CEO Archie Collins in his  
24 testimony, the company has improved its solid safety  
25 record, invested in technologies that have reduced fuel

1 costs for our customers, improved its system heat rate by  
2 20 percent, and improved its overall service reliability  
3 index scores by 32 percent.

4  
5 **(4) FUTURE CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE ENHANCEMENTS**

6 **Q.** Does the company's Customer Experience strategy reflect  
7 the changing nature of customer expectations?

8  
9 **A.** Yes. Our customer experience strategy continues to evolve  
10 to align with the changing expectations and needs of our  
11 customers. This includes adopting a more personalized  
12 approach to service, using data analytics to gain insights  
13 into customer preferences, and using technology to enhance  
14 interaction and service delivery. The company is also  
15 focusing on streamlining processes for greater efficiency  
16 and responsiveness and investing in training our staff to  
17 better understand and anticipate customer needs. By doing  
18 so, we aim to not only meet but exceed customer  
19 expectations.

20  
21 **Q.** Is Tampa Electric planning any future Customer Experience  
22 initiatives?

23  
24 **A.** Yes. In 2025, we are planning a broad range of capital  
25 investments to elevate service quality and customer

1 satisfaction. These investments include programs in three  
2 areas, which I describe below.

3  
4 1. Customer Digitalization: We intend to further enhance  
5 our digital platforms to provide customers with a  
6 convenient and efficient way to access services,  
7 information, and support anytime, anywhere. One  
8 example is that we plan to add new features to the  
9 Interactive Bill, such as more granular usage data,  
10 personalized insights based on usage and patterns,  
11 additional weather details, and comparisons to other  
12 customers with similar sized homes. The company will  
13 invest \$4.4 million on these projects in 2025.

14  
15 2. Operational Efficiency: As I previously explained,  
16 Customer Experience is organizing a specialized team  
17 focused on enhancing the operational efficiency of our  
18 organization. This effort will continue in 2025. Some  
19 efficiency tools Tampa Electric is considering include  
20 Artificial Intelligence ("AI") and machine learning,  
21 advanced data analytics, and customer segmentation.  
22 Customer segmentation divides our customer base into  
23 distinct groups or segments based on certain  
24 characteristics, behaviors, or demographics. The goal  
25 of customer segmentation is to better understand the

1 diverse needs, preferences, and behaviors of different  
2 customer groups to effectively meet their specific  
3 needs. By segmenting customers into meaningful groups,  
4 we can improve customer service, enhance customer  
5 satisfaction, and ultimately increase efficiency.  
6 Customer segmentation will enable us to deliver a more  
7 personalized experience that resonates with different  
8 segments of our customer base. These tools will help  
9 the company to proactively recognize specific customer  
10 needs, such as support for low-income individuals, or  
11 identify the likelihood of serving electric vehicles  
12 in a certain area. This benefits our customers by  
13 allowing the company to offer customer assistance  
14 options before any service disconnection occurs, or  
15 proactively plan for additional infrastructure to  
16 improve reliability and deliver uninterrupted service.  
17 Furthermore, AI can be employed to detect high energy  
18 consumption patterns and thresholds, enabling us to  
19 proactively present energy management solutions to our  
20 customers, giving them more control over their energy  
21 usage, and ensuring a more efficient and responsive  
22 service experience. The company will invest \$4.1  
23 million on these projects in 2025.

24  
25 3. Optional Customer Programs: We will improve the

1 company's portfolio of optional programs by providing  
2 customers more choice and flexibility in how they use our  
3 services. Such programs are intended to cater to the  
4 diverse needs and preferences of our customer base,  
5 enhancing their overall experience and satisfaction with  
6 our services. The company plans to invest \$4.9 million into  
7 projects in 2025 that aim to benefit our entire customer  
8 base.

9  
10 **(5) 2025 CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE RATE BASE AND O&M EXPENSES**

11 **Q.** How much capital did the company invest in Customer  
12 Experience during the three-year term of the 2021 Agreement  
13 from 2022 through 2024?

14  
15 **A.** For the period 2022 through 2024, the company invested  
16 approximately \$39.5 million in capital projects for the  
17 Customer Experience area, of which \$34.8 million is rate  
18 base expenditures. The projects associated with this  
19 spending and their dollar amounts by year are reflected in  
20 Document No. 6 of my exhibit. The 2022 and 2023 amounts on  
21 this schedule are actual numbers, and the 2024 amounts are  
22 forecasted based on the company's 2024 budget. I previously  
23 described the groups of capital projects that represent  
24 the key areas of capital investment.

25

1 Q. How much capital does the company expect to invest in 2025?

2

3 A. In 2025, the company expects to invest approximately \$15.1  
4 million in capital projects for the Customer Experience  
5 area, of which \$13.4 million is rate base expenditures.  
6 The projects associated with this amount are shown on  
7 Document 6 of my exhibit. I previously described the  
8 capital projects that make up this total and explained why  
9 they are prudent.

10

11 Q. What is the total capital investment in the Customer  
12 Experience area between 2022 and 2025?

13

14 A. The total capital investment in the Customer Experience  
15 area between 2022 and 2025 is expected to be \$48.2 million.

16

17 Q. What is the total amount of 2025 rate base attributable to  
18 the Customer Experience area?

19

20 A. The total amount of 2025 rate base capital for the Customer  
21 Experience area is \$13.4 million.

22

23 Q. Is this amount of 2025 rate base for the Customer  
24 Experience area reasonable and prudent?

25

1 **A.** Yes. This amount represents the Customer Experience rate  
2 base that will be in service and used and useful by the  
3 company to provide safe, reliable electric service to our  
4 customers. It also reflects the capital investments since  
5 2021 described previously in my testimony, which are  
6 prudent for the reasons I described.

7  
8 **Q.** What is the forecasted amount for 2025 Customer Experience  
9 O&M expenses, and is this amount reasonable?

10  
11 **A.** In 2025, the company plans to spend approximately \$108.1  
12 million in O&M expenses for Customer Experience, of which  
13 \$45.4 million is related to base rates.

14  
15 **Q.** How have the company's Customer Experience operating  
16 expenses changed since its last rate case? What items are  
17 causing the increase in operating expenses?

18  
19 **A.** The 2025 budgeted Customer Experience O&M expenses are  
20 approximately \$31.9 million higher than 2022, of which \$7.9  
21 million is related to base rates. This is 21 percent  
22 greater compared to 2022, largely due to a rise in bad debt  
23 expense and meter reading. The meter reading increase is  
24 attributed to the annual software maintenance fees for the  
25 AMI software and data management solution.

1 **Q.** What is the performance against the O&M benchmark for 2020  
2 in each of the Customer Experience functional expense  
3 groups?  
4

5 **A.** As shown in MFR Schedule C-37, Tampa Electric is well below  
6 the benchmark in all Customer Experience functional areas.  
7 Customer Accounts \$6.5 million under  
8 Customer Service and Information \$2.4 million under  
9 Sales Expenses \$0.02 million under  
10

11 **Q.** What are the main causes of the company's Customer  
12 Experience O&M expenses?  
13

14 **A.** The main causes of the company's Customer Experience-  
15 related O&M expenses include labor, outside services such  
16 as augmented staffing, and other operational expenses. The  
17 operational expenses include but are not limited to: (1)  
18 customer billing fees (vendor fees and postage); (2)  
19 processing fees associated with customer payments; (3)  
20 high-volume call answering ("HVCA") fees; (4) IVR virtual  
21 hold fees; and (5) other expenses associated with  
22 maintenance of our systems.  
23

24 **Q.** What steps has the company taken to reduce O&M expenses in  
25 the Customer Experience area?



1     **A.**    The company has taken the following actions to reduce  
2            Customer Experience O&M expenses.

3  
4            1.     Outsourcing Staffing for Contact Center: The company  
5                    engaged third-party service providers to temporarily  
6                    augment the staffing in our contact center. This  
7                    allowed us to adjust the company's workforce based on  
8                    demand without incurring the fixed costs associated  
9                    with full-time team members. This outsourcing enabled  
10                   the company to maintain service levels during peak  
11                   periods while controlling labor costs.

12  
13           2.     Process Re-engineering: We are conducting a  
14                   comprehensive review of the company's business  
15                   processes to discover ways to eliminate  
16                   inefficiencies. This will help to streamline  
17                   workflows and improve service delivery.

18  
19           3.     Adoption of Technology and Automation: Tampa Electric  
20                   is investing in technology and automation to  
21                   streamline operations. This includes implementing  
22                   digital capabilities to help customers self-serve.  
23                   These technologies will help to improve efficiency  
24                   and reduce the need for customers to call.

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4. Vendor Contract Renegotiations: We are renegotiating contracts with vendors and service providers to secure more favorable terms. The company has been successful in reducing the costs of goods and services by exploring competitive options.

5. Training and Development: The company provided training and development programs for existing staff to improve productivity and reduce errors. This initiative has enhanced employee performance, leading to more efficient operations and reduced costs.

These steps have collectively contributed to a substantial reduction in O&M expenses, enabling the organization to operate more efficiently and cost-effectively.

**Q.** How many team members were employed in the Customer Experience area in 2022 and 2023?

**A.** The average number of team members in 2022 was 407, and in 2023 it was 393.

**Q.** How many team members do you expect to employ in the Customer Experience area in the 2025 test year?

1 **A.** We expect to employ an average of 379 team members in the  
2 Customer Experience area in 2025. This is a reasonable  
3 number of team members to perform the work in the Customer  
4 Experience area.

5  
6 **Q.** How have uncollectible account expenses varied in 2023 and  
7 2024 and is the company's proposed level of uncollectible  
8 expenses reasonable for the 2025 test year?

9  
10 **A.** As highlighted in my testimony, customers have faced  
11 difficulties in paying their utility bills, underlining  
12 the critical need for flexible customer assistance options.  
13 In 2023, we observed a significant increase in bad debt  
14 expense, more than doubling due to the aftermath of COVID-  
15 19 and inflationary pressures. However, we anticipate a  
16 downward trend in bad debt expense beginning in 2024,  
17 driven by improving inflation rates and the company's  
18 sustained commitment to offering adaptable customer  
19 support options. The company's proposed level of bad debt  
20 expense for the 2025 test year is \$5.8 million, which is  
21 reasonable based on past experience and expected economic  
22 conditions for the test year.

23  
24 **Q.** What is the company's proposed level of advertising expense  
25 for 2025?

1 **A.** Advertising expense for customer education is shown in MFR  
2 Schedule C-14 and it equals to \$3.8 million.

3

4 In developing the company's advertising budget for 2025,  
5 the company considered changes in our customers' demands  
6 for information, as well as the cost dynamics of the  
7 advertising market in our service territory.

8

9 **Q.** Please describe the changes in customer demand for  
10 information.

11

12 **A.** Our customers are seeking more information and guidance  
13 from Tampa Electric regarding programs and services,  
14 specifically as it relates to energy efficiency,  
15 conservation, and reducing their overall energy bill.

16

17 The company's advertising decisions are also influenced by  
18 our research, which shows that the non-English speaking  
19 population in our service area is growing. As this  
20 population increases, Tampa Electric needs to make sure we  
21 are communicating with these customers effectively. This  
22 likely will require translating advertising materials into  
23 multiple languages and placing ads in new channels.

24

25 **Q.** How are the cost dynamics in Tampa Electric's advertising

1 market changing?

2

3 **A.** The competitive nature of the Tampa market, with its rapid  
4 growth and a limited amount of advertising space on  
5 billboards and television, poses a significant challenge  
6 for our business. Digital advertising is also expensive in  
7 our market - Tampa ranks as the 13th most expensive city  
8 in the nation in which to buy digital advertising.

9

10 Tampa Electric also competes for advertising space -  
11 physical and digital - with much higher-margin industries,  
12 such as tourism and other Fortune 500 companies, that are  
13 willing to pay top dollar to place their advertisements.  
14 The rising cost of high-quality advertising is impacted by  
15 increasing labor, technology, and media expenses, and  
16 creates cost pressure for the company. Tampa Electric  
17 addresses these pressures by exploring innovative methods  
18 of delivering updates and communications to ensure our  
19 customers remain well-informed and engaged across their  
20 channels of choice.

21

22 **Q.** Is the company's proposed level of advertising expense in  
23 2025 reasonable?

24

25 **A.** Yes. The company is increasingly focused on meeting and

1 exceeding evolving customer expectations, which includes  
2 educating our customers on services and solutions that will  
3 meet their needs. The company makes sure our customers  
4 receive updates and communications through various  
5 delivery methods including printed communications, social  
6 media, and online platforms. We also work to maximize our  
7 advertising efficiency and ensure our messages are  
8 delivered to the right audience with a targeted, strategic  
9 approach.

10  
11 **Q.** Is the company's proposed overall level of Customer  
12 Experience related O&M expense for 2025 reasonable?

13  
14 **A.** Yes. The overall level of Customer Experience related O&M  
15 expense for 2025 is reasonable. The company remains focused  
16 on prudently investing in strategic functions that will  
17 enhance the customer experience while keeping overall  
18 expenses relatively flat as compared to 2023 and 2024.

19  
20 **(6) PROGRAMS FOR LOW-INCOME CUSTOMERS**

21 **Q.** Has the company implemented new processes or programs to  
22 assist low-income customers?

23  
24 **A.** Yes. The company implemented new processes to assist low-  
25 income customers and has additional plans to enhance the

1 level of support in this area. For example, the company  
2 has established a direct referral process with external  
3 community partners who are only able to provide partial  
4 assistance. This process includes: (a) following up with  
5 customers on the remaining balance and ensuring service is  
6 not interrupted, (b) coordinating financial assistance  
7 with third-party assistance agencies, and (c) arranging  
8 installment payment plans.

9  
10 **Q.** Have these efforts been successful?

11  
12 **A.** Yes, but we would like to do more. In 2023, we were able  
13 to secure assistance for approximately 28,000 Tampa  
14 Electric customers for a total of approximately \$12 million  
15 dollars. However, Tampa Electric was only able to provide  
16 approximately seven percent of our low-income population  
17 with low-income energy assistance funds due to a decrease  
18 in funding at the state level. Since federal assistance  
19 dollars have declined significantly since 2021, Tampa  
20 Electric updated the customer assistance referral process  
21 to ensure customers who were unsuccessful in obtaining  
22 assistance can be referred to the company's internal team  
23 to discuss other financial options.

24  
25 Tampa Electric continues to advocate for the Low-Income

1 Home Energy Assistance Program ("LIHEAP") funding through  
2 its participation in the LIHEAP Action Day and through the  
3 National Energy & Utility Affordability Coalition  
4 ("NEUAC").

5  
6 **Q.** Is Tampa Electric proposing any new programs for low-income  
7 customers in this rate case?

8  
9 **A.** Yes. Tampa Electric is proposing a new program for low-  
10 income seniors known as Senior Care. This program would be  
11 available for Tampa Electric customers over the age of 65  
12 who are enrolled in Medicaid. Participating customers will  
13 receive a monthly credit of \$10 to help them pay their  
14 Tampa Electric bill. Additional details regarding the  
15 design and operation of this program are provided in the  
16 direct testimony of Mr. Williams.

17  
18 **Q.** Why is Tampa Electric proposing this program?

19  
20 **A.** Offering a senior low-income discount is a beneficial and  
21 socially responsible practice. Energy is essential for  
22 daily living and providing our low-income seniors with  
23 access to electricity at an affordable rate ensures that  
24 our most vulnerable population is not left behind.

25



1 Many of our low-income seniors already live on fixed  
2 incomes, and often these incomes are not sufficient to  
3 cover all expenses, including utilities. Providing a senior  
4 low-income discount can help to alleviate the financial  
5 strain and reduce risk of our low-income seniors having to  
6 choose between paying their energy bill and paying other  
7 essential items (e.g., medicine).

8  
9 Lastly, offering a low-income senior discount reduces the  
10 likelihood that a senior might fall behind on their utility  
11 bill and face disconnection of service. This practice  
12 benefits both the customer and the utility company as it  
13 prevents interruption of service and keeps administrative  
14 costs associated with managing delinquent accounts low.

15  
16 **(7) PROPOSED TARIFF CHANGES**

17 **Q.** Is the company proposing tariff changes in this proceeding  
18 to better meet the needs of customers and improve the  
19 customer experience?

20  
21 **A.** Yes. Tampa Electric is proposing the following tariff  
22 changes:

- 23 • Economic Development Rider
- 24 • Alternative Payment Arrangements for Contribution in  
25 Aid of Construction Process

- 1 • Increasing Lighting Wattage Percentage
- 2 • Updating Deposits Language for Sponsors
- 3 • Senior Care Program

4 These changes are discussed in Mr. Williams's direct  
5 testimony.

6  
7 **(8) SUMMARY**

8 **Q.** Please summarize your direct testimony.

9  
10 **A.** Tampa Electric continues to provide excellent service to  
11 its customers. We have thoughtfully and deliberately  
12 invested in information technology to ensure that our  
13 customer billing systems are up to date and interact with  
14 AMI and other Electric Delivery systems to improve service  
15 to our customers. We continue to enhance our ability to  
16 communicate with our customers using multiple channels so  
17 they can communicate with us using their preferred method.  
18 Although hot weather, higher usage, fuel and storm costs,  
19 and general economic conditions challenged our customers  
20 and Customer Contact Centers in 2023, we responded quickly  
21 and are improving our processes for the future.

22  
23 We are prioritizing financial discipline, digital and  
24 process innovation, and support for customers facing  
25 hardship. We will continue to streamline our operations

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and to offer customers more convenient and efficient ways to interact with us. Our proposed levels of Customer Experience capital investment and O&M expenses for 2025 are reasonable and prudent and should be approved so we can continue to provide high-quality service to our customers.

**Q.** Does this conclude your direct testimony?

**A.** Yes, it does.

EXHIBIT

OF

KAREN SPARKMAN

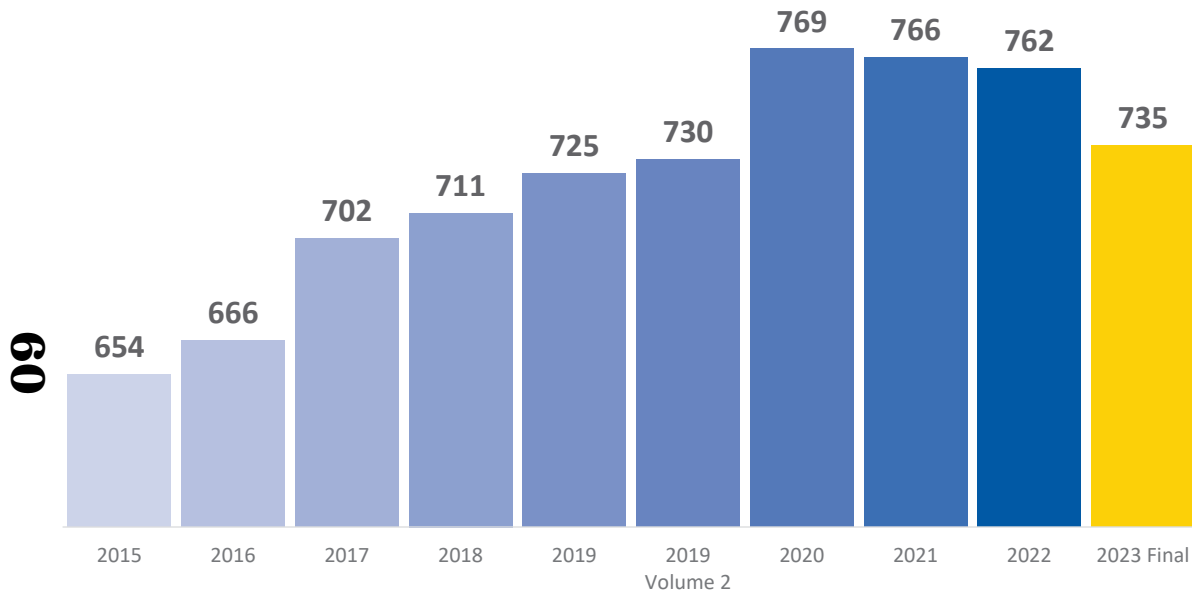
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LIST OF MINIMUM FILING REQUIREMENT SCHEDULES  
SPONSORED OR CO-SPONSORED BY KAREN SPARKMAN

MFR Schedule	Title
B-07	Plant Balances By Account And Sub-Account
B-08	Monthly Plant Balances Test Year-13 Months
C-06	Budgeted Versus Actual Operating Revenues And Expenses
C-08	Detail Of Changes In Expenses
C-09	Five Year Analysis-Change In Cost
C-11	Uncollectible Accounts
C-12	Administrative Expenses
C-14	Advertising Expense
C-37	O&M Benchmark Comparison By Function
C-38	O&M Adjustments By Function
C-39	Benchmark Year Recoverable O&M Expenses By Function
C-41	O&M Benchmark Variance By Function

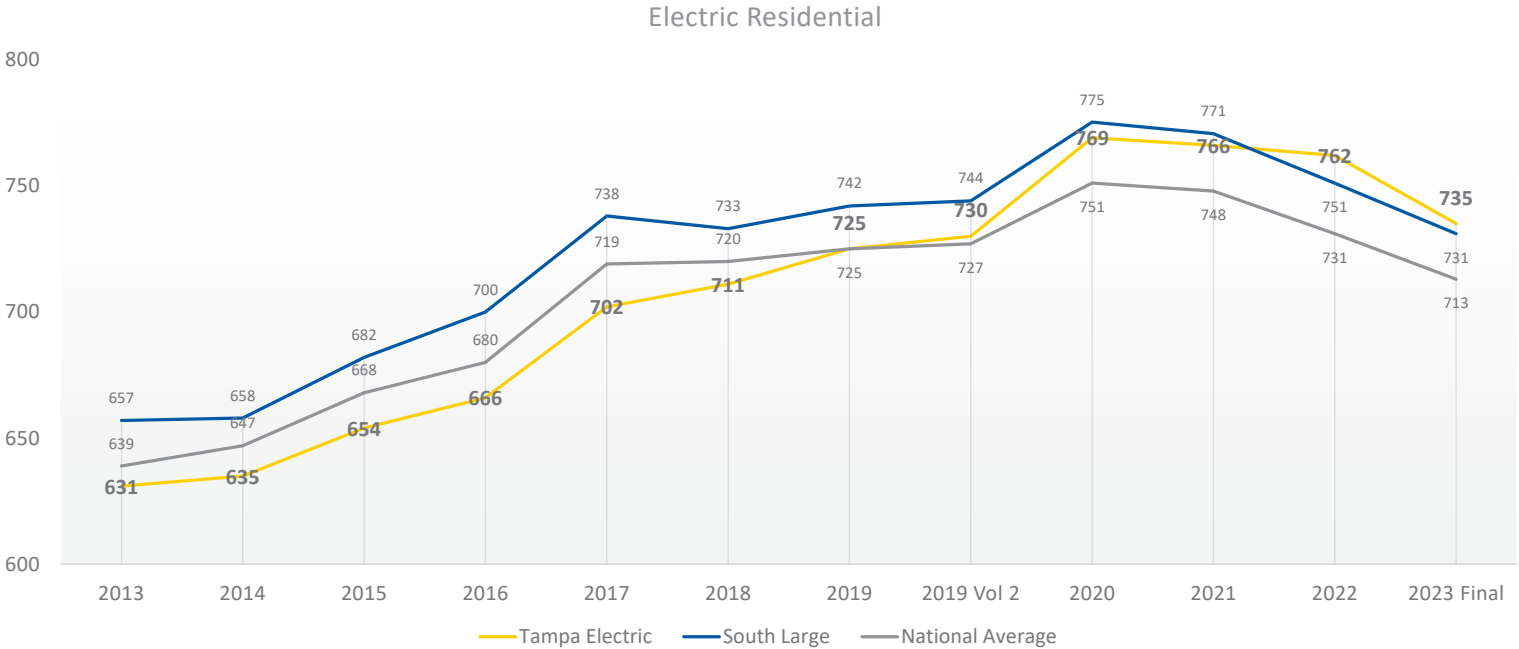
# Tampa Electric Residential Overall Customer Satisfaction



Year	Quartile	Industry Rank	Segment Rank	Florida Rank
2015	Third	101/140	12/13	10/11
2016	Third	101/137	12/13	9/11
2017	Fourth	103/138	12/13	9/11
2018	Third	97/138	11/13	10/11
2019	Third	81/142	10/13	9/12
2019 Volume 2	Third	71/141	9/12	6/12
2020	Second	40/143	7/12	5/12
2021	Second	44/145	5/12	6/12
2022	First	29/145	3/12	4/11
2023 Final	Second	46/149	5/12	6/11



# Electric Residential Overall Customer Satisfaction Trending

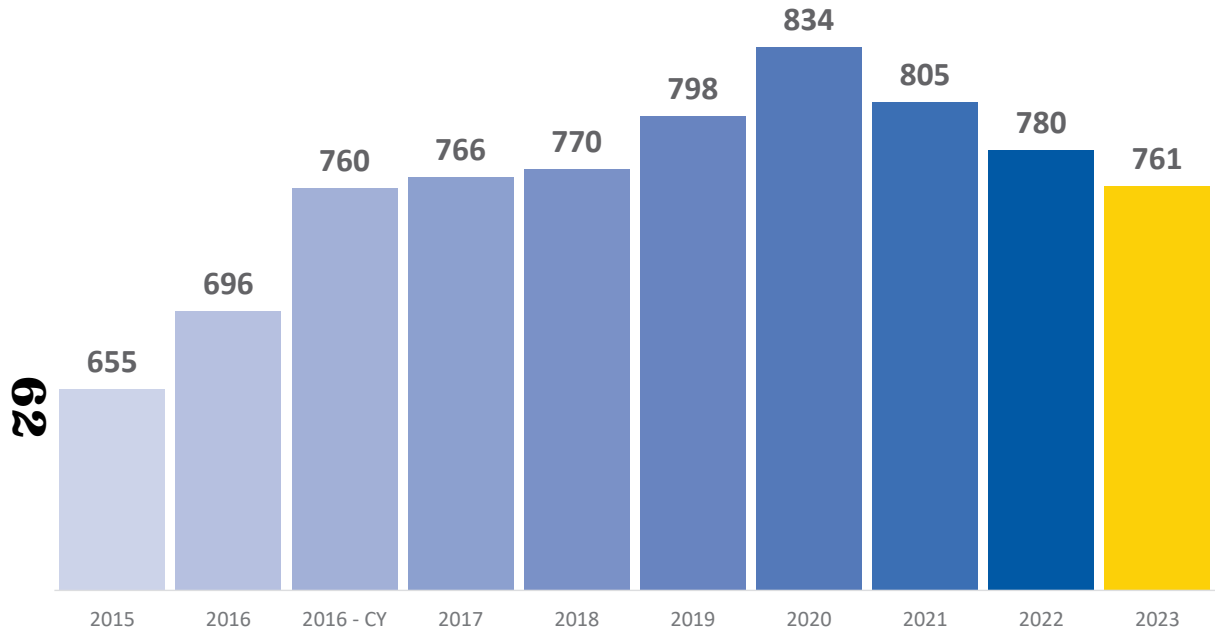


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# Tampa Electric Business Overall Customer Satisfaction

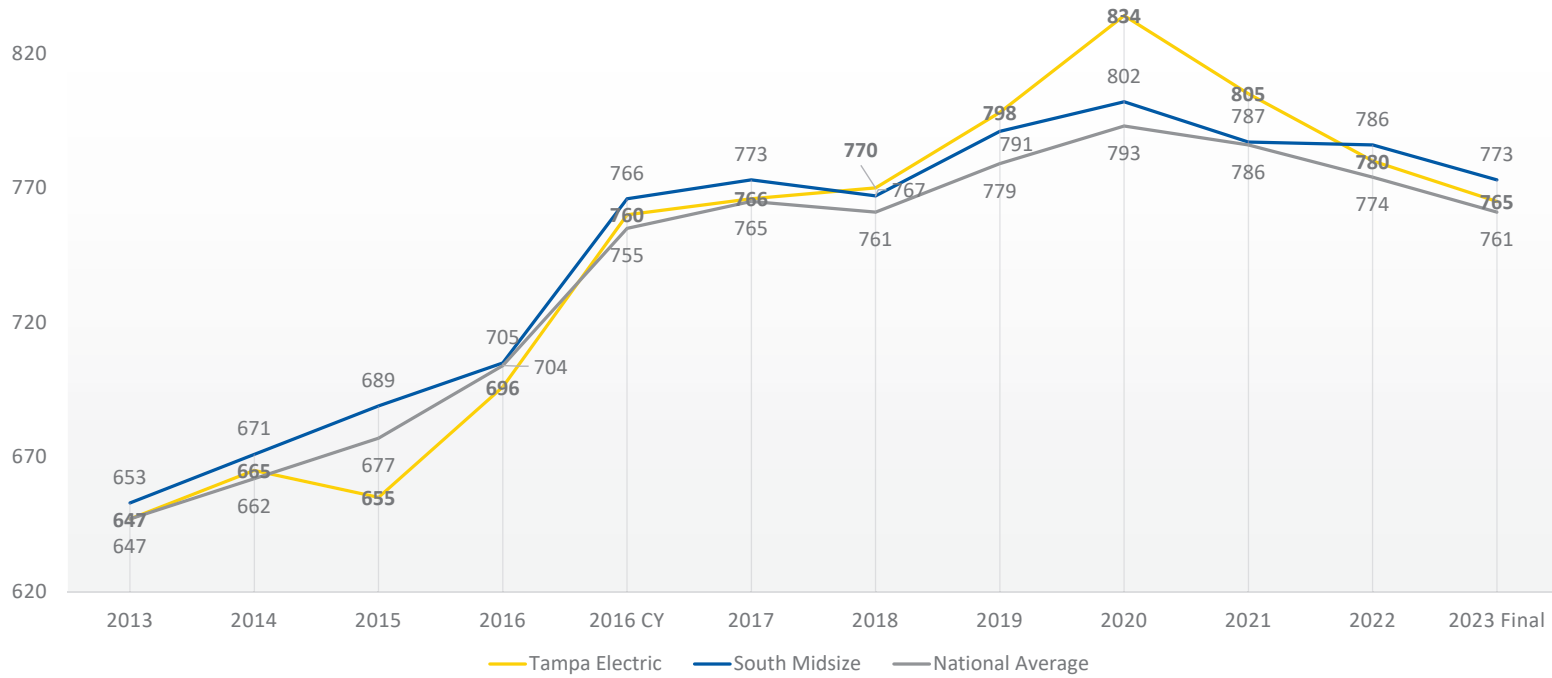


Year	Quartile	Industry Rank	Segment Rank	Florida Rank
2015	Second	69/87	10/11	6/6
2016	Third	57/86	9/12	6/6
2016 - CY	Second	26/87	9/13	6/6
2017	Second	36/86	7/11	5/5
2018	Second	29/85	6/12	4/5
2019	First	18/87	6/12	3/5
2020	First	4/80	2/11	2/5
2021	Second	20/67	2/7	3/4
2022	Second	36/76	4/8	2/3
2023	Third	38/77	6/7	4/4

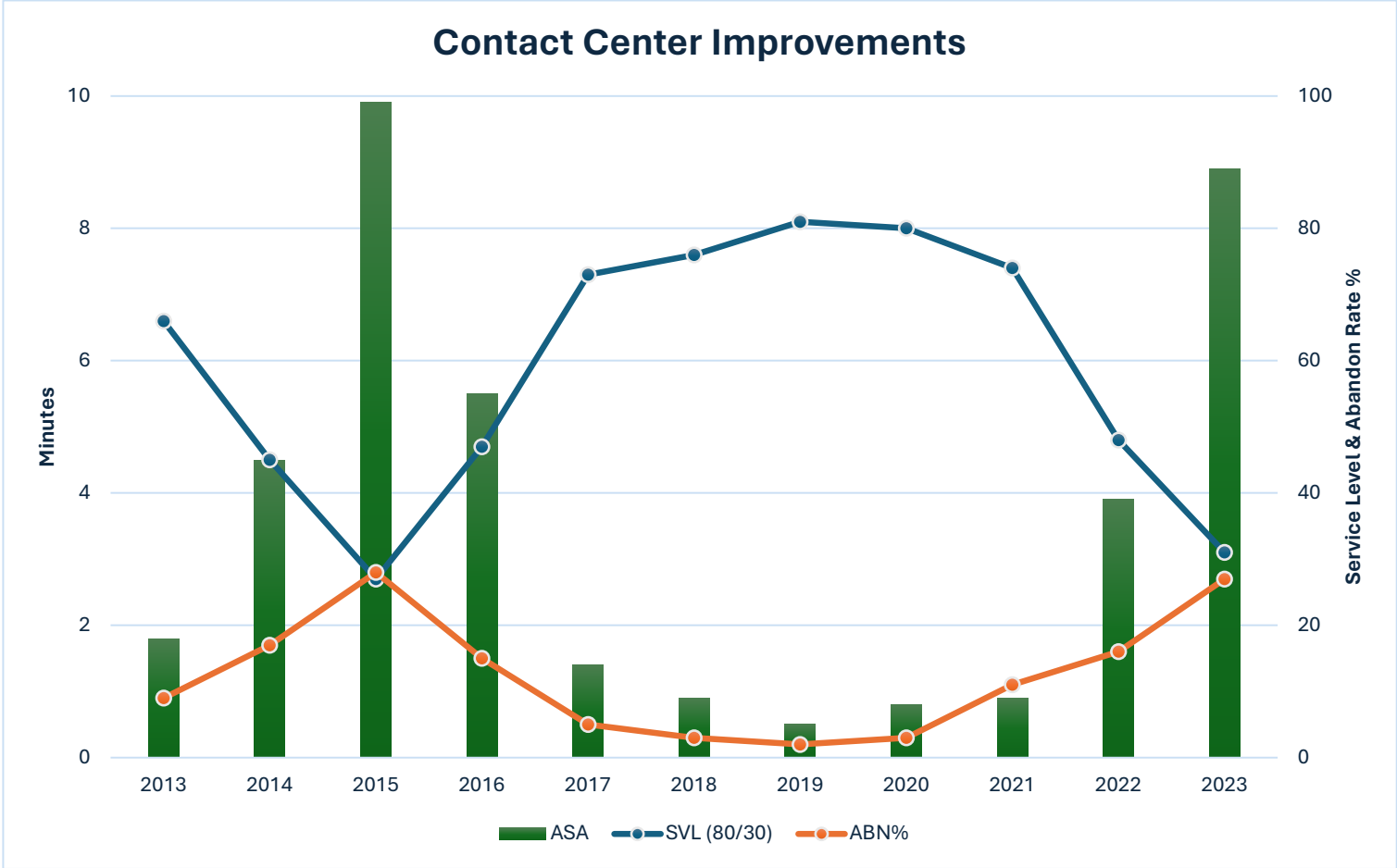


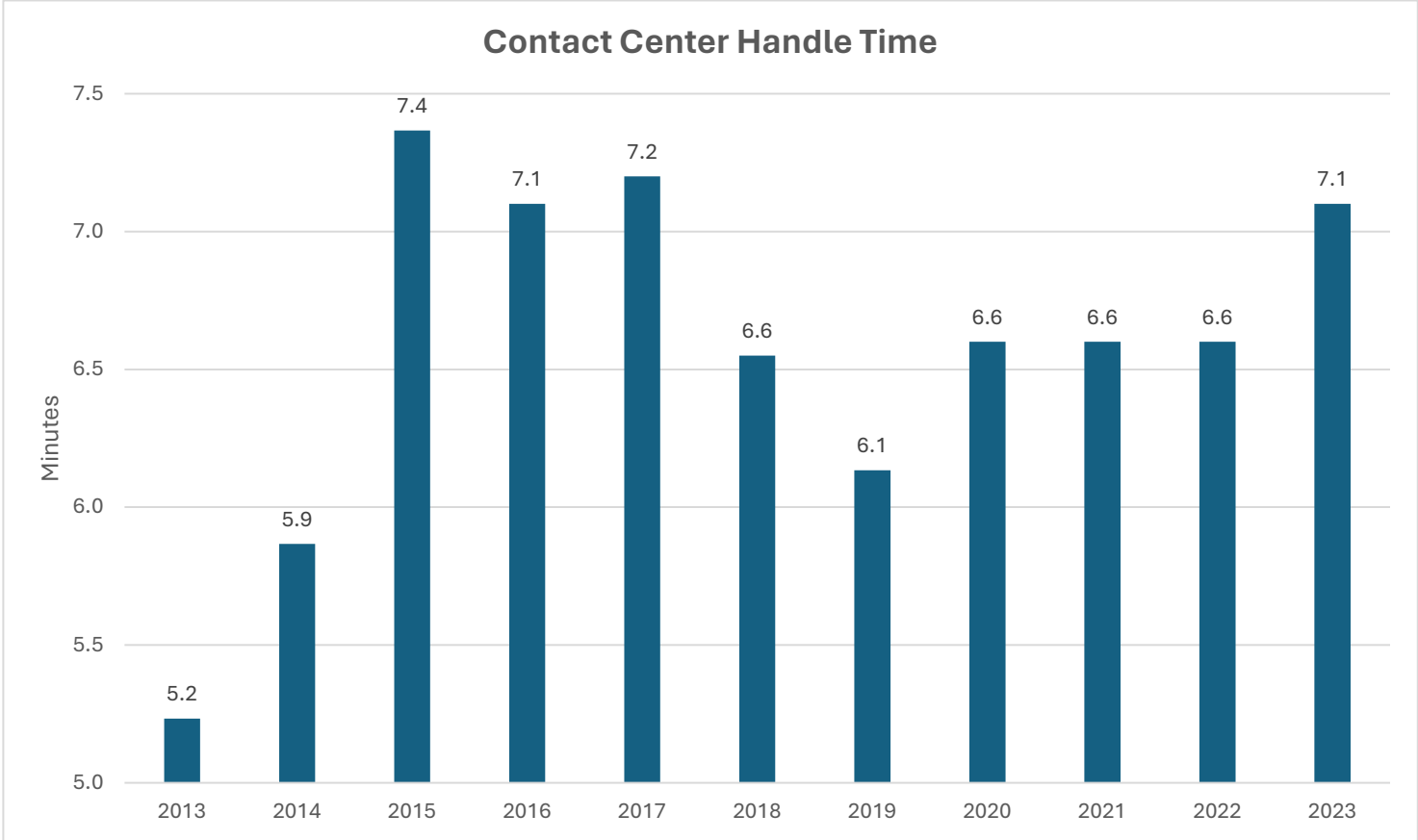
## Electric Business Overall Customer Satisfaction Trending

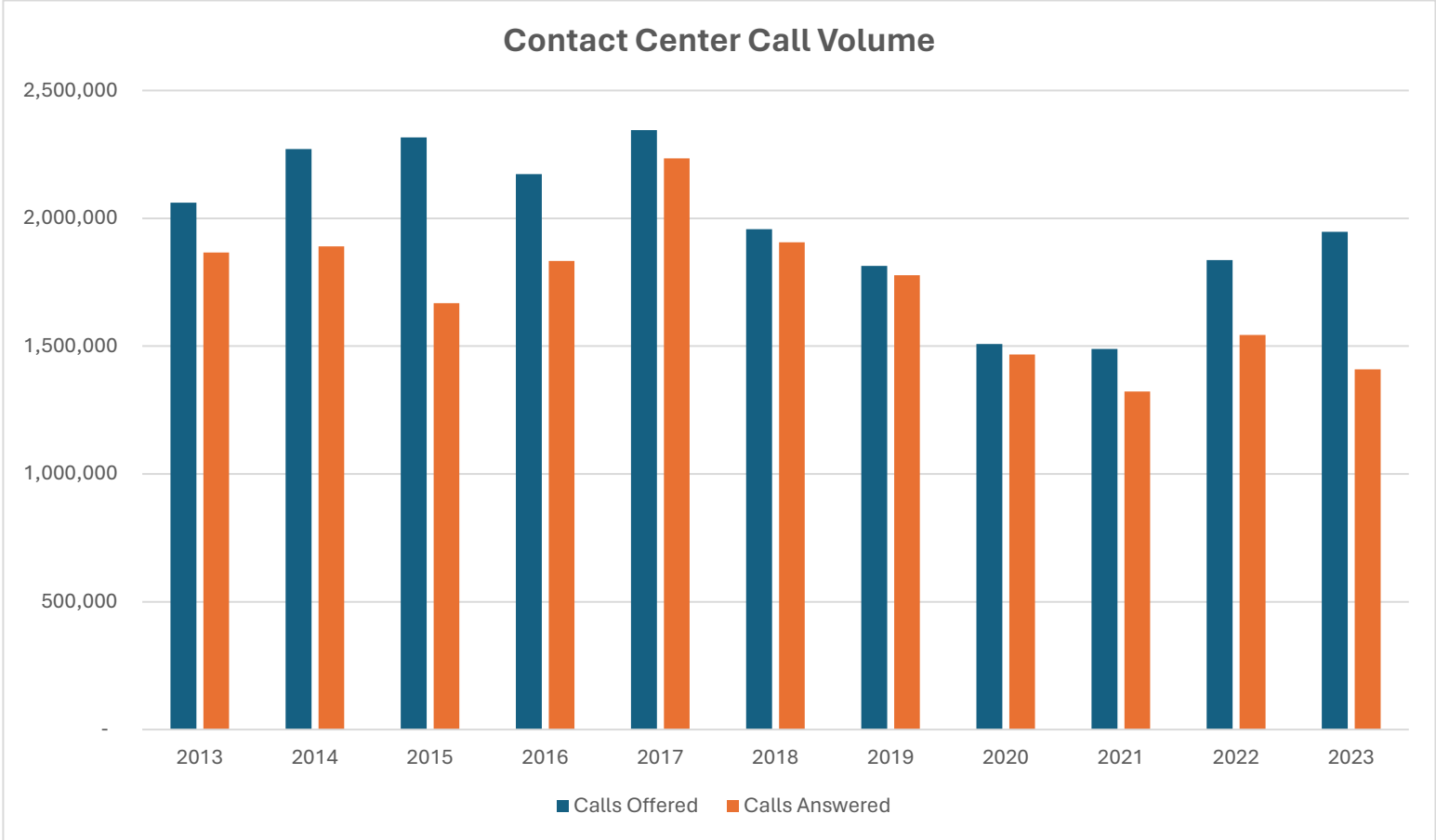
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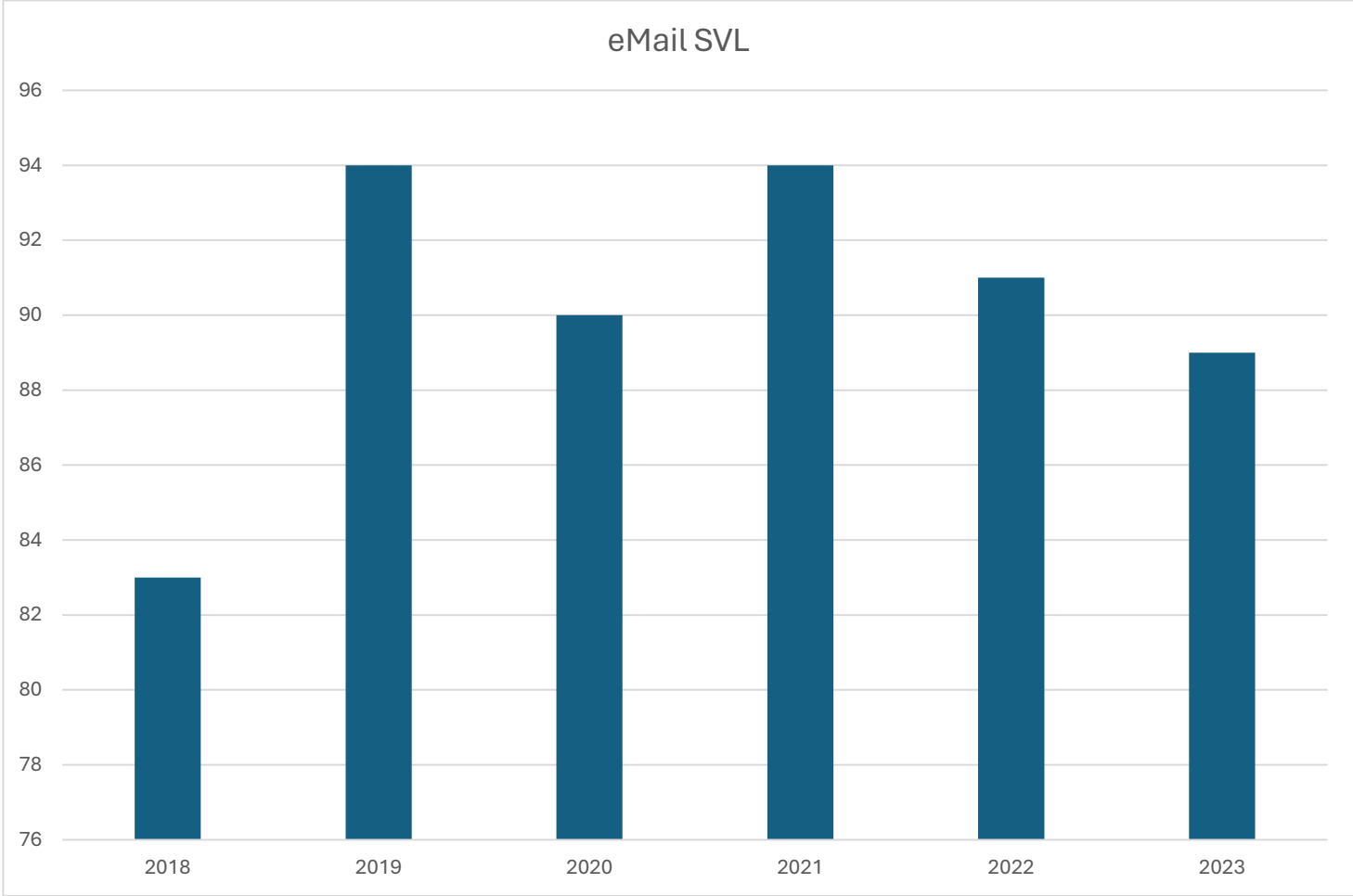


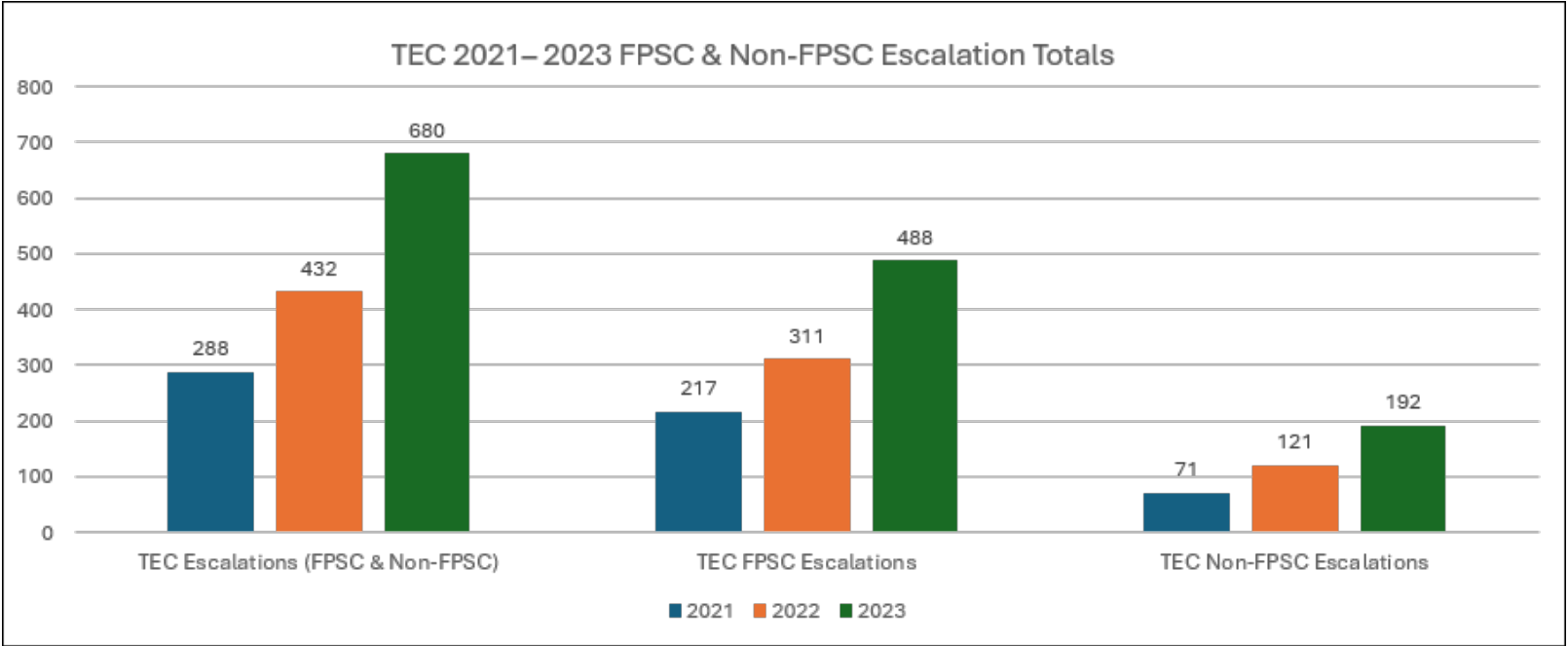
Tampa Electric - Contact Center Metrics											
	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
SVL (80/30)	66	45	27	47	73	76	81	80	74	48	31
Calls Offered	2,061,436	2,270,895	2,316,491	2,173,256	2,345,415	1,957,583	1,813,545	1,508,389	1,488,958	1,836,625	1,947,366
Calls Answered	1,866,095	1,890,310	1,667,533	1,833,709	2,234,759	1,905,619	1,777,736	1,467,246	1,322,809	1,544,199	1,408,821
ABN%	9	17	28	15	5	3	2	3	11	16	27
AHT	5.2	5.9	7.4	7.1	7.2	6.6	6.1	6.6	6.6	6.6	7.1
ASA	1.8	4.5	9.9	5.5	1.4	0.9	0.5	0.8	0.9	3.9	8.9
eMail SVL (24 Hrs)						83	94	90	94	91	89













**Tampa Electric**  
**CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE**

	<b>2022</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>Total 2022-2024</b>	<b>2025</b>	<b>Total 2022-2025</b>
<b>Total Capital</b>	11,188,853	13,889,020	14,400,644	<b>39,478,516</b>	15,095,580	<b>54,574,096</b>
CONSERVATION	-	-	-	-	-	-
AFUDC	-	-	-	-	-	-
BTL	(1,532,990)	(1,439,402)	(1,708,475)	<b>(4,680,867)</b>	(1,730,911)	<b>(6,411,778)</b>
<b>Base Rate</b>	<b>9,655,862</b>	<b>12,449,618</b>	<b>12,692,169</b>	<b>34,797,649</b>	<b>13,364,669</b>	<b>48,162,318</b>
<u>Base Rate Projects</u>						
Customer Digitalization	4,426,624	7,113,728	2,257,500	<b>13,797,852</b>	4,355,000	<b>18,152,852</b>
Operational Excellence	3,432,637	2,998,649	3,990,000	<b>10,421,286</b>	4,074,000	<b>14,495,286</b>
Optional Customer Programs	408,570	1,648,551	5,109,669	<b>7,166,790</b>	4,935,669	<b>12,102,459</b>
Outage Enhancements	1,050,000	258,480	500,000	<b>1,808,480</b>		<b>1,808,480</b>
Voice of Customer / Data	338,030	430,211	835,000	<b>1,603,241</b>		<b>1,603,241</b>
				-		-
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>9,655,862</b>	<b>12,449,618</b>	<b>12,692,169</b>	<b>34,797,649</b>	<b>13,364,669</b>	<b>48,162,318</b>

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