

**Yvette Gillespie**

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**From:** Hannah Barker  
**Sent:** Tuesday, April 9, 2024 9:28 AM  
**To:** Commissioner Correspondence  
**Subject:** Docket Correspondence  
**Attachments:** legal notice from Environmental Utilities for Sewer on Palm Island; RE. Docket # 20240032-SU; Denial of Docket #20240032-SU

Good morning,

Please place the attached emails in Docket No. 20240032. Thank you!

**Hannah E. Branum**  
Executive Assistant to Commissioner Clark  
Florida Public Service Commission  
2540 Shumard Oak Blvd.  
Tallahassee, FL 32399  
(850) 413-6004



## Yvette Gillespie

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**From:** Mike Beukema <Mike@westraconst.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, April 8, 2024 4:35 PM  
**To:** Records Clerk  
**Cc:** Office of Chairman La Rosa; Office of Commissioner Passidomo; Office of Commissioner Clark; Commissioner.Graham@psc.state.fl.us Commissioner.Fay@psc.state.fl.us Commissioner.Graham@psc.state.fl.us ; Office of Commissioner Fay  
**Subject:** legal notice from Environmental Utilities for Sewer on Palm Island

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Good afternoon Commissioners. My name is Michael Beukema. I have a home at 480 Bocilla Dr on Palm Island. I am writing you today to request that you DENY the request from Environmental Utilities, LLC. For the installation of Central sewer on Palm Island. I strongly object to this project for many reasons. I am the owner / President of a local Underground Utility / General Construction company. My company has been in business here in West Florida since 1977. I strongly believe when it comes to critical infrastructure and roadways that it be built / run and maintained by our local Governments.

Since 1977 my company has converted many failed or sold private utility owners sewer lift stations and water facilities over to Manatee and Sarasota County and upgrade those systems to meet the County standards. Transportation, power, and water/ wastewater facilities are public goods that are needed to ensure that a nation runs smoothly and that citizens' basic needs are met. Charlotte County already has the Wastewater Treatment facilities to treat the sewer from Palm Island if and when it is has been deemed that sewer services is needed. There is no need to reinvent the wheel here. I personally have not seen a water quality report that would deem it necessary. If there is such a study done that suggests the need for sewer, then I would highly recommend that Chalotte County own and operate it. I question EU's experience in owning and operating a sewer facility and its infrastructure.

From a contractor who has built 10 -20 million gallon Wastewater Treatment Facilities, I can tell you that it is no easy task to run and maintain. I am also concerned that EU as a private for profit company lacking any competitive pricing, where as if the county would own and operate it there is an economy of scale with there existing facilities to minimize the costs.

That being said I am opposed to the project without a proven need for the service. There has been no evidence that supports a need for the service. The last time this subject cam up, Expert witnesses at the Administrative hearing refuted EU's arguments. Again no water quality testing has been done to suggest the need for the service.

I bought on the island over 10 years ago and have been visiting the island for over 25 years. What make Palm Island a special place is it uniqueness. The sandy roads, the slowed pace of life, the beautiful habitat and animals. Please consider the repercussions of high density development and the impact of the sewer. Our barrier islands are in the Rural Service Area. The Comp Plan mandates on-site septic systems for the Rural Service Area. So why would a privately owned utility be acceptable?

- Has there been an water quality / environmental study done on the impact of the current septic systems?
- EU's lack of experience in owning and running a sewer system should be a major concern.
- The impact to the island during construction would be tremendous. My company has installed over 1.1 million liner feet of utility pipe in West Central Florida. Installing the sewer system on Palm Island would be very unique / tedious and a major impact to the Island, its residents and the right of way and more so the traffic not to mention the impact to the Island itself.
- The impact to the environment from the proposed construction would be a large concern. The destructive nature of construction will highly likely have a negative impact on the gopher tortoise population.
- My company has installed gravity sewer/ Vacuum Sewer and Low pressure force mains throughout Manatee, Sarasota and Englewood water district. There would be an immense price tag for such a system to be installed on a barrier island with ingress/egress by means of a barge.
- COST, COST, COST!

Please consider the impact to our Island community and DENY EU's request for sewer.

Respectfully,

Michael Beukema

**Mike Beukema**  
Westra Construction Corp.  
President

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## Yvette Gillespie

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**From:** Dale Novak <dnovak@novakcreative.net>  
**Sent:** Monday, April 8, 2024 3:46 PM  
**To:** Records Clerk  
**Cc:** Office of Chairman La Rosa; Office of Commissioner Clark; Office of Commissioner Passidomo; ommissioner.Graham@psc.state.fl.us; Office of Commissioner Fay  
**Subject:** RE. Docket #20240032-SU

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April 8th, 2024

Environmental Utilities, LLC (EU)  
Application to the Public Service Commission (PSC)  
Installation of central sewer on the Islands of Don Pedro, Knight and Palm Island.

Dear Commissioners:

Once again, here we are with another attempt by Environmental Utilities, LLC (EU) to force-feed a central sewer system on the residents of the barrier islands of Don Pedro, Knight and Palm Island. As you know this was previously rejected by the Public Service Commission.

I find it to be highly agitating that I need to spend my time to once again address this outrageous proposal by the EU. There is absolutely no regard at any level for the residents of this island and their respective property rights. I find this entire process to be egregious and potentially unlawful.

The points made by the residents of these barrier islands still remain:

1. There is no environmental need for this system. Our water quality is not impacted by the “part-time” use of the septic systems on these islands. Any water quality issues are the product of nutrient releases coming from Lake Okeechobee.
2. The residents of the island will not voluntarily connect to the system and I can assure you that legal battles will be vigorously fought with as much publicity as we can forge.
3. Residents would be forced to give up the sovereign property rights without compensation. A potential “taking” under the laws of Florida. More legal challenges.
4. Residents would be forced to pay massive fees to hook up to the system with no regard to each islanders ability to pay these fees. The application shows \$12,000 for the initial hook up plus another \$1,097 for the connection to a home. This will cause financial hardships for many of our fellow islanders especially as we continue to be deeply effected by the damage caused by hurricane Ian.
5. The suggested monthly costs (\$263.57/month for wastewater service alone) are easily five times the average sewer bill in the State of Florida which stands at \$61.24 for 4,000 gallons of use. And, that state-wide figure INCLUDES the water bill. The EU’s cost would ONLY be for sewer.
6. The cost of decommissioning the current septic systems would also be placed on the residents. Adding another financial burden to the residents, especially considering that many of these septic systems have been updated and inspected and are operating within all county codes.

7. Cost of new electrical service for the system, again, to burden the homeowners with the costs and fees with no consideration of the excessive financial burdens placed on us.
8. Possible need for a costly generator to “assist” the EU’s sewer proposal in the event of a power outage (which is frequent) and storm issues so that raw sewage doesn’t back up into our homes. An issue that we do not have at this time. More burdens with no regards to our ability to pay or the disruption to our lives.
9. We are in a “rural service area” as defined by the Charlotte County Comprehensive Plan. The Plan mandates on-site septic systems for the Rural Service Area, not a privately owned for-profit central system. There is no need for this system.
10. The EU has no experience, at any level, with a project such as this one. This is a bold money grab. It’s extortion. The sewer system that will be poorly designed, poorly executed, embedded with failures and will deteriorate our quality of life. The likelihood that the company will fail is more likely than it succeeding – creating an entirely new issue for the residents.
11. The disruption to our roads and right of ways will create turmoil for many years. The project will be unsightly, cause natural water flow issues, and cause irreparable harm to many of the native species, especially the protected Gopher Tortoise.
12. Lastly, and I really need to only make this one final point. It’s all about money. It always is.

We vehemently oppose and object to this proposal by the EU and demand that the County Commissioners of Charlotte County support the voices of those who will be directly impacted by this ill-conceived proposal over that of a for-profit private company with only their financial interest in mind.

Regards,

Dale & Julie Novak  
611 Bocilla Drive  
Full time residents  
Don Pedro Island  
920-664-1088

## Yvette Gillespie

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**From:** Brian Fredley <bfredley@bpfdesign.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, April 8, 2024 2:52 PM  
**To:** Records Clerk  
**Cc:** Office of Chairman La Rosa; Office of Commissioner Clark; Office of Commissioner Passidomo; Office of Commissioner Fay; Alexis Martin Yoga; pie@palmislandstates.org  
**Subject:** Denial of Docket #20240032-SU

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**Attention:** Clerk of the Commission

**Subject:** Docket #20240032-SU

**Property Owner:** Brian P Fredley – Alexis Martin - Spirit Quest Family Revocable Trust

**Property Address:** 311 Bocilla Drive, Placida, FL 33946

**Barrier Island:** Don Pedro Island / Bocilla Island

**Owner Email:** [bfredley@bpfdesign.com](mailto:bfredley@bpfdesign.com)

**Memo:** We are vigilantly opposed to the denial of the Docket #20240032-SU

There is no evidence that this proposed service is needed for the island or property owners. The current septic systems that are on each owner's fee simple property are all permitted under the statutes of Florida and the Florida Building Code. All the properties on the island require the review and permitting from the Department of Environmental Protection to develop these septic systems to insure they are compliant with regards to perk rates, elevation, proximity to bodies of water and total make up. As a result, there is tremendous investment by each landowner to install and maintain their system. There is no advantage of abandoning this permitted, well working and non-problematic system that is in place.

The cost recovery of this sewer system would be passed on to the residents that would be forced to connect. The cost is estimated to be approx. \$ 13-14,000 per property and most do not have the resources to pay for this, not to mention the estimated \$ 265 monthly cost for the utility. Moreover, there would be additional costs to pumping out the existing septic systems or removal, cost of electrical for lift stations, if needed. Lastly, with the potential hurricanes, we currently can maintain our own systems with power outages since these are all gravity systems. With the potential for power outages during storm events; lift station sewer systems would have devastating backups unless generators could be employed, yet another cost to owners.

The environmental impact of bringing a sewer service on to the island would be devastating to the habitat and the individual properties, to say the least. There is an endangered species of animals on this island that should not be disturbed including Gopher Tortoise. We see and experience this wildlife on a daily basis on these properties. In addition, it would require each property owner to give up private property rights with easements. These easements would be where the heavy construction would occur and there would be substantial loss of trees, vegetation, widening roads and habitat. Finally, heavy equipment, traffic congestion and chaos would be occurring to try to do this project on our sand roads.

This island is not a high-density development zoning. Providing sewer encourages rezoning and lobbying to attempt to achieve higher density developments on this pristine barrier island. We are sincerely asking PSC to deny the EU's application for wastewater service. Moreover, this request is unjustified and unwarranted. There is no logical reason to

impact the island and all the properties with a private system that everyone is opposed to and destroy this natural Florida habitat. We are pleading with you to help protect our properties and this barrier island from this development and the domino of future development. There is a hidden agenda for this request, and we urge you to understand what this is.

There are very few natural barrier islands remaining in Florida; that are remarkably untouched, as this one is. This happens to be one of them.

We encourage you to visit our island before making any sort of decision and see for yourself the type of habitat and community we have. I will personally give you a tour of the island to show you these points made above and many more if given the opportunity,

Please call me on my cell to schedule or discuss, 386/212-9206

Thank you, Brian

Brian P. Fredley, President



207 Fairview Avenue, Daytona Beach, FL 32114  
Ph: 386/257-0502 Fx: 386/257-1050 E-mail: [Bfredley@bpfdesign.com](mailto:Bfredley@bpfdesign.com)

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