

COPY

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ORIGINAL

Duane E. Rutledge
872 Sunset Vista Drive
Fort Myers, Florida 33909

January 10, 1998

Wayne L. Schiefelbein
Gallin, Schiefelbein & Cowdery, P.A.
3301 Thomasville Road, Suite 300
Tallahassee, Florida 32312

Re: Docket No. 98-WS

Dear Mr. Schiefelbein:

In response to your letter of December 30, 1997, pertaining to the statement that no response was received from me regarding messages left on my answering machine is completely untrue as I responded to your inquiries during the Christmas holiday period. My response was left on the answering service of a Mr. Bob Dix informing him that I would not be available for any comment or dialog until January 15, 1998 due to family activities. After several intimidating and threatening calls from Florida Cities Water, I felt that their intentions were only to belittle and ridicule my concerns over a service area. This all was also documented with Mrs. Brubaker as I stated to her in my phone conversation on or about January 5th.

This seems to have been a most ridiculous time, due to the multiple holidays, for a company that is truly interested in procuring proper dialog. Intimidating and harassing phone calls left on my answering service by Mr. Dix, demanding that we speak with him, were not appreciated. I do not have to answer to him. Subsequently, after discussion and counsel, I understand that Mr. Dix, of Florida Cities Water, has no authority to solve these problems, or make a decision. I could see no use in speaking with him since he can only glad hand the situation, and basically lie to me to get me to do what his company wants and I will not do that. Obviously if I cannot trust the company, why would I even want to have a conversation with him?

Florida Cities Water sole wish is to monopolize an area and to hold all property owners accountable to them either through finagling contracts, or with the county through permits, or through the building and code department. I do not agree with their philosophy or methods. They should have no authority to mandate water through county permits, but time has shown where ordinances will find a way, under the table, to bring this in as a mandatory service. Florida Cities Water is manipulating too much of an area here. If another company had access to operate in this area, it would help control water usage, water rates, and service to the customer.

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I feel that since Florida Cities Water was not interested in answering my letter, evidently Gatlin, Schiefelbein & Cowdery, P.A. are only interested in rai. loading this issue through and could care less about the little people. To even bring it up during the holiday season where people are busy with crammed schedules of family time, community service, and church activities, is absurd. Through this whole ordeal of misplaced letters, lost letters, and untimely notices, Florida Cities Water has shown their true colors in their complete disregard for the public and the public's interest. They are interested only in lining their pockets with silver.

The fact that I was notified so close to the date that an initial response was requested, was rude. Since I am not a professional attorney and do not handle matters such as these on an everyday basis, I needed time to compose my thoughts on paper to protect my present and future interest. Even a professional corporation takes time to formulate letters of this sort. Your lack of professionalism does not constitute an emergency on my part nor does it build a friendly alliance.

Sincerely,



Duane E. Ruffedge

DER/rmh

cc: Jennifer Drubaker, Esq.
Blanca S. Bayo, Director