

**Yvette Gillespie**

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**From:** Yvette Gillespie on behalf of Records Clerk  
**Sent:** Thursday, April 18, 2024 4:01 PM  
**To:** 'Andy Ball'  
**Cc:** Consumer Contact  
**Subject:** RE: Docket #20240032-SU

Good afternoon George A. Ball,

We will be placing your comments below in consumer correspondence in Docket No. 20240032, and forwarding them to the Office of Consumer Assistance and Outreach.

Sincerely,

*Yvette Gillespie*

Commission Deputy Clerk I  
Florida Public Service Commission  
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**From:** Andy Ball <gab\_three@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, April 17, 2024 5:32 PM  
**To:** Records Clerk <CLERK@PSC.STATE.FL.US>; Office of Chairman 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>; Office of Commissioner Fay <Commissioner.Fay@psc.state.fl.us>; Office of Commissioner Graham <Commissioner.Graham@PSC.STATE.FL.US>  
**Subject:** Docket #20240032-SU

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Dear Commissioners,

I am writing to seek your support again in denying Environmental Utilities LLC application of an original certificate for providing wastewater service to the Islands Don Pedro, Little Gasparilla, and Knight.

As a full-time resident/owner on Don Pedro Island, I first want to first thank you for denying Environmental Utilities LLC (EU) application in 2022 for an original certificate for providing sewer to the island. I am a retired government employee living on a fixed income here on the island. To have to pay a for-profit company for a service that has not been requested nor is it, environmentally feasible would have been a difficult challenge to overcome. To me, it equates to extortion as I would have to pay an individual for a service, I did not request to continue to live on this slice of paradise that I've called home for the last 15 years. If the county government was doing it, I might see it differently as they are not in it to make a profit off the residents. I attended some of the

hearings that you held during the last application process. I am grateful that you all made yourselves available to the residents, listened to, and heard our voice as reflected in your decision not to certify EU. Thank you. I am glad you were able to make it out to the island to see, and recognize the unique circumstance we have. I invite you to come out again to revisit, and refresh your memories of our unique situation.

Unfortunately, here we are again as greed rears its ugly head. Nothing has changed that should change your positions as stated during the vote as seen on the video of the last proceedings. I won't go over all of the reasons why this is a bad idea. I'm sure all of the information has already been presented to you during the last application. If not, it will be presented to you again. Instead, I will summarize some points important to me.

### **No Request for Service or Demonstrated Need**

There has been no request for service nor has a need been demonstrated. If there was a need, the County would not be issuing permits for new houses that include septic systems. Houses are continually being built and rebuilt before and after Hurricane Ian with septic systems.

We are in a Rural Service area mandated by the County to have septic systems. This is done to direct development away from the area. Installing sewer, will do the opposite. In order to direct development to places that are desirable for large populations, the Urban Service Area provides infrastructure and utilities to attract developers.

### **Unique Situation**

As you have seen and recognized, we have a unique situation on this bridgeless island. For most of us, the environment is our way of life here. Maintaining the Rural Service area designation without Public or Private sewer will help protect the environment.

### **Sewer - Not the most Environmentally friendly solution for our situation**

While I accept that septic systems are not the optimal solution to sewage, it's the best option for the island. Pumping sewage through submerged pipes in the intercostal waterway presents a huge risk, more so than a few leaky septic tanks (not that any have been identified that I'm aware of). A sewage spill in the Inland waterway and on our flats would be an environmental disaster that would have huge impacts on the residents, not to mention the local economy. Look how long it took the County to identify and repair the sewage leak in Port Charlotte not long ago. That would be environmentally devastating. One or two leaky septic tanks will be nothing compared to a sewage leak in the intercostal or, in our back waters. I am unaware of any testing that has been done that provides evidence of leaky septic tanks here resulting in contaminated water (increased nutrient load in water). Thus, I don't see how there is an environmental need for a sewer system unlike in other areas around Lake Okeechobee. During hurricane Idalia last year, we had a significant storm surge here on the island yet, no contaminated water was reported. While only anecdotal, there were no red tide outbreaks following that storm in our area. During a storm, unlike septic systems, there is a greater chance for sewage back up in the event of a power outage. Even with a generator, not everyone on the island will be operating one.

Construction of a sewage system on the island will be destructive to native fauna and floral including protected species. There will also be a significant increase in traffic during the construction thus the generation of more air and noise pollution to name a few. Getting on and off the island is already a challenge as result of tourist season and contractors. Construction is going to exacerbate the problem and cars, trucks, and machinery will be idling for over an hour as they wait for the barge. Then there is our delicate road system that will likely be heavily impacted by the construction. Add heavy rains and storms to the mix, there will likely be significant flooding displacing animals not to mention infrastructure and property damage as a result. As it stands now, our roadways on the island during and immediately after a heavy rain hold a lot of standing water and are messy and not the easiest to navigate.

Without a need, destroying and putting the environment at risk unnecessarily to make a buck, doesn't seem very environmentally minded.

### **Cost Prohibitive**

The hook up costs are high and were not anticipated in my retirement planning. It is not just the hook up cost to the sewer line but, all of the other hidden costs. A new electrical panel will need to be installed to accommodate the pump. There will be a need for tree removal and extensive landscaping costs. Then there are the costs associated with the decommissioning and removal of the septic system. Also, during a storm and power outage, a generator will be needed to run the sewage pump. During hurricane Ian, it was a

challenge to get gas for the generator just keep the fridge on. Please remember, running down the street to the local gas station isn't an option for us here, especially during or after a storm.

I will have to pay all of this even before the service bill is received. An estimated bill of around \$250 a month is crazy. Service and care of my septic system on an annual basis is nowhere near that. In addition to this, my electric bill will increase as a result of running the pump. And in the case of a power outage there is the cost of gas, assuming the sewer system will operate even with a generator. I have very low expectations that EU will know how to operate when there is an emergency. Nothing they have said or done boosts my confidence in their abilities.

### **Matter of Principle**

There is the issue of easement. I did not request the service and therefore, I do not want a private company that I would be forced to pay to have rights to my land that I paid for. This does not sit well with me at all. As a matter of principle, this is just wrong. Boca Utilities (water), Comcast, and FPL don't demand such an easement. This makes the feeling of being extorted even worse. Not only will they force me to pay to live here, they will have rights to part of my land. I know I'm over simplifying this however, its not a good feeling. I would be more understanding if it were the County government that is doing it, knowing they are not making a profit for me to live here. Aside from that, the county has experience in operating a sewage system.

Thank you for your consideration. I formally request that the PSC deny Environmental Utilities application for wastewater service.  
Sincerely,

George A. Ball

Email: [gab\\_three@yahoo.com](mailto:gab_three@yahoo.com)