

Antonia Hover

From: Betty Leland
Sent: Tuesday, April 23, 2024 4:24 PM
To: Commissioner Correspondence
Subject: Docket #20240032
Attachments: RE. Docket #20240032-SU; Centralized Waste-Water Charlotte County FL; Docket #20240032-SU; Docket #20240032-SU - Application for certificate to provide wastewater service in Charlotte County by Environmental Utilities, LLC.; Docket #20240032-SU ; 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

Antonia Hover

From: Josh Jaquish <joshjaquish@yahoo.com>
Sent: Tuesday, April 23, 2024 3:45 PM
To: Records Clerk
Cc: Office of Chairman La Rosa; Office of Commissioner Clark; Office of Commissioner Passidomo; Office of Commissioner Graham; Office of Commissioner Fay; Josh Jaquish
Subject: RE. Docket #20240032-SU

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To Commissioner Larosa, Commissioner Clark, Commissioner Passidomo, Commissioner Graham, Commissioner Fay and Clerk of the Commission:

My name is Josh Jaquish and I own 9378 Little Gasparilla Island, which is within the proposed sewer service area for Little Gasparilla Island. **I am formally objecting to the sewer proposal and request that the PSC deny the Application for Original Certificate of Authorization for Environmental Utilities, LLC (EU) for a central sewer system for Little Gasparilla Island.**

There is little doubt in my mind that proceeding with this particular party EU for providing private central sewer is the wrong move for Little Gasparilla Island. EU does not have the technical expertise to properly construct, operate and maintain a sewer system. Allowing EU to move forward with a central sewer system will result in situations that will be more damaging to the environment. While a central sewer system has its merits for improving the environment in the future, selecting the appropriate party and technology is essential for success of the project. From the information presented, EU is proposing a low pressure sewer system, that will only remove the clear water from the tank and leave the solids behind, similar to a septic tank. There are very few letters of support compared to the long list of homeowners that do NOT support this project. The support letters provided from Little Gasparilla Island residents mention times of flooding with sewage on the island. The currently proposed sewer system will cost millions of dollars to construct and will not change the situation in times of flooding having solids from inground sewage tanks overflowing on the island. Many current septic to sewer conversions are installed across the State of Florida using small grinder pump stations at the home to transport the solids and water from the home to the treatment facility. A sewage grinder pump station would provide more effective design and provide better environmental benefits to have a central sewer system that removed all of the wastewater to be treated.

We are currently customers of Little Gasparilla Water Utility, which is owned and operated by the same parties that are applying as Environmental Utilities, LLC. The owners have minimal experience operating a water system and no experience operating a wastewater system. The water system on Little Gasparilla Island is constructed poorly and not operated responsibly by these parties. The owners of the water system do not respect owners property rights and place water lines wherever they want without proper communication with the homeowner nor obtaining proper easements for their water lines. While the project to bring sewer services to the island has merit, Environmental Utilities is not the appropriate party to complete a project of this nature. Part of EU's proposal for the central sewer system is "claiming ownership" of a utility easement on private property without compensating the homeowner. Charlotte County should continue to seek other experienced parties to provide sewer service to Little Gasparilla Island or pursue funding to extend County sewer service to our residents. Septic to Sewer conversion projects are being successfully completed across the State of Florida. Converting these barrier islands to a central sewer system would be a strong potential project for Charlotte County to propose for infrastructure grants and funding. Millions of dollars are going to be available for these types of projects in the coming years, which would reduce the financial burden for connection charges for the residents of Little Gasparilla Island.

The costs of owning a home on Little Gasparilla Island have increased dramatically over the last 4 years since EUs first petition to provide sewer. With the devastation from Ian, many homeowners have significant repairs or complete rebuilds

of their homes. Construction prices have tripled in the last 2 years to get any work done on our home, no matter how small or big the project is. We continue to experience rising costs in every aspect of home ownership on Little Gasparilla Island. The insurance and property taxes alone have increased dramatically. This is NOT the time for an additional expense for the homeowners of Little Gasparilla Island, especially when the proposed project will not offer environmental benefits as currently proposed.

The proposed connection charges for the sewer system are listed from \$11,000 to \$20,000 and it does not appear the pricing provided for connection has changed since the 2020 petition to provide sewer service. Today a typical septic to sewer project is costing utilities between \$30,000 to \$40,000 per property to provide sewer service. It does not appear he has updated the construction costs for this project nor reflected that in his connection charges submitted. Many utilities performing septic-to-sewer conversions are doing so with grant funding and SRF loans to lessen the burden on the homeowner. Because EU is a private utility, they are not able to access any of the infrastructure funding being provided in the state of Florida. This area is currently designated in the Charlotte County Utility District and should stay that way to allow for funding dollars to assist with installation of a central sewer system.

On top of the significant connection charges, the proposed monthly sewer charges are VERY high compared to other utility rates. For the residents of Little Gasparilla Island, we already pay high monthly rates for the water system to the same entity. I currently pay \$83 per month as the base meter facility charge then the water usage is added on top of that fee. Adding the proposed monthly sewer charges would bring the monthly water and sewer charges to over \$250 a month which is a much higher than the monthly charge for water and sewer compared to other local utilities.

Mr. Boyer, the owner of Environmental Utilities, has been very vocal as a resident on Little Gasparilla Island that he has no intentions of completing this project, nor does he care about improving the environment on our island, he is solely making the petition to be granted the sewer service rights then sell them for his own financial gain. He has told other island residents that he is "locking in his retirement" expecting to make millions and retire. I personally want someone who cares about the future of our island to be involved in such an important public health and safety project for Charlotte County and Little Gasparilla Island. The residents and property owners in Charlotte County deserve fair and equitable rates and monthly charges for sewer service, not to be a private individual's retirement plan.

In conclusion, due to the lack of technical expertise of the applicant, lack of respect for homeowner property rights of the applicant, and inability to provide fair and equitable rates, I formally request that Environmental Utilities, LLC Application to provide sewer service to Little Gasparilla Island be denied.

Sincerely,

Josh Jaquish

Antonia Hover

From: Linda Soderquist <linist@hotmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, April 23, 2024 3:39 PM
To: Office of Commissioner Fay; Office of Commissioner Graham; Office of Chairman La Rosa; Office of Commissioner Clark; Office of Commissioner Passidomo; governorrn.desantis@eog.myflorida.com; ltgovernorjeanette.nunez@eog.myflorida.com
Subject: Centralized Waste-Water Charlotte County FL

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April 22, 2024

I am writing to comment on the proposed centralized waste-water treatment for the barrier islands in Charlotte County Florida.

I am not currently a homeowner, but did live full time on Little Gasparilla Island from 1992 until 2020. During most of that time I was a sea turtle primary permit holder (Imperiled species sea turtle permit TP-132 with FWC) During that time my permit included data collection, training and supervising volunteers, collecting data on sea turtle strandings, and leading educational opportunities. I was on the beach every single day from May 1st through October 31st starting in 1997 until 2019.

During my beach time as the permit holder, I was able to observe extreme tide changes and the beach during and after storms. Many times, I observed septic tanks compromised by the wind and tide, pouring raw effluent onto the sandy beach. The beachfront properties on Little Gasparilla are literally in the sea turtle nesting zone and most every septic tank has been affected to some extent multiple times. These properties have no recourse but to cover the exposed tanks and drain fields with beach sand (usually before the county could even come out to inspect the breach) and wait for the next high-water event. They have no place on their lot to relocate septic tanks. For this reason, centralized waste-water is a must for the barrier islands. Water quality is at stake.

I lived on the bay side of Little Gasparilla Island. In walking down the path to the beach every morning, I observed many similar situations with failing septic tanks and drain fields on the interior of the island. Some older properties do not even have drain fields, but merely a cesspool covered with plywood and sand. The flood tides and storm surges certainly negatively impact these properties over and over again. That polluted water drains off right back into the bay and gulf.

I am an environmentalist. I know water quality has been compromised by continuing to allow aging septic tanks on barrier islands, creekfront properties, and bayfront properties. I have been a member of the CHVWQMN (Charlotte Harbor Volunteer Water Quality Monitoring Network associated with FDEP)) for over 20 years and have seen the data that supports declining water quality in many of the estuaries and creek areas. Much of this decline has to be a result of aging septic tanks on the barrier islands as well as nearby mainland waterfront and creekfront properties.

I believe there is a need NOW for centralized waste-water. The barrier islands are a place to start, but other areas need to be addressed as well. We cannot wait. I have many friends still on the island and have heard their comments. Many more are now in favor of centralized waste-water treatment. They have concerns and questions about the cost and feel they need assurances for the reliability of the systems proposed. Once these concerns are addressed, they will support a centralized waste-water system because they, too, see it as necessary to protect the beaches and island life they love.

Linda Soderquist

Watercolor Artist
Florida Master Naturalist

Linda's Island Art LLC
www.Lindaislandart.com

P.O.Box 958
Englewood FL 34295

(941) 270 7994

Antonia Hover

From: Jennifer McCullough <rummysway@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, April 23, 2024 3:38 PM
To: Records Clerk; Office of Chairman La Rosa; Office of Commissioner Clark; Office of Commissioner Passidomo; Office of Commissioner Fay; Office of Commissioner Graham
Cc: mfriedman@deanmead.com
Subject: Docket #20240032-SU

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Hello,

I am a property owner on Little Gasparilla Island and I live here full time in order to care for my 95 year old parents. My husband, Orgain, lives in Colorado but visits often.

I'm writing to you today to formally request that the PSC deny Environmental Utilities' application for wastewater service.

I have the following concerns:

1. I am an extremely environmentally conscientious person and realize that sewer hookup is absolutely the best thing that could happen for the island environment. I do have a concern about putting EU in charge of the effort. The system that would need to be put in place would have to be absolutely perfect or there could be a catastrophe on our hands. I would be more onboard if county or state true professionals were in charge.
2. Mr. Boyer currently charges island residents one of the highest rates in the state for use of the water system he forced us all to hook up to. I have a very real and deep concern as to what my personal cost will be if forced to convert from septic to a sewer system managed by Mr. Boyer. I live on a very limited budget and my full time job is taking care of my 95 year old parents who first arrived on the island in 1968 and who still live here (Charles NeSmith - 8078 Grand Ave.). I would not only be responsible for replacing my septic system but my parents as well. That means double the initial and ongoing costs which is quite considerable.
3. Another major concern I have is if/when power on the island goes out for an extended period of time. This could be an absolute disaster for the environment! This reason alone should be enough to warrant waiting until a truly perfect solution can be put into place.
4. There is lush and beautiful landscaping all around my septic field and the thought of the destruction entailed if this effort gets approved is very upsetting.
5. I understand there is not a 'pay-over-time' option which would mean taking out loans that I cannot afford in order to pay for the new system(s).
6. The fact that there is no grandfathering of septic systems that are working perfectly and have been working perfectly is another concern.
7. The fact that there would be no one overseeing the project is yet another major concern. What options would we have in the event of significant issues arising?

8. What happens if we become completely reliant on this system and a tornado or other catastrophic event causes the system to be destroyed or incapacitated in an extended way?
9. I also have a real fear of running massive amounts of sewage across the bay. What if there is a leak or rupture? I can't even imagine how horrible the impact would be.
10. I'm also very concerned that if LGI has a sewer system, then the next step will be for large development efforts to get underway. LGI is an extremely special and fragile environment and must be protected.
11. Loss of habitat is already running rampant on the mainland. I'm asking you to please, from the most sincerest aspect of my soul, keep the island protected. Send an army out, if you want, to ensure that all of the septic systems are working perfectly but please do not let this wastewater goal of EU gain traction.

Sincerely,
Jennifer & Orgain McCullough

8046 Grand Ave.
Dock # 3
Little Gasparilla Island
Placida, FL 33946

303-809-0493
RummysWay@gmail.com

Antonia Hover

From: Naval Architect <naval_architect@hotmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, April 23, 2024 1:58 PM
To: Records Clerk; Office of Chairman La Rosa; Office of Commissioner Clark; Office of Commissioner Passidomo; Office of Commissioner Fay; Office of Commissioner Graham
Subject: Docket #20240032-SU - Application for certificate to provide wastewater service in Charlotte County by Environmental Utilities, LLC.
Attachments: Comer-Franklin Letter Docket #20240032.pdf

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Commissioners – Please find our input regarding the subject matter attached. Best Regards

Joe Comer
251-709-0799

Joseph H Comer III
Marsha L Franklin
8934 Gulf St.
Placida, FL 33946
(Mailing address PO Box 422, 33946)

23 April 2024

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

Via email - Clerk@psc.state.fl.us, Commissioner.LaRosa@psc.state.fl.us,
Commissioner.Clark@psc.state.fl.us, Commissioner.Passidomo@psc.state.fl.us,
Commissioner.Fay@psc.state.fl.us, Commissioner.Graham@psc.state.fl.us

Subject: **Docket #20240032-SU** - Application for certificate to provide wastewater service
in Charlotte County by Environmental Utilities, LLC.

Dear Commissioner.LaRosa, Commissioner.Clark, Commissioner.Passidomo,
Commissioner.Fay and Commissioner.Graham:

We are new owners to Little Gasparilla Island this year and have recently heard of the subject
proposal that seems un-necessary and a system not widely used or proven. Please consider
the following:

Environmental

There has been no study in our area that proves the need for a new system. A low pressure
system, not being a central system that handles both liquid and solids would be a major
destruction to the habitat and the endangered residence of the gopher tortoise.

What would be the impact of the removal of all the drain field mounds? There will be significant
damage to public and private landscape and hardscape in the removal of old systems and the
installation of the proposed new LPS system.

Sewer Spill

Our current septic system permitted #SW 85-264E on 7/17/1985 was inspected before we
purchased the house this year and found to be in very good operating condition only needing a
'pump out' for which was immediately scheduled. To this day, this has not been accomplished
because of the limited capacity of the 'honey wagon'. As we understand the proposed LPS
system, this problem of timely pump-out capability would still exist. The cost and the delay for
every day maintenance would not improve.

Walking the island, there is no noticeable sewage odor, not like when passing some public
systems ashore. Even with heavy rains there are no spills which regularly occur at public
systems.

Power outages are experienced often on Little Gasparilla Island especially during storms and
hurricanes which occurred for a long period of time during Hurricane Ian. This will require
homeowners to install emergency generators or incur the hardship and cost of living off island
until the situation is resolved.

Mandatory Hook-up

Current Charlotte County regulations require homes to connect to central water and wastewater within one (1) year of availability and would assume this would apply to the proposed LPS system for which there would be enormous homeowner costs for installation. Most properties only have room for their current septic system, so the old system would have to be removed and the proposed system installed leaving the homeowner without service for some long period of time. If the existing tank were to be used, few properties would meet the ten (10) foot radius around the manhole.

Easements

Normal utility easements occur in public roadways, however on Little Gasparilla Island many roadways are private pathways, sand and one lane wide. Many homes do not front on these pathways and often septic systems are at the rear of the property so the LPS will have to cross private property with no regard for homeowner rights. There will be a cost to litigate these easements.

Transportation

Little Gasparilla Island is only accessible by boat. And we like it that way! However, a major construction project like this would take years to complete. Using Hurricane Ian two (2) years ago as an example, re-construction is still underway with some project completions not in sight. Construction equipment, material, labor would all have to come over by boat/barge. Not something most would look forward to after recent experiences.

It appears a new sewer system of any kind is not needed on Little Gasparilla Island. The subject proposed LPS system would have an associated exorbitant cost to homeowners as well as the operator and would translate into a huge monthly homeowner utility costs. There is no apparent benefit to the subject proposed LPS system or any 'new' system.

We request that you vote to reject the subject application and do the same on any future similar ideas.

Sincerely



Joseph H Comer III
Marsha L Franklin

Antonia Hover

From: Lynn Provost <lynn@thedockdoctors.com>
Sent: Tuesday, April 23, 2024 1:53 PM
To: Records Clerk; Office of Chairman La Rosa; Office of Commissioner Clark; Office of Commissioner Passidomo; Office of Commissioner Fay; Office of Commissioner Graham
Subject: Docket #20240032-SU

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Property Owner on Don Pedro Island, 121 Bocilla Dr.

Jeffrey & Lynn Provost

Mailing: 8725 Placida Rd. Suite 7-510

Placida FL 33946

941-662-8701

We are writing to formally request PSC to deny the Environmental Utilities application for wastewater service. Please consider the following:

- There has not been an official study with comprehensive data to illustrate the need for this.
- Being that we live on a bridge less, barrier island, after a catastrophic event like Hurricane Ian, we were the last to receive power reconnection after the storm. Had this type of sewer system been in place at that time, it would have not been functional without electricity hence homeowners would not have been able to return home for an extended period of time. The traditional gravity fed systems that are in place on the island can still function without the necessity of power.
- If Charlotte Counties reasoning for allowing this application to be considered is truly for environmental purposes they should consider a completely different type of system such as the Advantex Wastewater Treatment Systems. We have attached a link to their web site for your information. <https://www.orenco.com/products/treatment-systems> Advantex is a very environmentally sound product and is ideal for small sites and environmentally sensitive areas. These units are dependable, proven technology for treating residential septic tank effluent to better-than-secondary standards, including nitrogen-reduction. I (Jeff) have personally been involved with the installation of several of these systems with my business and personal residences in Vermont where the soils are very poor and environmental guidelines are extremely restrictive. This type of system could be incorporated for new construction projects and replacement systems to make the change over time.
- There definitely should be some scrutiny on the fact of conflict of interest between our County Commissioner, Bill Truex being personal friends with the applicant, Jack Boyer.
- I (Jeff) have had communications with Jack Boyer during his prior application process for this same purpose. It is very clear that he does not have the desire or the structure in place to perform the project. His goal is simply to obtain the rights to do the project and then set his price to sell the rights to the highest bidder.
- The situation has gotten worse since Hurricane Ian with regard to the financial impact of rising insurance and inflation of property taxes over the past several years. If the County is requiring a sewage treatment system be put in place, they should assume some of the obligation versus putting the entire burden on the property owners and ridding themselves of a project of this magnitude.

Thank you for consideration and reviewing our concerns and thoughts on this application.

Regards,

Jeff & Lynn Provost

Sent from my iPad

Antonia Hover

From: Olga Kroslak <gogijoe76@hotmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, April 23, 2024 1:43 PM
Cc: Records Clerk; Office of Chairman La Rosa; Office of Commissioner Clark; Office of Commissioner Passidomo; Office of Commissioner Fay; Office of Commissioner Graham
Subject: Docket #20240032-SU

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My name is Joseph Kroslak. My wife and I own two properties on Little Gasparilla Island, located at 9424 and 9426 Rum Runner Rd.

We are formally requesting that the PSC DENY EU'S APPLICATION FOR WASTEWATER SERVICE.

We are appealing to you with due respect because we feel that it is your responsibility as public servants to protect the interest of the taxpayers and homeowners, and not that of private enterprise.

Here a few reasons why we are against this service:

1. There is no evidence that supports a NEED for this service. The vast majority of existing septic systems that homeowners have are functional when maintained properly.
2. ENVIRONMENTALLY, this project brings the potential for destruction of habitat and interference with endangered species
3. We feel it is unfair that we will be forced to give up our private property rights for free. According to 14.0, "the Customer shall grant or cause to be granted to the Company, and without cost to the Company, all rights, easements, permits, and privileges which are necessary for the rendering of wastewater service.
4. The COST of central sewer is very high and certainly comes at a very bad time for islanders. Many of us are still dealing with the many after-effects of Hurricane Ian and have had to lay out large sums of money for rebuilding, etc. Please don't saddle the homeowners with additional financial burdens.
5. Included in the above point is the need for a separate electric panel, a generator, tree removal around the septic area, etc, which all comes at the homeowner's expense.
6. The experience and ability of EU is certainly questionable as it is not a major operator with solid infrastructure support behind them.
7. We love our beautiful island just the way it is, including the privacy we have. Providing utilities to our island will draw more development and more population.

Once again, PLEASE, consider our request for denying central sewer service to our island!

We thank you for your consideration.

Joseph and Debby Kroslak