

Charlie Smith

CORRESPONDENCE
3/27/2025
DOCUMENT NO. 02244-2025

From: Betty Leland
Sent: Thursday, March 27, 2025 3:09 PM
To: Commissioner Correspondence
Subject: Docket #20240032
Attachments: Docket #20240032-SU; Docket 20240032; Docket # 20240032 Environmental Utilities;
RE. Docket #20240032-SU

Good Afternoon:

Please place this email in Docket #20240032.

Thanks.

Betty A. Leland, Executive Assistant to
Commissioner Art Graham
Florida Public Service Commission
bleland@psc.state.fl.us
(850) 413-6024

Charlie Smith

From: C N <clarenavrtil@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, March 27, 2025 1:38 PM
To: Records Clerk; Office of Commissioner Clark; Office of Commissioner Passidomo Smith; Office of Commissioner Graham
Subject: Docket #20240032-SU

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Dear Commissioners:

As a homeowner on Don Pedro Island, I vehemently oppose the EU's application for a sewer system.

Here are my reasons:

Environmental. In many situations, a septic system can be more environmentally friendly than a sewer system. Also, keeping septic systems will keep the beaches pristine and clear of condos and other progressive builds that will come with sewers.

Cost: The cost is exorbitant. Many islanders have just invested enormous amounts of money to repair their homes and septs in the last two years due to the three hurricanes. Many islanders will not be able to afford the price tag of the sewer system. Add the cost of the sewer to the already high taxes, and many will be forced to sell and move away.

Many islanders came and spoke at the public hearings, so you are aware that there is high opposition to this proposed plan.

Please consider the position of the residents of Don Pedro and vote against this proposal.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Clare Navratil
7332 Palm Island Drive #4
Placida FL 33946
clarenavrtil@gmail.com

Charlie Smith

From: John Hetrick <hetrickj2@att.net>
Sent: Thursday, March 27, 2025 1:27 PM
To: Records Clerk; Office of Commissioner Clark; Office of Commissioner Passidomo Smith; Office of Commissioner Graham
Cc: Hetrick.Suzanne513@gmail.com
Subject: Docket 20240032

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Re: Docket #20240032

Dear Commissioners;

We have been homeowners of a condo located on Little Gasparilla Island since 1994. We were pleased that we were purchasing a property that included a DEP permitted septic plant.

In 2024, we were informed that an organization named Environmental Utilities was seeking a certificate to install sewers on Little Gasparilla. We were told initially that our condo complex was excluded from the scope of the application due to the condo complex having a permitted septic plant. The exclusion was made by the attorney representing Environmental Utilities (EU).

Later in 2024 rebuttals were made to the application for sewer installation on the island. The location of the waste water transmission line was moved from Don Pedro State Park to our condo property known as Hideaway Bay Beach Club(HBBC). Even more alarming was an additional rebuttal citing eminent domain to seize property owned by HBBC.

It is appalling that owners of property on Little Gasparilla Island were not notified of this major change to the application from EU. Our condo attorney, Nick Porter, wrote to PSC to note that proper notice was not given to home owners. He cited other concerns about the application as well.

We are requesting that the EU application to install sewers on Little Gasparilla Island be denied until all owners affected by this application have had an opportunity to provide input about the harm that would result from the new proposal for sewer installations.

Sincerely,

John Hetrick
Suzanne Hetrick
Condo F3, HBBC

Charlie Smith

From: Kari Harju <karanne.harju@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, March 27, 2025 1:12 PM
To: Office of Commissioner Clark; Office of Commissioner Passidomo Smith; Office of Commissioner Graham; Records Clerk
Subject: Docket # 20240032 Environmental Utilities

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Dear Commissioners,

My name is KarAnne and my husband Steve and I own a unit on LGI at 9400 Little Gasparilla Island Unit C1 at the Hideaway Bay Beach Club condos. (HBBC). We are writing this letter to strongly urge you to **deny** the application by Environmental Utilities for a certificate to install sewers on our island.

EU made the change to the location of the waste water transmission line from Don Pedro State Park to the HBBC property. Even though we were excluded from the scope of this application on May 13, 2024 (Doc # 03001-2024) by EU's attorney, this change directly affects all of us at HBBC.

The HBBC board was **not** notified of this substantial change to the application. This is a direct violation of one of the tenets by which the PSC should base their decision - proper notification of all involved parties. This change to the application without notification denies all the owners at HBBC of our due process to be able to fight this change.

The letter from the HBBC lawyer, Nick Porter dated February 28, 2025 (Doc #01210-2025) also states HBBC's position in this matter. It is extremely disappointing the PSC staff did not take into account this oversight in notification in their recommendation.

132 Families are being denied their due process because of the change made by EU without notification.

If EU plans to use the model as indicated in the 2017 CC SMP, the pump house for the sewer will be built on the HBBC Septic Plant drain field and also under our DEP approved barge landing, critical for our community. Building anything on our drain field will result in the community being shut down completely during the construction. It will also force us to hook up to the EU sewer despite being excluded from the scope of this project. How can this be done without any kind of notification? Again, 132 families are being denied our due process.

Because we were excluded from the scope of this application, there have been no estimates of the hook up costs for the condos. If this scenario plays out, HBBC would have to be the first to be forced to hook up to the sewer system. We wouldn't have any recourse to this questionable action by EU, we wouldn't have any indication of the costs associated with this action, we wouldn't be able to use our homes resulting in additional living expenses until the initial sewer construction was completed. We would have to assume the costs of decommissioning our septic plant estimated at \$500,000, which would be unreasonable for our 132 families to pay. Is this fair & reasonable especially since we are excluded from the scope of this application.

132 families that are directly affected have not been notified. 132 families currently using a DEP permitted septic plant do not need a sewer line brought to our property. 132 families have no idea what the financial burden will be if this transmission line is brought to our property.

We ask you to let us have our due process and please **deny** EU's application.

Respectfully,
Steve and KarAnne Harju
HBBC Unit C1

Charlie Smith

From: Matthew O'Brien <mrobrien@bu.edu>
Sent: Thursday, March 27, 2025 12:55 PM
To: Records Clerk
Cc: Office of Chairman La Rosa; Office of Commissioner Clark; Office of Commissioner Passidomo Smith; Office of Commissioner Graham; Office of Commissioner Fay
Subject: RE. Docket #20240032-SU

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Good Afternoon,

I am writing to express my COMPLETE OPPOSITION to the Environmental Utilities Sewer application currently under consideration. My wife, Lindsey, and I were fortunate enough to purchase a lot on Don Pedro Island at 301 Bocilla Dr in 2021 with the vision of living a life of freedom, independence, and enjoying the natural beauty of Florida. We were excited to embrace a lifestyle that includes great neighbors, a peaceful atmosphere, and independence. Prior to this, we purchased our first home together in 2016 at the age of 25 in Bradenton, FL. The house still has its original septic tank from the 1970s, which we have carefully maintained and serviced over the past nine years without incident. It remains in perfect working order.

In contrast, Manatee County has faced numerous issues with the release of sewage into the Manatee River from its wastewater plant, and we have witnessed the negative impact on the surrounding environment. Yet, our septic system has continued to function effectively, something both Manatee and Charlotte Counties cannot say about their wastewater management systems.

After carefully reviewing the details of the application, the hearings, and the information provided by EU, it is clear to me that this is an unnecessary and unjustified request for service. Additionally, it is evident that there is little to no public support for this application, with many local neighbors on the barrier islands, mainland Charlotte County residents, and others who are informed about the issue all opposing it. My specific concerns are as follows:

- **Private Utility Company:** I do not believe a private utility company, especially EU with no experience in this field, should be responsible for managing wastewater services. It would be like going to a grocery store and asking a checkout clerk for dental surgery—it simply doesn't make sense. I am also concerned about the potential for unpredictable and uncontrollable cost increases in monthly service fees.
- **Low-Pressure System:** I strongly oppose the use of a low-pressure system, which Charlotte County has already deemed problematic and has ceased installing in the county.
- **Understated Cost Estimates:** The cost estimates provided by EU for the sewage hookup seem grossly understated, raising concerns about their planning, budgeting, and project management capabilities. Based on costs in other areas of Florida, I believe the proposed price is simply not feasible.
- **Environmental Impact:** The application does not provide sufficient evidence of any negative impact on the surrounding waterways or natural habitats, despite the existence of working and functional septic tanks. In fact, after Hurricanes Ian, Helene, and Milton, I saw firsthand the minimal damage to septic systems on Little Gasparilla, Don Pedro, and Knight Island. Not a single septic system was completely destroyed, and they continued to function as designed the very next day. Unfortunately, the same cannot be said for Boca Grande's sewage facility or other surrounding facilities, which experienced failures due to power loss.

These are just a few of the reasons I am strongly opposed to this application and any future proposals like it. The public, as evidenced by the lack of support for this application, shares these concerns. I respectfully ask that you oppose this project as well.

I have great respect for the role that our County Commissioners and public servants play in shaping the future of our community, and I sincerely hope that you will respect the public's wishes and reject the Environmental Utilities sewer application.

Best regards,
Matthew O'Brien