

Charlie Smith

From: Charlie Smith on behalf of Records Clerk
Sent: Wednesday, April 17, 2024 1:13 PM
To: 'Lindsay Yates'
Cc: Consumer Contact
Subject: RE: Docket No. 20240032 Environmental Utilities LLC

Good afternoon Lindsay Yates,

We will be placing your comments below in consumer correspondence in Docket No. 20240032, and forwarding them to the Office of Consumer Assistance and Outreach.

Best regards,

Charlie Smith II

Office of Commission Clerk
Florida Public Service Commission
2540 Shumard Oak Blvd.
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0850
850-413-6770

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From: Lindsay Yates <lyates@springsips.com>
Sent: Tuesday, April 16, 2024 12:54 PM
To: Records Clerk <CLERK@PSC.STATE.FL.US>
Cc: Office of Chairman La Rosa <Commissioner.LaRosa@psc.state.fl.us>; Office of Commissioner Clark <Commissioner.Clark@psc.state.fl.us>; Office of Commissioner Passidomo <Commissioner.Passidomo@psc.state.fl.us>; Office of Commissioner Graham <Commissioner.Graham@PSC.STATE.FL.US>; Office of Commissioner Fay <Commissioner.Fay@psc.state.fl.us>
Subject: Docket No. 20240032 Environmental Utilities LLC

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Commissioners:

I am a resident of Don Pedro Island writing to you in opposition to the application for wastewater certificate filed by Environmental Utilities, LLC. My objections have not changed since the last go-round in 2021-22. It appears that owning and operating a sewer utility must be an excellent way for one to make buckets of money. Otherwise, why would someone keep at it so tenaciously and cause his island neighbors to spend more time and more money in trying to protect their properties and protect the fragile environment that they call home. None of my neighbors want to be forced to be held hostage by a for-profit company that has absolutely no experience in owning and operating a central sewer system.

As far as I know, it has not yet been proven that there is a need for central sewer service. I have not seen results of any water quality or environmental tests that have specifically been conducted on the water surrounding our island and which tests show environmentally damaging septic runoff. There is one school of

thought that suggests that any nitrogen problem in Charlotte Harbor is caused by Charlotte County's inefficient removal of nutrients in reclaim water.

Additionally, the disruption and destruction of the island ecosystem, wildlife habitat, flora and fauna caused by a construction project of this magnitude will be devastating. We've all seen how developers work on the mainland – will Environmental Utilities really pay attention to our large gopher tortoise population that we so carefully nurture?

Who requested sewer service? Not me, nor any of my neighbors. Nine letters were submitted with Environmental Utilities' application: three signed by the same person not only as an individual but also as the principal of two business entities. The other six letters were sent by owners on Little Gasparilla Island – one of whom refers to being in favor of "municipal" service, and another refers to supporting "city sewage services."

It has been less than two years since Hurricane Ian devastated our islands and recovery is still underway. Our roads and transit system continue to be overwhelmed by the effects of ongoing construction. Don Pedro/Knight/Palm Island is serviced by car ferry which runs two ferries during daytime hours. These ferries hold up to eight normal-sized cars. We are currently experiencing ferry wait times of sometimes up to an hour or more due to the number of cement trucks, semi-trailer loads of construction materials, and the added number of contractor vehicles. The additional traffic generated by this potential sewer project (not only construction of the system itself but also the removal of the existing septic tanks) would be a nightmare in a normal year without the hurricane construction overload. Residents here are still rather fragile and trying to regain normalcy in their lives. Environmental Utilities' timing is terrible and its disregard for its neighbors is disgusting.

The costs associated with this project are going to be an extreme burden on the property owners. It is my feeling that the estimated costs are way low. The homeowners who are rebuilding from the hurricane can tell you that building costs from three years ago have increased considerably. As far as monthly charges from EU for service, we are currently paying one of the highest water rates in the state. Adding a sewer cost +2.5 times more than we are paying for our water is unconscionable. Additionally, whatever the final cost associated with installation of a system – which is going to be exorbitant – unlike the procedure used by Charlotte County on the mainland, all costs must be paid immediately; there will be no multi-year payment plan. There will be no grant funding pursued to assist people in making payment. There will be no grandfathering of current systems based on age of the system. Everyone must replace their septic even if it was just installed.

For these reasons, I urge you to DENY the application of Environmental Utilities LLC.

Lindsay Yates
2 Pointe Way
Don Pedro Island