

Charlie Smith

From: Charlie Smith on behalf of Records Clerk
Sent: Wednesday, April 17, 2024 1:11 PM
To: 'joe.noto@comcast.net'
Cc: Consumer Contact
Subject: RE: RE. Docket #20240032-SU

Good afternoon Joe Noto,

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: joe.noto@comcast.net <joe.noto@comcast.net>
Sent: Wednesday, April 17, 2024 12:33 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: RE. Docket #20240032-SU

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Dear Clerk of Commission and Commissioners LaRosa, Clark, Passidomo, Graham, and Fay,

My name is Joe Noto and I live at 181 N. Gulf Blvd. #10, Placida, Florida 33946 on Palm Island. I apologize for the length of this email, but this central sewer / wastewater service project is unnecessary and wrong for so many reasons. And the PUC, having heard all the arguments a couple years ago, did not grant approval of the application. But now we have to go through this costly process again. This is simply not right or fair.

The central sewer system proposed by Environmental Utilities will have a significant negative impact on me, the environment, and our community. As a homeowner in the proposed service area. **I am formally requesting that the PSC deny EU's application for wastewater service, and they be prohibited from applying again if it is denied.** We went through this lengthy and costly process once before, and there was ample support and evidence for not approving the EU application. I'm not sure anything has changed; so it's very troublesome that we now have to go through it again. Seems to imply this will never end, and that's simply not right or fair.

Please read my concerns below so that you understand why **I strongly oppose the central sewer system proposed by Environmental Utilities (EU).**

1. I am opposed to the installation of a central sewer by a privately owned, for-profit utility. Charlotte County is abdicating its responsibility to a private operator who has never owned a wastewater utility company before.
2. There has been no evidence provided that supports a need for service in the proposed service area. I have not requested, nor do I need this unnecessary system.
3. Expert witnesses at the last Administrative Hearing refuted the arguments that EU put forward supporting the need for service.
 - a. Previously, the Final Order released by the PSC on this very matter stated: "noting the level of opposition to EU's proposal by its prospective customers, we find that customers are highly unlikely to voluntarily connect to EU's system."
 - b. As a public official, I would like to think you do things in the best interests of your constituents. This project is certainly not in the best interests of your constituents.
4. I cherish our environment, and you should too.
 - a. No water quality testing has been done in our area to prove the need for a central sewer system.
 - b. This project could very easily have a negative impact on, and interfere with, the habitat of endangered species such as the gopher tortoise.
 - c. The risk of a central sewer leak into the intercoastal waterway seems greater than the risk of one or more septic systems developing leaks.
5. I am concerned about the ability of Environmental Utilities to financially handle this project, and adequately maintain such a system. I have not been provided any information about the financial history, stability or viability of Environmental Utilities and their management team.
6. I am also concerned as to whether Environmental Utilities has the technical expertise and capability to handle such a project.

- a. To the best of my knowledge, EU is not a contractor that has won a bid to install sewer systems.
 - b. It is my understanding that Environmental Utilities has not provided adequate information on how the system will be serviced in the event of failure during a storm or other adverse conditions.
 - c. What experience do they have with other wastewater systems?
7. I am concerned about the costs of this **unnecessary and unwanted project**. My current system costs about \$20 per month (about \$700 to have my tank pumped every three years) Given what I've seen, it appears the EU system will cost me at least \$350 per month (amortize the \$12,000 initial hook up cost over 10 years, plus monthly service, plus the same periodic pumping) plus unknowns (c, d, e, and f below). Without the unknowns this is a 1,750% (one thousand seven hundred fifty percent) increase. That's ludicrous and irresponsible.
- a. Initial hook up cost. **\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$**.
 - b. Monthly service costs. **\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$**
 - c. Cost for a separate electrical panel. **\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$**
 - d. Cost for a generator to ensure there is no sewage back up during a power outage (which we experience frequently). The system's grinder pump will probably not function long without power. **\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$**
 - e. I am concerned about the life of the equipment installed by Environmental Utilities and their ability to maintain it. This could result in future charges to homeowners because of the needed repair costs. **\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$**
 - f. Cost to replace existing (more than "basic") landscaping that will be destroyed digging out my existing septic tank, putting in an EU septic tank, and running sewage lines. **\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$**
 - g. Cost to have the EU tank pumped out periodically as I currently do. **\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$**. If my existing system is replaced by EU tank, they should be required to pay to have it pumped out. It would be their system.
 - h. In summary, this unnecessary and unwanted project will be very costly to me and a lot of other homeowners who live on a fixed income. It will only further burden us, coming at a time when we're dealing with high inflation and soaring costs on top of Hurricane Ian repairs.
8. Also, it is my understanding that EU wants a utility easement, at no cost to them, that will go through my property from the tank that would be located near my house to the connection to the

sewer line near the main road. This is my property, and I should not be forced to grant a free easement for this **unnecessary and unwanted project**.

9. It is my understanding that our island is in the Rural Service Area which supposedly is not designed for commercial / high-density development. It appears this project is designed to encourage and attract commercial / high-density development which is certainly not in the best interest of residents.
10. There is, and will continue to be, a lot ferry traffic for the existing level of residents, renters and tourists, along with the construction traffic related to re-building from the hurricane, and new construction. This has made wait lines / times for the ferry unpredictable and ridiculously long. The heavy equipment and materials needed on the island for this project would make this situation even worse for a very long time.

The **central sewer system proposed by Environmental Utilities will have a significant negative impact on me, the environment, and our community**. As a homeowner in the proposed service area. **I am formally requesting that the PSC deny EU's application for wastewater service, and they be prohibited from applying again if it is denied.**

Sincerely,

Joe Noto

574-904-7224

joe.noto@comcast.net