

**Lisa Smith**

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**From:** Office of Commissioner Passidomo  
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 16, 2022 1:43 PM  
**To:** Commissioner Correspondence  
**Subject:** FW: Docket # 20200226-SU

Please place the e-mail below in Docket No. 20200226.

Thank you!

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**From:** Dale Novak <dnovak@novakcreative.net>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 16, 2022 1:41 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

Dear Commissioners:

On April 21, 2022 the PSC staff is scheduled to make their recommendation with regards to Docket # 20200226-SU.

I wanted to write you to express our position on this matter including factual analysis of the proposal by Environmental Utilities (EU).

We are currently in the process of building a home on Don Pedro Island. It will be located at 611 Bocilla Drive, 33946, which is in the EU service area.

First and foremost, I find it incredibly disconnected, and rather impossible to believe that a “start up, for profit” utility service with absolutely no experience in designing, building, implementing and servicing a sewer utility is even being considered. How is this possible? Imagine if you can, boarding a 747 and being told over the PA system that the pilot that will be operating the aircraft today has never flown anything in his life, has zero experience in aviation and has absolutely no idea how to fly a 747. Would you sit quietly in your seat and just say “oh well, I hope this goes okay?” Or, jump out of your seat and head for the exit?

That is precisely what is happening here. We are all preparing to board our sewer flight with a start-up company with zero experience other than operating a poorly operated insignificant water system on Little Gasparilla Island.

So what drives them (the EU) to want to do this? Profit, plain and simple. At the total and unfettered expense of the property owners in the proposed service area. Not their expense. Ours. They are burdening all of the expenses on the property owners. Further, Charlotte County is mandating that we hook up to the system. I truly feel that this story line is impossible to believe. Yet, here we are.

I also find it unconstitutional to “mandate” that a private property owner shall be required (mandated) to participate in a system operated by a private for profit company. But, that’s something we can let the Attorneys debate.

Based on the handout provide by the EU, the “proposed” cost of implementing the service comes to \$13,280.85 per property owner. That’s just to get our home connected to the service. But, why stop there? The proposed monthly cost is \$256.66 per month based on 4,000 gallons of use. It ratchets up to \$472.48 if you go over the 4,000 gallons. Compared to the current sewer rates provided by Charlotte County (and posted on their website) for the same 4,000 gallon use it would be \$67.22, or over 380% more for the EU’s proposed costs. Granted, the service will be on a barrier island which would likely cost more, but nearly 400% more? Does that sound reasonable to the PSC?

Plus, for every homeowner to be “forced” to pay the EU an additional \$13,280.85 just to initiate service is outrageous. It’s not realistic. This is an egregious assault on our property rights and freedom to choose if we want to use the service or not.

Our home will be built soon. We will likely pay anywhere from \$25,000 to \$50,000 to install our entirely up to code septic system. Charlotte County will permit and inspect the system. We will have to meet certain requirements to accomplish this in an environmentally sound way. The system will need to be inspected as well. That is part of our island life and we accept it. We don’t want to add nutrients to the water any more than any other island residents. But, to “require us” to then dig up and remove this brand new system a year from now leaves us speechless. Is the EU going to compensate us for the cost of not only removing our system, but the cost to install it? Keep in mind, we are doing everything by the book. This same scenario would be playing out island wide and the costs could be in the millions to decommission and remove septic systems. More costs, and more money, to burden the property owners.

No part of the EU’s proposal addresses the costs to the property owners. Every homeowner on the island could be “mandated” to spend \$25,000-\$35,000 just to comply with this proposal. I expect there to be court battles with regards to this if it is approved. It’s inevitable.

To continue with my objections, what happens if there is a failure of the system? Does the EU have enough cash reserves to handle an environmental catastrophe? Do they have the crews and equipment to address a failure caused by a storm, pipe break, or failure of the system due to negligence or the improper installation of the system? Or, is it their plan to simply pass on ALL of the costs to the property owners — in a similar fashion as their current proposal? The PSC needs to address these real concerns.

I think I speak for many islanders that we all want to protect our water quality. But all the issues currently present in our waterways are NOT due to septic systems, but rather the releases from Lake Okeechobee into the Caloosahatchee river. It’s been documented and proven and a known issue by the State of Florida, Environmentalists and the Federal Government, including the Army Corp of Engineers. There is no crises being caused by the properties on the chain of island in the EU’s proposed service area. None. Zero. In fact, many of the homes are only occupied seasonally or sporadically throughout the year. The EU wants to create a crises where none exists.

The bottom line is that the EU’s proposal is all about generating a profit for the stakeholders in the company. Nothing else — all at the expense of the property owners who choose to live on this very special chain of barrier islands. As a Florida resident, and native of the great State of Florida, I respectfully plead with the PSC to deny this application.

Regards,

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