

Charlie Smith

From: Charlie Smith on behalf of Records Clerk
Sent: Tuesday, April 23, 2024 2:33 PM
To: 'jim luscombe'
Cc: Consumer Contact
Subject: RE: Docket #20240032-SU

Good afternoon Jim Luscombe and Kris Doubles,

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: jim luscombe <jbluscombe@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, April 23, 2024 12:04 PM
To: Records Clerk <CLERK@PSC.STATE.FL.US>
Cc: Office of Commissioner Fay <Commissioner.Fay@psc.state.fl.us>; Office of Chairman La Rosa <Commissioner.LaRosa@psc.state.fl.us>; Office of Commissioner Graham <Commissioner.Graham@PSC.STATE.FL.US>; Office of Commissioner Clark <Commissioner.Clark@psc.state.fl.us>; Office of Commissioner Passidomo <Commissioner.Passidomo@psc.state.fl.us>
Subject: Docket #20240032-SU

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Dear Commissioners

My name is Jim Luscombe and I own and reside full time at 420 Bocilla Drive on Don Pedro Island with Kris Doubles. Our family home was built in the late 70's and we have been full time residents for 8 years We live within the service district for the central sewer system being proposed by Environmental Utilities (EU). I request that you DENY EU's Application for Original Certificate or Authorization for the following reasons.

1: **Need:** For over a decade, our home owners association have been testing the waters surrounding our island. Hundreds of tests later, we have never been able to find any contaminated waters. E coli counts obtained over the past decade would indicate we do not have a problem. Spending 10's of millions of dollars to correct our water quality with a sewer system seems almost ridiculous. Charlotte county, Lee county and Sarasota county

have all been in the news over the past year (as recently as last week) BECAUSE OF SEWAGE SYSTEM FAILURES. Pumps fail, lift stations fail. Various reports ranging from 10,000 gallons to will over 100,000 gallons of raw sewage going into our waterways because of the same system being proposed.

If the County truly believed the logic of the applicants need assessment, the county would not be granting new permits on our islands for septic systems. This is not the case.

Had the proposed system been in place post Hurricane Ian, this island would have been literally be swimming in SH+T. With no power, the proposed system fills and overflows. Septic tanks work 24/7.

The only way you can justify moving ahead with this project based on NEED is for financial gain. Need has NOT been established. Studies have not been completed and the engineering lacking.

NEED.....NOT GREED

2: Technical Expertise: I know and respect the applicant HOWEVER, he has no experience in wastewater management and has never completed a project of this magnitude. I spoke with him last year and he made it clear that he feels strongly that the best option for all involved is for the COUNTY to take it over. Another island resident had a meeting with the applicant and at that meeting the applicant advised that he had no intention of actually doing the project. There can be NO justification for moving ahead with this project based on Technical Expertise.

3: Fair and Equitable Rates & Charges: We the residents, have yet to be informed of the total actual costs. Hookup fees have been quoted from 10K to 20K. Unfortunately, this is just the tip of the iceberg. Our existing septic's have to be decommissioned. Many homes will require an electric upgrade to power the pumps: No estimate

Our lots will be torn up from the street to the house to lay the line and tankage. Cost of replacing landscaping: No estimate.

What will each resident be paid for the easement needed for them to do this: No estimate.

The best one is the ongoing cost. We will now have to pay an estimated \$200 plus monthly for wastewater. The average in the state of Florida is currently is published at \$61.24 for water and wastewater, excluding utility taxes.

With an average water bill of \$120 and an additional \$250 for wastewater for 4000 gallons, this easily makes our utility costs on Palm Island at **SIX TIMES THE STATE AVERAGE!** The applicant has stated that he will apply for the maximum increase allowed each year. The only way you can justify moving ahead with this project based on Fair an Equitable Rates & Charges is for financial gain. Period.

There can be NO justification for moving ahead with this project based on Fair and Equitable Rates and Charges.

Another area of HUGE CONCERN , is the damage to our fragile environment. We are home to a challenged gopher tortoise population. Has a study been done to determine the risk to this protected population?

Collateral Damage: Our island has a thriving vacation rental market. Tearing up our landscape for a few years will ultimately cost businesses and owners millions of dollars in lost revenue. After a pandemic and Hurricane Ian, this is the last thing we need as a community.

After all is said and done under the proposed program, our waste will be transported to Rotonda where it is treated. The gray water containing high levels of nutrients and Nitrogen will then be diverted to "Fertilizer

Water” used by local golf courses, to ultimately end up in the water table and back into our rivers and coastal waters. This solves nothing.

Sarasota has recently indicated that they should STOP hooking up septic systems to sewers UNTIL that have advanced waste water treatment systems in place. Advanced systems are designed to eliminate the nutrient waters that get recycled. This is a much more logical place for the County to start. Make Rotonda and advanced waste water treatment plant.

The process we are going through seems and feels totally wrong. There is no engineering study, there is no need and there are no precise costs to the owners being presented.

As a non-engineer but a concerned resident, this feels like a total sham and does not at any level pass the smell test.

Please make the right decision that is not based on a high profit permit to one individual, but on the best long term solution to our island that meets our needs now and in the future, has minimum environmental impact and is affordable to all.

Regards

Jim Luscombe and Kris Doubles

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jim", with a horizontal line above and below the name.

Jim Luscombe

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www.palmislandstays.com