

KATHY CASTOR
14TH DISTRICT, FLORIDA

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY
AND COMMERCE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND
INVESTIGATIONS
RANKING MEMBER

SUBCOMMITTEE ON INNOVATION, DATA
AND COMMERCE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON ENERGY, CLIMATE
AND GRID SECURITY

SELECT COMMITTEE ON
THE STRATEGIC COMPETITION
BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES
AND THE CHINESE COMMUNIST
PARTY



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0914

WASHINGTON OFFICE:

2052 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515
(202) 225-3376

TAMPA DISTRICT OFFICE:

4144 NORTH ARMENIA AVENUE
SUITE 300
TAMPA, FL 33607
(813) 871-2817

ST. PETERSBURG DISTRICT OFFICE:

136 FOURTH STREET NORTH
SUITE 201
ST. PETERSBURG, FL 33701
(727) 369-0201

www.castor.house.gov

July 26, 2023

Office of Governor Ron DeSantis
State of Florida
The Capitol
400 S. Monroe St.
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0001

RE: FY24 State of Florida Budget Energy Efficiency Funds Veto

Dear Governor DeSantis,

Recently and without warning or transparency to the citizens the State of Florida, you turned away substantial cost savings for Floridians through energy efficiency rebates and discounts. Your unilateral decision to prevent Floridians from enjoying energy efficiency discounts will prove to be very costly to Florida families and small businesses and should be immediately reconsidered.¹

Floridians already are reeling from exorbitant electric bills and the most expensive property insurance rates in the country. Now, Florida families and small businesses are being pickpocketed because you've elevated your political interests over the people's interest. It's wrong, and I urge you to reverse course now so that Floridians can put money back into their pockets at a time that they need it.

The cost-saving discounts are being provided to all Americans under the historic Inflation Reduction Act and Bipartisan Infrastructure Law which aims to lower energy costs, protect communities, and reduce pollution. The Inflation Reduction Act is expected to reduce toxic air and carbon pollution by 40% in the next ten years. In less than a year since it was signed by President Biden, the Act also is promoting conservation, creating manufacturing jobs for American workers, and delivering a clean, secure, and healthy future for our children and grandchildren. The savings, jobs, and other benefits will reach communities across Florida, except you have single-

¹Line-item veto, 1463B of \$5 million in grants and aid to local governments from the Inflation Reduction Act, in the 2023 state budget that eliminates \$5,000,000 for hiring necessary personnel for the State of Florida to properly administer energy efficiency rebates of the Inflation Reduction Act as required by Federal law.

handedly nixed one of the most significant tools to save Floridians money: energy efficiency savings.

The Inflation Reduction Act and Bipartisan Infrastructure Law make it more affordable for Americans to purchase energy efficient appliances when they need to, make repairs around their homes, and save money on their utility bills each month through rebates covering 50-100% of the cost of installing new electric appliances, including super-efficient heat pumps, water heaters, clothes dryers, stoves, and ovens. In Florida, millions of households are eligible for rebates. Plus, additional rebates for repairs and improvements to single-family and multi-family homes to increase energy efficiency will be a godsend to working families.² Now, due to your inexplicable gut punch to Floridians, those savings will go elsewhere.

Specifically, as a result of your veto, Florida will lose \$174 million in rebates for energy-efficiency improvements, \$173 million for rebates to purchase energy-efficient home appliances, and \$7 million for a training program for electrical contractors—a loss of \$354 million to the people of Florida. Floridians will lose a seventy-fold return on investment—money that would have gone directly to their pockets.

Governor, this summer the rising costs and impacts of the climate crisis are wearing on Floridians, yet you have your head in the sand—and it is costing us a fortune. Your lack of leadership in moving the “Sunshine State” to cleaner, cheaper energy is very costly for Floridians. Florida is too dependent on fracked gas to generate electricity and that has severely pinched Floridians as electric bills have skyrocketed.³

Naysayers and vested dirty fuel interests often argue that the transition to clean energy is too costly.⁴ Actually, the cost of doing nothing—the status quo—is an enormous threat to Florida. In fact, the cost of clean energy has gone down significantly, and you could be doing more to help end the dependency on dirty energy that is costing us money and is bad for our health. Florida is more vulnerable than other states to significant economic damages, lost wages, mortality from extreme temperatures, and coastal property damage. Extreme weather is costing residents and farmers too much. Florida is in the midst of its hottest year in modern history, with little sign of meaningful relief. This year, temperatures are crushingly hot—and getting hotter. We’re about halfway through the summer of 2023 and we have already seen 32 days with a heat index of 100 degrees or higher in Tampa. The hotter temperatures are a threat to people who work outside and

² <https://map.rewiringamerica.org/>

³ <https://www.foodandwaterwatch.org/2023/05/15/florida-teco-electricity-rate-hikes/>

⁴ <https://rmi.org/insight/x-change-electricity/>

are harming Florida's special ecosystems. Air conditioning is vital, but your actions will hurt the ability of Floridians to lower their bills and save money when we have to replace our AC.

High electric bills, soaring insurance rates (for those who can even get insurance), and out of sight housing costs are hammering Floridians—so every dollar counts for Florida families.⁵

Fighting culture wars does not save Florida families and small businesses money, does not ease inflation, does not stop the pollution that is overheating the planet, and certainly does not help everyday Floridians. While your attention is elsewhere as you focus on your political future, I urge you to consider the future of our great State and the pocketbooks of Floridians. Now is not the time to impose extra costs on our Florida neighbors. Instead, allow Floridians to save money while we save energy so we can share in progress towards a cleaner, healthier and safer future.

Sincerely,



Kathy Castor
U.S. Representative
Florida-14

⁵ <https://apnews.com/article/florida-insurance-homeowners-aaa-farmers-fd8df5314e8214a46a5fc38ef822a376>