

Carl and Melanie O'Gwynn  
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CC: JG/JB

May 9, 2025

Ms. Krys Abel  
Records Division  
Louisiana Public Service Commission  
602 North 5th Street, 12th Floor  
Baton Rouge, LA 70802

Re: LPSC Docket No. U-37394; South Louisiana Electric Cooperative Association, ex parte,  
*In re: Petition for approval of abandonment of electric facilities located in Terrebonne and Lafourche Parishes  
pursuant to Commission General Order dated July 9, 2008 (R-30301)*

Ms. Abel:

Enclosed for filing in the above referenced docket, please find the testimony against SLECA's request for abandonment from Carl and Melanie O'Gwynn.

**RECEIVED BY FAX**

**MAY - 9 2025**

**LOUISIANA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION**

**BEFORE THE**  
**LOUISIANA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION**

SOUTH LOUISIANA ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE ASSOCIATION

DOCKET NO. U-37394

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*Petition for Approval of Abandonment of electrical facilities located in Terrebonne and Lafourche Parishes  
pursuant to Commission General Order dated July 9, 2008 (R30301)*

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**DIRECT TESTIMONY**  
**OF**  
**CARL AND MELANIE O'GWYNN**

**RECEIVED BY FAX**  
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LOUISIANA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

**MAY 2025**

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## I. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Q: PLEASE STATE YOUR NAME, CAMP LOT#, AND YEARS OF OWNERSHIP IN REFERENCE TO THIS DOCKET. PLEASE STATE YOUR NAME AND POSITION IN REFERENCE TO THIS DOCKET.

A: We are Carl and Melanie O'Gwynn, married and both named on the camp lease. We leased the vacant lot in 2000 and built our camp in 2005. The camp lot is #BLK-S1-Lot 21 in Lake Fields. It has been 25 years in Lake Fields.

Q: ON WHOSE BEHALF ARE YOU FILING THIS TESTIMONY?

A: I am filing this testimony on both our behalf as lease holders and our heirs that are potential lease holders.

Q: WHAT IS YOUR INVOLVEMENT WITH SLECA AND WITH THIS MATTER?

A: As residents in Ghens La for 45 years we have been customers of SLECA the only electrical service provider for the area. We have more than one account through the years in Ghens and are at Lake Fields as a camp owner.

Q: PLEASE PROVIDE A GENERAL OVERVIEW OF YOUR CONNECTION WITH THE PROPERTY NOTED ABOVE AND HISTORY WITH LAKE FIELDS.

A: Both of us were raised by families that visited, owned camps and enjoyed the benefits of outdoor living around Lake Fields and Lake Salvador. Melanie's family had a camp in Lake Fields from the late 50's to 70's. Growing up in Lockport she and her family were only minutes away and enjoyed the sportsman paradise of Lake Fields. Fishing, hunting, water sports, swimming in Bayou Lafourche only blocks from her home were daily occurrences. Her grandfather was an avid boater and even a Town Councilman that help to establish the boat launch and bayou side park in Lockport.

Q: WHAT BROUGHT YOU TO THE PURCHASE OF THE PROPERTY NOTED ABOVE.

A: We chose to purchase the camp due our love of fishing, water sports, hunting, adventures, waiting to raise a family to enjoy the adventures of outdoors that we had grew up with. The location so close to Lockport and the lots being next to family, the old family camp location, lifelong friends being within walking distance. Although the availability of electricity was a main factor. Lake Fields was going to be only minutes away and after building from ground up we would have lights, heat, air conditioning, electric stove, refrigerator, hot water, tv, music, etc. All of life luxuries.

Q: WHAT IMPROVEMENTS HAVE YOU INVESTED IN THIS PROPERTY BEFORE AND SINCE HURRICANE IDA?

A: Our family putting in many years of sweat, back ache and ten of thousands of dollars of financial investments. When we got our lease, it was an overgrown swamp area that need to be cleared of trees, tall grass, logs and old debris. We built a bulkhead, had to purchase loads and loads of dirt from the dredging over many years to build up the ground. Then built a camp in 2005. We still had plans to continue building porches and a shed.

Hurricane Ida's impact on Louisiana was devastating. It hit Lake Fields harder than ever before in the history. Camp owners lost their homes, not just a camp in Lake Fields. Some were lucky will we were not. Our camp fell off it's foundation over 4

feet to the ground. We spent nearly \$10,000 to raise the camp back up all the while thinking we were going to have the electricity and comforts as before. With no electric power the raise was harder than it should have been. Generators couldn't push the power needed for jacks so manual jack had to be used. We had to purchase a generator and all the necessities that are required to support it. The transportation of gallons and gallons of gas, the generators themselves, the hardship on our bodies as senior citizens is unbearable. No electricity will require continuous expenses and replacement of generators over the years and the cost to purchase and transport a huge generator is above our means.

Q: WHAT EXPENSES HAVE YOU INCURRED SINCE THE LOSS OF POWER?

A: Purchase two new generators to power the camp switching out hours at a time. This requires purchasing gas, oil and maintaining the generator. Also, the burden of hauling the generator in and out of a safe place or in boats is hard and unsafe. Safety of the use of a generator is priority and dangerous. We all have grandchildren, pets and inclement weather that affects the use of generators. Generators are an un-clean energy source and future cost to appliances or powered equipment could be a factor.

## II. POSITION ON MATTER

Q: WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF YOUR DIRECT TESTIMONY?

A. My testimony is that we fully support the petition to deny SLECA's abandonment to the Lake Fields service lines on behalf that electricity has been available for decades. SLECA's direct failure to maintain its equipment, lines, poles over decades we believe was a major factor in the failure of their infrastructure.

Q: WHAT IS YOUR UNDERSTANDING OF THE ISSUES IN THIS MATTER?

A: SLECA sent out letters to Lake Fields camp owner's leading us to feeling we would regain our power. SLECA believing solely on the approval of governmental assist for Lake Fields led them to take a position that impacted camp owners. SLECA counting on bigger and better took it upon themselves to destroy what existed. They destroyed our future as camp owners, residents and impacted of financial and heartfelt investments.

Q: PLEASE ELABORATE ON YOUR ISSUES CONCERNING THIS MATTER.

A: No electricity impacts camp owners differently. Some camp owners were not seasonal visitors they were residents. They were left homeless or incapable of rebuilding because of the indemnities once offered. We planned on the future retirement to Lake Fields. Safety, accessibility, sustainability to invest in our camps/homes were erased. No more streetlights to give us a sense of security. No more relaxing, freedom or the enjoyment lake life with family and friends. Enduring the heat, the cold and hauling ice chests, generators is just not responsible. It has become a challenge, a burden a heart ache not to mention the financial impact it will cause.

We have a hard time understanding the power the right that an electric provider can have to totally tear down such and infrastructure that has been in existence for decade without offering options to its customers. A citizen can request power to their property and these companies go out and asses the cost to the individuals to get the power to their property. If the poles and lines would have not been removed they could have reached out to camp owners or even the Lake Fields

Commission with price quotes to get it from one camp to the other. We would have "invested" a reasonable amount of even \$5,000 to get my power back. This will be more than what we will invest over years to come.

**Q: WHAT IS THE IMPACT TO THE COMMUNITY SINCE THE LOSS OF ELECTRICITY IN LAKE FIELDS?**

A: Beside taking away the value of my investment, along with the pleasure, comfort, and family values that I looked forward to continuing throughout my life, they impacted the revenue source of my hometown. The Town of Lockport is suffering from the loss in revenue for the sales of products from the visitors and camp owners of Lake Fields. The once overpacked boat launch is often empty on weekends.

**Q: HAS SAFETY BEEN AN ISSUE SINCE POWER HAS NOT BEEN RESTORED?**

A. Lake Fields did experience some crime over the years, as we were robbed once. Although SLECA's removal of the electricity has caused camp owners to feel unsafe to be there. Crime has been ramped, there is no longer boat traffic or sense of security if you break down or need to flag down someone for help. Lake Fields goes and camp owners are scared to stay after dark. Loss of belongings, valuables, and the decrease in values of their investments will live Lake Fields to become a bigger ghost town.

**Q: IF SLECA IS AWARDED ABANDONMENT BY THE LPSC, HOW WOULD THAT IMPACT YOU FINANCIALLY?**

A: Primarily, the spiraling decreases of property value, ability to sell due because lack of interest for no electricity, security. Additional financially impact would endure expenses such as fuel cost, maintenance to equipment, replacement of power sources such generators over a period of time. The impact on the body and possible bodily injury is due to lifting fuel cans, generator hauling/moving, electrical shock, fires, and limited use of generators for extended periods and during inclement weather conditions. Unsafe conditions for children. Additional labor costs for repairs to equipment, appliances, comfort, lack of stability to secure your camp and belongings. There are camp owners or visitors who can no longer function due to the need for medical equipment that requires electricity such as oxygen, C-pap machines, heart monitors, etc.

### **III. CONCLUSION**

**Q:WHAT IS YOUR REQUEST TO THE LPSC?**

A: My request is for LPSC to deny SLECA's request to abandon all of Lake Fields power source and to enforce them to restore power to the Lake Fields Community. These camps were homes, permanent residences and for many other camp owners' future retirement homes. Make them reimburse camp owners for the lost of financial loss. Also, to establish laws that prevent SLECA and other companies from ever taking other people's livelihood in their hands.

**Q: PLEASE SUMMARIZE YOUR RECOMMENDATIONS.**

A. My recommendation is to enforce measures that require SLECA to reinstate the power to Lake Fields. To include all other affected communities while implementing regulations and restrictions to band SLECA from ever taking actions of destruction without proper authority from the courts that would include the impact of their customers such as Lake Fields resident's livelihood and stability. Have them be required to maintain their lines, poles, equipment to a certain standard and incur penalties and fines when they do not.

Q: DOES THIS CONCLUDE YOUR TESTIMONY?

A. Yes, this concludes my testimony.

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DOCKET NO. U-37394**

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and Lafourche Parishes pursuant to Commission General Order dated July 9,  
2008 (R30301)*

**AFFIDAVIT OF WITNESS**

I, Carl & Melanie O'Gwynn, being duly sworn, depose,

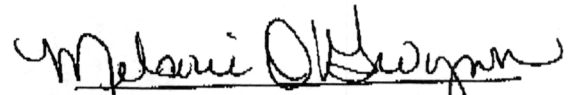
that the Direct Testimony in the

above matter against the approval of abandonment of electrical

facilities by SLECA

is true and correct to the best of my knowledge, information, and belief.

  
Carl O'Gwynn

  
Melanie O'Gwynn

Subscribed and sworn before me,

Notary Public, Me this 9 day of May, 2025.

Notary Signature: 

Printed Name of Notary: Penny Matrange

La. Bar Roll No./Notary No. 51127

My commission expires At Life's End