

Antonia Hover

From: Office of Commissioner Clark
Sent: Wednesday, January 19, 2022 11:07 AM
To: Commissioner Correspondence
Subject: FW: Docket #20200226-SU

Good afternoon,

Please place the attached email in Docket No. 20200226.

Hannah E. Barker

Executive Assistant to Commissioner Clark
Florida Public Service Commission
[2540 Shumard Oak Blvd.](#)
[Tallahassee, FL 32399](#)
(850) 413-6004

From: Roy & Wendy Petteway <oranges@embarqmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 19, 2022 11:06 AM
To: Records Clerk <CLERK@PSC.STATE.FL.US>; Office of Commissioner Clark <Commissioner.Clark@psc.state.fl.us>; Office of Commissioner La Rosa <Commissioner.LaRosa@psc.state.fl.us>; Office of Commissioner Passidomo <Commissioner.Passidomo@psc.state.fl.us>
Subject: Docket #20200226-SU

To whom it may concern,

My name is Roy Petteway and I have been a homeowner on Little Gasparilla Island in Charlotte County, Florida, since 1983. Little Gasparilla Island is a bridge-less barrier island with no access other than by boat. There are few designated "roads", which are sand paths, and do not connect north and south completely. Where the north/south paths end, they meander through private property, some with the owners' knowledge, and some without. Golf carts are the main mode of transportation, or bike.

I am stating that I am in opposition to the central sewer system proposed by Environmental Utilities (EU) and I am respectfully requesting that the Public Service Commission deny EU's application for wastewater services on Little Gasparilla Island, Palm Island, Knight Island, etc.

The reasons I am opposed are as follows:

1. I do not feel there is a need for service, as the island has working septic tanks at this time, many of which are inspected regularly. There are also many new septic tanks that have been installed in the past few years.
2. The cost of this service will add a financial hardship to my family, as well as other residents on Little Gasparilla Island (LGI). We were forced to hook up to Mr. Boyer's water system, with exorbitant rates. I would add we are paying some of the highest water rates in the state, over \$75 per month before the first drop of water is used. From what I can determine, there are uncertain hookup charges for the sewer system. When this was first proposed to our Property Owners Association, the installation fee was in the \$20,000 range. Now I

understand that amount has changed per the PSC filing to \$13,221. Also, the average residential bill for service will be \$178 per month, which is roughly twice the amount that is paid on the mainland by homeowners for both water and sewer combined. If you add the proposed sewer bill to the already high water bills, there will be homeowners who can no longer afford a home on the island.

Another thing, there is no "pay over time" for the installation, homeowners will have to obtain a 2nd mortgage on their homes to cover this high cost of connection and other costs that have not yet been identified. Charlotte County regulations will require all homes on the island to be connected to the sewer system within 1 year of installation. There will be no grandfathering of any existing septic tanks on the island, no matter if they were installed recently or not.

3. The sewer system proposed requires a separate electric panel to be installed at the owners expense to operate the grinder pump. The grinder pump has limited capacity, with only a 60 gallon tank. And in the event of a power outage, which happens frequently, it will not be able to function. Electric power on the islands are very undependable, we have frequent power outages that can last for hours. Just last week a tree fell over a power line and much of the island was out for 8 hours or more. I have seen power off at the island for over 24 hours. Because of this, the homeowner will be required to install an expensive generator to operate the grinder pump when the power is out. This places an undue financial hardship on homeowners to purchase the generator, as well as the hardship of hauling fuel for the generator over to the island in a boat.

4. We have a pristine, natural landscape on LGI. We have endangered species such as bald eagles and gopher tortoises, as well as osprey nests on the island, which need to be protected. To put in the sewer system that is being proposed, much of the island's landscape will be irrevocably destroyed. Also, landscaping around the existing septic tanks will have to be destroyed to give the ability to crush and fill the existing septic tanks, which will again be at the homeowners expense.

5. Many of the properties on LGI are of various sizes, and some lots are set up in a way to not have adequate easements between them or around them to be able to run the sewer lines without having to be run through private property to access them. Not to mention, most utility easements are placed in the road right of way. EU has claimed ownership of utility easements that he has not purchased, or been granted. The proposal is that homeowners will be forced to "give" easements for utilities. This is un-American. Utility easements are granted by the owner, or purchased, they are not just taken. I would also mention that staging areas for excavation equipment and supplies will have to be placed on private property, as all property on the island is private. There is no "public" land on LGI.

6. I will remind you again, LGI is a bridge-less, barrier island and access is only by boat. Equipment may be brought to the island by barge from the mainland at Eldred's Marina, which is neither punctual nor dependable. The barge operates solely at the discretion of the owner, and may not run for days at a time. For the scope of this project to depend on this barge service is not only not feasible, it would totally shut down any resident's need for the barge as it would be tied up with this project. Homeowners and contractors use the barge service to deliver all necessary items that cannot be brought over in a personal boat, such as a golf cart, or a load of shell, or building supplies, etc. Because of this, in the event of an emergency spill or regular maintenance, EU has not stated how they would be able to address any emergency that would require equipment that was not already on the island.

7. In such a hostile salt environment as this coast, it is my experience that equipment needs replacing on a regular basis, and this will be another homeowner expense, not to mention the additional electric expense that will be borne by the homeowner to operate this equipment.

8. To my knowledge, no water quality testing has been done on LGI to even show the need for a sewer. I feel the risk of a sewer spill in the bay from a sewer pipe crossing the Inter-Coastal is far greater than the unproven risk of septic tank use.

9. Lastly, EU has no experience with sewer installation, as this is the first wastewater project they have been involved with. A company with no track record in this area should not be allowed to begin a project with this scope and magnitude on a bridge-less barrier island.

I would offer an invitation to any commissioner to come to our island and let me show you the pristine environment of LGI and see for yourself what will be irreparably destroyed to install this sewer system.

For the reasons above, I respectfully request that you deny the application by Environmental Utilities to install a sewer system on Little Gasparilla Island.

Respectfully submitted,

Roy Petteway

oranges@embarqmail.com