

Antonia Hover

From: Office of Commissioner Clark
Sent: Thursday, January 27, 2022 3:50 PM
To: Commissioner Correspondence
Subject: FW: My support for central sewer and why.

Good afternoon,

Please place the attached email in Docket No. 20200226.

Hannah E. Barker

Executive Assistant to Commissioner Clark
Florida Public Service Commission
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From: eu777offices@gmail.com <eu777offices@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, January 27, 2022 3:36 PM
To: Office of Commissioner Passidomo <Commissioner.Passidomo@psc.state.fl.us>; Office of Commissioner Graham <Commissioner.Graham@PSC.STATE.FL.US>; Office of Chairman Fay <Commissioner.Fay@psc.state.fl.us>; Office of Commissioner La Rosa <Commissioner.LaRosa@psc.state.fl.us>; Office of Commissioner Clark <Commissioner.Clark@psc.state.fl.us>; Commission Clerk <CommissionClerk@psc.state.fl.us>; Office of Commissioner Clark <Commissioner.Clark@psc.state.fl.us>
Subject: My support for central sewer and why.

To whom it may concern-

My wife and I strongly support centralized sewer service for Palm Island. We currently own two vacant lots and are in the process of working with our architect and engineers to obtain a building permit. Based on my recent conversations with my septic engineer and septic drain field contractor, the cost to construct and install a septic system and associated drainfield is as much or more than the projected cost per owner for sewer. In addition to the less expensive cost of public sewer, I think most people would agree that it is overall better for the environment to have a central sewage system versus private drainfield designed to leech waste water into the soil and/or water table. Finally, the next easy to understand benefit of having central sewer is that it frees up our yard area to be used for parking, landscaping, building area and other uses. Installation of a drainfield eats up a significant portion of most lots on the island and renders the area basically unusable. When considering all of these factors cumulatively from the standpoint of all of the vacant lot owners on the island (which will be built out at some point in time) I would suggest that anyone looking at all facts and factors objectively would come to the same conclusion – central sewer is the hands down best solution when compared to septic and drainfield.

The address of our two vacant lots are:

29 North Gulf Blvd. & 461 North Gulf Blvd.

My wife and I are members of PIE and so we have been kept abreast of the PIE leadership position, which from the correspondence we receive leads us to believe they have a strong opposition to the certification and approval of Environmental Utilities(EU) by the PSC as the wastewater service provider for our island. My QuickTake is the opposition is focused on two primary issues –1) EU does not have the financial wherewithal or skill set to effectively be put in charge of the wastewater system for our island, and 2) either the reported cost per owner of roughly \$13,000-\$20,000 is too high, and/or there is no certainty of a guaranteed max price(GMP). I don't believe I have heard anyone object to central sewer service for the island on environmental grounds. Conversely, I suspect that if you asked the question of each owner on the island as to whether central sewer or private individual drain fields are better for the environment and desired the majority of those persons being intellectually honest would choose public sewer. Assuming this to be true, then the major objections that I am aware of are - 1) cost, and 2) the financial wherewithal and skill set of the applicant.

I have no knowledge or basis to form a comment on whether the applicant has the skill set and financial ability or not to provide and bring to completion a sewer system for our island that is as competitive in price as any other applicant. Therefore, I will leave it to the applicant, the facts presented, and the PSC to arrive at a decision on this issue. On the issue of cost, I would say from the perspective of a vacant lot owner in the process of obtaining permits there is no cost disadvantage in having central sewer. In fact, given all of the factors I have outlined above it is in my opinion less expensive to have public sewer than the cost to install private individual systems and the ongoing maintenance associated with each. As far as making arguments that the projected/reported cost for providing sewer service on our island is more expensive on a per homeowner basis than on the mainland is analogous to the proverbial comparison of apples and oranges. The cost to build my home on the island versus to build my same home on the mainland is also apples and oranges. The cost to build my home on the island far exceeds the cost to build on the mainland for many different reasons including the most obvious which is the ferry/barge fees of getting vehicles and equipment from the mainland to the island. Following the same line of linear reasoning, I would certainly expect the cost per unit to provide sewer service on the island to be more than on the mainland. Unfortunately, everything cost more these days. In closing, I would like to say that I certainly understand the viewpoint of the persons that are in opposition to this project. And, to be honest if I had just finished construction of my new home and paying for my new septic and drainfield I might vote with my wallet and be in opposition to the project. Just being honest. With that said, other than cost to existing homeowners, I can't think of any other reason that having sewer service for the island is not in our long-term best interest.

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