

Charlie Smith

From: Charlie Smith on behalf of Records Clerk
Sent: Wednesday, April 17, 2024 1:08 PM
To: 'Jeffrey Bashore'
Cc: Consumer Contact
Subject: RE: Docket No: 20240032-SU

Good afternoon Jeff and Melissa Bashore,

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.

Best regards,

Charlie Smith II

Office of Commission Clerk
Florida Public Service Commission
2540 Shumard Oak Blvd.
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0850
850-413-6770

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From: Jeffrey Bashore <jeffreybashore@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, April 17, 2024 11:58 AM
To: Records Clerk <CLERK@PSC.STATE.FL.US>
Cc: Mel <melbashore@gmail.com>; 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 Graham <Commissioner.Graham@PSC.STATE.FL.US>; Office of Commissioner Fay <Commissioner.Fay@psc.state.fl.us>
Subject: Docket No: 20240032-SU

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Florida Public Service Commission
2540 Shumard Oak Blvd
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0850

Dear Public Service Commissioners,

Thank you for once again providing an opportunity for public input from residents who would be directly impacted by the proposed wastewater plan included in Docket #20240032-SU.

Mr. Boyer and Environment Utilities are back again with the same deeply flawed plan that was rightfully denied by the Commission just two years ago. Only two things have changed from my perspective.

1) Mr. Boyer made a point to obtain the formal support of Charlotte County, where he maintains cozy relationships. If there is a true need for a sewer system for barrier islands the county should take responsibility to install a proper high pressure system that does not leave solids on site at each home. Charlotte County does not want take on the financial or administrative burden for managing the installation. They appear to be all too happy for anyone else to step forward to do their job for them, even if that is done for profit on the back of the community or with an improper system for the stated purpose.

2) Our community has very recently been devastated by Hurricane Ian, a horrific category five storm in late 2022. Every resident continues to struggle with the aftermath in some manner to this day; the economic and emotional impact has been life altering for many homeowners. There couldn't be a worse time to lay a massive financial burden on the community, particularly where it would not achieve a proven environmental benefit.

We plead for your consideration in once again rightfully DENYING the application from Environmental Utilities. Our four primary points of objection are included below:

A) There is no proven need for the proposed sewer system

- There are no proven need for the installation of sewer. No studies have been conducted/published to demonstrate that water pollution is occurring as a result of residential septic systems.

B) Even if there was a proven need this is the WRONG system

- The proposed system is deeply flawed. It contains multiple points of failure and would be even more susceptible to failure during extreme weather than properly managed residential septic systems.

- The proposed low pressure system continues to hold solids on site. It does not solve for current challenges with pump outs on bridgeless barrier islands.

C) Environmental Utilities lacks the experience, capital or community trust to take on this endeavor

- The utility has zero experience with installing or maintaining a wastewater system.

- They currently struggle to maintain consistent, safe freshwater service without frequent outages, water contamination and poorly communicate boil water notices. In their ~20 years of operation they have failed to earn the public trust.

- Environmental utilities currently imposes some of the highest, if not the highest, water rates in the state. They recently increased rates again to the maximum amount possible without holding administrative hearings. It is estimated that they currently mark up the cost of water provided by over 100%.

D) There is no environmental benefit that justifies the crippling economic impact

- The initial installation and hook up estimates of \$13K per home (which are likely grossly underestimated) would be a financial death blow to residents who have recently endured recovering and rebuilding from one of the worst hurricanes in Florida's recent history.

- Many homeowners would be forced to sell. It would adversely impact the most financially vulnerable residents and reshape our community likely leading to more high intensity rentals and overdevelopment.

- The installation of the system would further exacerbate the destruction of delicate natural ecosystems in some of the final vestiges of wild Florida. In particular, the protected gopher tortoise population was highly impacted by the sudden coastal flooding caused by Hurricane Idalia in August, 2023.

In closing, I would reiterate that Environmental Utilities continues to fail to meet their obligation of demonstrating a need for the service, providing an appropriate proposed system that would actually solve for risks and challenges associated with residential septic systems and finally this is not an organization that has the experience, proper capital or community trust to get this right. We compel you to do the right thing once again and DENY this deeply flawed application from Environmental Utilities.

For your reference our prior correspondence to the Committee is included below. Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,
Jeff and Melissa Bashore
8738 Marsh Street, Little Gasparilla Island
8728 Grande Avenue, Little Gasparilla Island (preserved/undeveloped lots)

From: Jeffrey Bashore <jeffreybashore@gmail.com>
Date: March 15, 2022 at 9:01:40 PM CDT
To: Office of Commissioner Clark <Commissioner.Clark@psc.state.fl.us>, Records Clerk <CLERK@psc.state.fl.us>, Commissioner.LaRosa@psc.state.fl.us, Commissioner.Passidomo@psc.state.fl.us
Cc: Mel <melbashore@gmail.com>
Subject: Re: Docket #20200226-SU

Dear Public Service Commissioners,

Thank you all for providing an opportunity for island residents to share their input about this incredibly impactful proposed project that would have a profound impact on the environment and our homes. Commissioner Clark - I personally appreciate that you took the time to acknowledge our family's written response.

You have a difficult decision on your hands. We fully recognize the desire and public interest in connecting the barrier islands to an effective sewer system. We are strong advocates for clean water and leaving a thriving ecosystem behind for our children.

I plead with you to recognize that the current application is so deeply flawed that it will only cause significantly greater environmental damage while also financially devastating island residents and ripping up our unspoiled ecological dreamland.

The proposed low pressure sewer system will only greatly exacerbate the problems that exist today with private septic systems. With multiple points of failure in the system at every home we are merely one storm and an extended power outage away from seeing massive water pollution after millions of dollars of taxpayer dollars are completely wasted.

As any island resident will tell you, the elements on the barrier islands are severe. They take a rapid, hard toll on everything, particularly electrical components. The concept of leaving solid waste behind in tanks and depending on hundreds to thousands of properly operating electric pumps to siphon off liquid waste is so broken at it's core that it is hard imagine that a knowledgeable, rational person could even propose it as a viable solution.

The many deeply flawed elements of the proposed system design are terrible enough that they should never see the time of day in a hearing in front of you. That is before you begin to consider that the applicant, Mr. Boyer, has the exact same amount of experience as me and most other island residents when it comes to installing and

maintaining a large scale sewer system - absolutely zero. He not only lacks the experience but he also lacks the answers to critical questions about the planning, costs and logistics related to the massive infrastructure project.

The water utility that Mr. Boyer operates charges some of the highest rates in the state, has frequent outages, fails to properly distribute boil water notices and is considered unreliable by those in his service area. He lacks the experience and capital to make this project a success. It is a foregone conclusion that if he is granted the sewer permit that it will be a devastating outcome.

In closing, we personally appeal to you as a parents and environmental enthusiasts. Like our neighbors, we have a deep love for preserving some of our most pristine, unspoiled environmental treasures in Florida. We want to do our best to leave our barrier islands in better condition than we found them for future generations. The proposed project would permanently impact our islands and leave the future for our homes and neighbors in great uncertainty. That is a huge price to pay for a solution that would not have a chance of solving the stated problem even under the best of circumstances and outcomes.

Regards,
Jeff and Melissa Bashore
8738 Marsh Street
Placida, FL 33946

(484) 769-4870

On Mar 15, 2022, at 1:47 PM, Office of Commissioner Clark
<Commissioner.Clark@psc.state.fl.us> wrote:

Dear Mr. and Ms. Bashore,

Thank you for contacting me regarding the Application for certificate to provide wastewater service in Charlotte County, by Environmental Utilities, LLC- Docket No. 20200226. I know how concerning it can be when presented with a possible change regarding utilities.

I have had the opportunity to hear from many of you over the past few months, both in person at our service hearings, and through the countless emails I have received. I want to stress how valuable the customer perspective is to me. Tomorrow the parties in this case will be filing briefs, laying out their arguments, and we are scheduled to make a decision the morning of Tuesday, May 3rd at our monthly Agenda Conference. If you would like to watch the Agenda Conference you may go to FloridaPSC.com, where it will be live streamed.

Thank you, again, for contacting me. I appreciate the opportunity to hear your concerns.

Sincerely,

Gary F. Clark
Commissioner
Florida Public Service Commission
2540 Shumard Oak Blvd.
Tallahassee, FL 32399
(850) 413-6038

-----Original Message-----

From: Jeff Bashore <jeffreybashore@gmail.com>

Sent: Monday, January 24, 2022 3:11 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>

Cc: Mel <melbashore@gmail.com>

Subject: Docket #20200226-SU

Jeffrey & Melissa Bashore
8738 Marsh Street
Placida, FL 33946
Jeffreybashore@gmail.com

January 21, 2022

Florida Public Service Commission
2540 Shumard Oak Blvd
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0850

Re: Docket #20200226-SU

Commissioners of the Public Service Commission:

I am a property owner at 8738 Marsh Street on Little Gasparilla Island, which is a property within the service area of the proposed central sewer system, Docket #20200226-SU.

I formally object and request that PSC deny Environment Utilities (EU) application for Original Certificate of Authorization for this proposed central sewer system.

While I feel strongly that the barrier islands and low lying inland areas of the state should be swiftly migrated to a sewer system to protect our fragile ecosystem, I am concerned that the current proposal is deeply flawed.

Turning a project of this magnitude over to an LLC that has zero experience with installing or operating a sewer system is unacceptable. Environment Utilities lacks both the experience as well as the capital to take responsibility for the proposed massive undertaking that will impact some of the most delicate, unspoiled areas of the SW Florida coast. The proposed solution leaves many critical questions unanswered about right-of-way access and how the many points of failure involved with a 'low pressure' sewer system would be effectively managed in the harsh climate presented on the barrier islands.

Charlotte County should be held responsible to implement and manage the project directly. It is clear that they are trying to find any bidder to insulate them from the obligations of managing this important work. Turning this over to an inexperienced, under-capitalized, for-profit LLC with the county maintaining no accountability for the outcome is not the right move for the environment, property owners in the affected areas or the citizens and visitors of Florida at large.

Regards,
Jeff and Melissa Bashore

Regards,
Jeff

(484) 769-4870
Sent from my iPhone