

Yvette Gillespie

From: Yvette Gillespie on behalf of Records Clerk
Sent: Thursday, April 18, 2024 3:55 PM
To: 'Alex Freeze'
Cc: Consumer Contact
Subject: RE: Docket #20240032-SU

Good afternoon Alex (Morrison) Freeze,

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: Alex Freeze <alexfreezephoto@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, April 17, 2024 8:56 PM
To: Records Clerk <CLERK@PSC.STATE.FL.US>
Cc: Office of Commissioner Clark <Commissioner.Clark@psc.state.fl.us>; Office of Commissioner Fay <Commissioner.Fay@psc.state.fl.us>; Office of Commissioner Graham <Commissioner.Graham@PSC.STATE.FL.US>; Office of Chairman La Rosa <Commissioner.LaRosa@psc.state.fl.us>; Office of Commissioner Passidomo <Commissioner.Passidomo@psc.state.fl.us>
Subject: Docket #20240032-SU

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Hello Florida representatives,

I am writing as a concerned homeowner (9862 Little Gasparilla Island, Placida, Florida 33946) on Little Gasparilla Island. My grandparents, father, and uncles built our house on the island in the 1970s and it has been the heart of our family for generations.

Homeowners on the island by a vast majority do not want to hook up to mainland sewer utility for a myriad of valid reason. I will share the primary ones below.

Please take into consideration specifically the proposed impacts to local habitats, endangered wildlife like the gopher tortoise, and the astronomical, non-negotiable cost to homeowners.

The following are a list of opposition points:

Need for Service. There has been no evidence provided that supports a need for service in the proposed service area. Expert witnesses at the last Administrative Hearing refuted the arguments that EU put forward supporting the need for service. And the Final Order released by the PSC stated: "noting the level of opposition to EU's proposal by its prospective customers, we find that customers are highly unlikely to voluntarily connect to EU's system." It's up to us to provide this opposition.

Environmental. No water quality testing has been done in our area to prove a need for sewer. This project brings the potential for destruction of habitat and interference with endangered species such as the gopher tortoise.

Providing utilities is the way local government promotes high-density development. The Charlotte County Comprehensive Plan categorizes land into two groups: the Urban Service Area and the Rural Service Area. In order to direct development to places that are desirable for large populations, the Urban Service Area provides infrastructure and utilities to attract developers. In the same way, if government wishes to direct development away from an area, it puts it into the Rural Service Area. Our barrier islands are in the Rural Service Area. The Comp Plan mandates on-site septic systems for the Rural Service Area. Now they are insisting that the Comp Plan prohibits the County from installing central sewer, but not a privately owned utility.

We would be forced to give up our private property rights for free. According to County regulations, hook-up to central sewer is mandatory within one year of the utility being installed and available to their property. EU's application for certification of the service area includes a copy of the contract that homeowners would have to sign. Here's a segment:

Remember, this is not just a utility easement on your side boundary. With a low-pressure sewer system, the tank and equipment will be located close to your home. You will be forced to give up easement rights across your property without compensation.

Traffic Congestion. The combination of post-storm rebuilds, new home construction, and tourist traffic during season has made wait lines at the ferry both unpredictable and outrageous. Now, consider the heavy equipment and materials transport needed to construct an island-wide central sewer system. And how long it will take to build.

The Costs. The costs of central sewer are quite considerable at a very bad time for Islanders. Many are still engaged with fighting their insurance companies for settlements from Hurricane Ian and have had to lay out large sums for their re-builds while they wait for compensation. Some owners have just paid deep-pocket sums to install new septic systems at their newly built or re-built homes. Many property owners simply do not have the resources available to convert from septic to sewer. Here is an outline of what we anticipate:

BASIC COSTS

EU's application shows it would cost \$12,000.00 for the initial hook up plus \$1097 for the sewer lateral installation fee (the charge to run the pipe from the road to the location of the equipment near your home). There is also an initial deposit required of \$414, which is identified as 2x the estimated monthly bill. PIE believes that this figure does not include additional expenses that the homeowner may be obliged to pay (see below).

MONTHLY COSTS

EU estimates average household usage at 2,500 gallons/month. Based on this, the monthly billing would be \$207.00/month. However, the PSC estimates average household usage at 4,000 gallons/month. Using this figure the monthly billing would be \$263.57/month for wastewater service alone. This is exclusive of your water bill.

RELATED COSTS

These are some items that might be an additional expense for individual homeowners (listed here but not limited to):

\$\$ Cost of pump-out and maintenance of new system tank

\$\$ Cost of ALL permitting ie, removal, installation, rehoming wildlife etc.

\$\$ Cost of electric installation for system

\$\$ Cost of additional electric service if needed (potential of new or added panel)

\$\$ Cost of replacing anything more than the “basic landscaping” that the hook-up agreement states will be replaced.

\$\$ In the event of another bad storm or lengthy power out, you may need to have a generator to prevent sewage backup on your property.

Thank you for your time and listening to your constituents.

All the best,

Alex (Morrison) Freeze