

RESOLUTION NO. 25-34

A RESOLUTION OF THE PINELLAS COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS DIRECTING THE TERMINATION OF THE COUNTY'S PARTICIPATION IN THE DUKE ENERGY CLEAN ENERGY CONNECTION PROGRAM; RESTRICTING FURTHER COMMITMENTS TO ELECTRIC VEHICLE PROGRAMS; AFFIRMING THE COUNTY'S RESPONSIBILITY TO PRESERVE TAXPAYER DOLLARS; AND REALIGNING FUTURE CLEAN ENERGY GOALS TO ALIGN WITH ECONOMIC REALITY; AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

WHEREAS, the Pinellas County Board of County Commissioners (the "Board") recognizes its duty to manage public funds responsibly and ensure that taxpayer resources are allocated effectively; and

WHEREAS, Pinellas County entered into the Duke Energy Clean Energy Connection Program ("CEC Program") in or prior to 2022; and

WHEREAS, while the CEC Program initially claimed nominal savings of approximately \$15.18 million over a 33-year period, this figure overestimates the long-term value of the credits. The structure remains heavily backloaded, with majority of the return being deferred into future decades. These savings fail to account for the time value of money, inflation and rising energy prices, rendering the program fiscally inefficient. A dollar spent today holds greater economic weight than one returned decades from now, making the program a poor public investment; and

WHEREAS, while the County supports environmental responsibility, it acknowledges that many clean energy technologies—including solar—still depend on fossil fuels in their production, maintenance, and backup power systems, raising valid questions about the true environmental impact and cost-effectiveness of such technologies when examined across their full life cycle; and

WHEREAS, electricity costs in the County have risen despite ongoing participation in clean energy initiatives and efficiency upgrades, providing no measurable cost relief to ratepayers; and

WHEREAS, the Board asserts that all public investments must demonstrate clear, measurable, and financially sound returns to residents and taxpayers;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Pinellas County Board of County Commissioners at a duly assembled meeting held on this 22nd day of April, 2025, as follows:

1. Termination of Duke Energy Clean Energy Connection Program: The County Administrator is hereby directed to initiate the County's withdrawal from the Duke Energy Clean Energy Connection Program to prevent further subscription costs and halt any long-term obligations.
2. Restriction on Electric Vehicle Procurement: No further public funds shall be allocated toward the procurement of electric vehicles unless a comprehensive financial analysis is first conducted and presented to the Board of County Commissioners. Such analysis must clearly demonstrate the fiscal benefits of the proposed acquisition, including projected savings on maintenance and

long-term operational costs. Any future electric vehicle purchases shall be subject to formal review and approval by the Board. This restriction shall not apply to the purchase or use of electric utility carts.

3. Reallocation of Resources: Energy program funding shall be redirected to fiscally sound investments that prioritize operational savings, including conventional infrastructure upgrades. The County shall emphasize financial outcomes over symbolic compliance.
4. Realignment of Clean Energy Goals: While the Board recognizes the importance of environmental sustainability, it has determined that the previously stated clean energy targets—including 50% renewable energy by 2030, 100% for County operations by 2040, and 100% countywide by 2050—are not aligned with the County's fiscal realities, infrastructure capacity, or long-term operational priorities.

Accordingly, these specific targets shall not be incorporated into the County's policy framework. Instead, the County shall prioritize energy strategies that are financially sound, scalable, and measurable in their impact, ensuring that taxpayer resources are directed toward initiatives with proven value.

All provisions of this resolution shall be incorporated into the Sustainability and Resiliency Action Plan, as well as relevant departmental strategic plans, capital programs, and administrative policies. Staff are directed to ensure consistency with this resolution across all applicable County operations.

5. Repeal: Resolutions 20-146 and 21-127 are hereby repealed and declared null and void and of no further effect.
6. Effective Date: This resolution shall take effect October 1, 2025.

Commissioner _____ Nowicki _____ offered the foregoing Resolution and moved its adoption, which was seconded by Commissioner _____ Scherer _____, and upon roll call the vote was:

Ayes: Scott, Eggers, Latvala, Nowicki, Peters, and Scherer.

Nays: Flowers.

Absent not voting: None.

APPROVED AS TO FORM
By: Jewel White
Office of the County Attorney