

Antonia Hover

From: Antonia Hover on behalf of Records Clerk
Sent: Monday, April 22, 2024 8:44 AM
To: 'Laurie Barclay'
Cc: Consumer Contact
Subject: RE: RE. Docket #20240032-SU

Good Morning, Laurie Barclay.

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.

Thank you!

Toni Hover

*Commission Deputy Clerk I
Florida Public Service Commission
2540 Shumard Oak Boulevard
Tallahassee, FL 32399
Phone: (850) 413-6467*

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From: Laurie Barclay <it000016@hotmail.com>
Sent: Saturday, April 20, 2024 2:56 PM
To: Records Clerk <CLERK@PSC.STATE.FL.US>
Cc: 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: RE. Docket #20240032-SU

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From Laurie Barclay, MD, property owner on Don Pedro Island (Colony Don Pedro unit #8; 50 S Gulf Blvd.)

I hereby formally request that the PSC deny EU's application for wastewater service, based on the arguments in opposition to the proposed central sewer as listed below.

As a property owner on Don Pedro Island for more than 30 years, I firmly believe that it is a unique treasure, reflecting unspoiled Florida at its finest. It is a pristine environment and beautiful, idyllic location bringing much needed peace and restoration to our hectic, troubled world.

In these 30 years, I have never had issues with my current septic system, nor has any water quality testing indicated a need for sewer. I have the current septic system maintained regularly. I did not request a sewer system, nor have any of my neighbors, to my knowledge.

The proposed central sewer would be extremely disruptive to our environment and way of life. The noise and disturbance of sand and soil by installing the proposed system would be devastating to wildlife, human residents and visitors, and the natural beauty of our beloved island. Installing and maintaining a sewer system may destroy the natural habitat and interfere with the gopher tortoise and other endangered native species.

Sewage spill in the Intracoastal could be devastating to fish and sea turtles, as well as to human life by encouraging red tide and potential infection from contact with coliform bacteria in the water: The risk of a central sewer leak with a subaqueous crossing exceeds the risk of one or more septic systems developing leaks.

I am also extremely concerned regarding the proposed high costs of wastewater service. I rent out my property when possible and enjoy it myself the rest of the time. As a retired senior, the costs of island living are substantial already, and the proposed system would inflict an unnecessary financial burden of upfront and ongoing costs.

The extent of this burden is uncertain, with estimated connection fees ranging from \$13K to \$20K; the requirement of installing an electrical panel at my expense; the need to buy and maintain a generator to avoid sewage back-up during power outages; removal of trees, landscaping and hardscaping around the septic area at my expense; and monthly fees in the range of \$200, or approximately twice the amount paid on the nearby mainland for water and wastewater combined, and far exceeding my current sewage-related expenses.

As the grinder pump has a limited capacity of 60 gallons, and will be unable to function for long if there is a power outage, each property would need a generator to keep the system running and avoid sewage back-up. Again, more unnecessary expense, inconvenience, noise, storage, and potential fire and environmental hazard of storing gas.

To gain access to crush and fill the septic tank, landscaping, trees and structures around the septic area would have to be cleared at my expense, which would disrupt the environment and wildlife, disfigure my property, and take away useable outdoor recreational and parking space.

In any event, these are additional expenses I cannot afford, at no benefit whatsoever to me, my renters, or my neighbors. In fact, the only beneficiary of the proposed sewer system is EU itself. Even worse, there is no pay-over-time plan, so that a loan (and associated interest and negative impact on credit rating) could be needed to cover connection cost.

The pandemic and Hurricane Ian have created enough economic and other disruption to our way of life, and imposing the expenses of a sewer system could put me over the edge of having to give up island living that I so dearly love. We are already at risk with an anticipated more active than usual hurricane season, and likely failure of the sewer system during a storm imposes unnecessary additional economic and other hardship.

No renters want to have their time away spoiled by sewer system installation, with the associated noise, inconvenience, and increased local and barge traffic, nor do I. Increased traffic, and delays waiting to get on the barge to access or leave the island could continue for years and would further detract from the joys and peace of island living. The proposed system would therefore negatively impact Florida tourism and hospitality industries on the island and nearby mainland.

In addition, I view the EU's proposal for a sewer system as offensive, as it is an infringement of my personal rights and my rights as a property owner. The septic system in current use works perfectly well, and I cannot understand why I should be forced to change it, as said change would be harmful to me for reasons expressed herein.

Unfortunately, however, should the sewer system proposal be approved, connection would be mandatory. Charlotte County regulations require all homes to connect to central water and wastewater within 1 year of availability, with no grandfathering of septic systems, regardless of age or condition.

As EU has claimed ownership of a utility easement going from the sewer equipment near the house to the connection in the road, without compensation to homeowners, their proposed system would lower property values at no benefit to us.

The proposed sewer system has no accountability, as EU is not a contractor that has won a bid to install the sewer, and there is no "contract," no single point of general oversight, no performance bond required, and no single point of recourse for homeowners should there be cost overruns or project failure. EU is a private, for-profit company with no experience in wastewater utility management.

Furthermore, EU has not addressed how the sewer would be serviced if it fails during storms, which are frequent on tropical islands. Another concern of island living is the corrosive effect of salt air on mechanical and electrical equipment, resulting in the need for frequent replacement of sewer components, again at the expense of the homeowner.

Based on the arguments above, I hereby formally request that the PSC deny EU's application for wastewater service. These arguments include, but are not limited to, negative impacts on the environment, island living, Florida tourism and hospitality industries, property rights, and homeowner expenses. Please do not destroy our beautiful island and the oasis of tranquility it provides.

Sincerely,

Laurie Barclay, MD

lt000016@hotmail.com