

Antonia Hover

From: Antonia Hover on behalf of Records Clerk
Sent: Monday, February 14, 2022 8:38 AM
To: 'Jennifer Aulsebrook'
Cc: Consumer Contact
Subject: RE: Docket #20200226-SU: Formal Objection to EU's Application for Wastewater Service

Good Morning, Jennifer Aulsebrook.

We will be placing your comments below in consumer correspondence in Docket No. 20200226, and forwarding them to the Office of Consumer Assistance and Outreach.

Thank you!

Toni Hover
Commission Deputy Clerk I
Florida Public Service Commission
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From: Jennifer Aulsebrook <jennifersue_12@yahoo.com>
Sent: Sunday, February 13, 2022 1:45 PM
To: Records Clerk <CLERK@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>; Office of Commissioner Passidomo <Commissioner.Passidomo@psc.state.fl.us>
Subject: Docket #20200226-SU: Formal Objection to EU's Application for Wastewater Service

Good Afternoon Commissioners LaRosa, Clark, Passidomo and Clerk of the Commission,

We (John and Jennifer Aulsebrook) are writing to you as the property owners within the proposed service area (Don Pedro/Knight Islands) contained in the application from Environmental Utilities, LLC [EU] for central sewer for Docket No. 20200226-SU. We hereby firmly object to the EU's application for certificate to provide wastewater service in our service area. Our rationale for this objection is as follows:

- **Ethical Practices:**

- On January 5, 2021, the PSC made a decision to deny the EU's motion to bifurcate for temporary waiver of Rule 25-30.033(1)(p) and (q). While we are grateful for this decision, we find this initial filing incredibly disturbing as it would have allowed the EU to move forward without fully informing the homeowners of the impact this project. This unintegral business strategy, conducted at the beginning of this application, gives us great concern about the EU's ability to complete this project ethically and fairly. Furthermore, with this initial behavior, this leads us to believe the continued maintenance and service will also be conducted in this manner.

- **Financial Burden, impacting Health:**

- As stakeholders in the proposed service area, it is important to have all the relevant information regarding the proposed central sewer including the connection fees. In January 2022, we have been provided a Rate Case Overview, which indicates the sewer lateral installation and main extension charges will be \$13,221. This rate sheet does not disclose the additional fees for: Electric (the system pump requires a separate electric panel), Generator (homeowners will need a generator to keep the system running during an outage to avoid sewage back-up), Landscaping / Hardscaping around the septic area, and Septic Removal. These additional expenses (all at the

homeowners expense) can and will add up, incurring a great burden for us. Additionally, there is concern for other, unexpected fees not listed here; therefore, we still do not feel we have been informed on the **full** financial impact of this project.

- The residential service bill for 4,000 gallons of usage will be \$256.66/month. This is almost triple the amount a homeowner would have to pay on the mainland. We have also been informed that the EU will incorporate increases at a maximum and where possible. We have never paid this much for sewer service in our life and this will have detrimental impact to our finances. We find it absolutely abhorrent that these fees are even being considered, further outlining the EUs ability to conduct themselves in an ethical manner.
- For this section, I will convey our situation in 1st person: While I do not typically share financial and/or health situations outwardly, I feel it's best to provide this information in this sensitive situation. My husband suffered a heart attack as a result of extreme stress. He and I both suffer from osteoarthritis in our spines, as well as, other health issues. We made the conscious decision to sell our home in Colorado and move to the island, strictly for our health and well-being. This island is a healing place for us, quite literally. Unfortunately, my husband is no longer able to work; therefore, we have only one income that is fixed and no wiggle room for exorbitant budget items such as a sewer system. Quite simply, we absolutely cannot afford the expense of the initial start-up, nor can we afford the atypically high monthly service bill. We are also not able to get a loan (it's absolutely not an option). For us, the approval of this sewer system would financially devastate us. This is utter honesty and without exaggeration. We would have to consider moving away from the island, which would, in fact, impact our overall health. The alternative to moving away from the island would be for me to obtain a second job, which would also impact overall health. The ramifications of this decision are vast and I am sharing this to give you a sense of who we are as people and what this could mean for our future. There are often assumptions made about the islanders...that we are wealthy and can frivolously afford things like this without a problem. I'm writing this to inform you that is absolutely **not** the case with us...and that is not the case for many of us (as I have been made aware). In complete vulnerability, we are two humans, trying to care for our health and well-being, counting our pennies along the way so we may have the necessary blessings that this healing island provides. For us, this island carries incredible meaning and importance to our livelihood.

- **Purpose:**

- We have a perfectly working septic system that follows the Charlotte County requirements for maintenance. It is in excellent condition and we (like all islanders) are required to follow our Operating Permit and Maintenance Agreement required by state law and provisioned through the Florida Health Department. We fully adhere to the operating permit/required maintenance, including but not limited to, conducting bi-annual inspections, septic pumping as required within the specified timeframes, ensuring a fully functional aerator with alarms, mitigating root growth, ensuring the drain field has proper vegetation, blower and air filter cleaning, etc. There is absolutely no consideration for homeowners that have a well-maintained, functional, environmentally-safe septic system to be grandfathered. Additionally, we have not heard adequate rationale for the need to replace our existing septic system with a sewer line.

- **Environmental Concerns:**

- We have conducted thorough research on both septic and sewer systems. We have serious concerns with the environmental impact of the installation, operating, and maintenance of a sewer system. As we understand it, in terms of the environment, our controlled and highly maintained septic system does not have the impact on the environment that a sewer system does. We are incredibly concerned about the wastewater that could potentially enter our ocean (as has been seen time and time again with many sewer systems). Additionally, this could have a high impact on our ecological system, including but not limited to, our protected Sea Turtles, Gopher Tortoises and Birds.

In summary, any potential project with regard to sewer installation would impact us immensely and would be devastating to our finances, our overall health, and the environment; therefore, we are formally and respectfully requesting that the PSC deny the EU's application for wastewater service.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

John and Jennifer Aulsebrook

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jennifersue_12@yahoo.com