

Charlie Smith

From: Charlie Smith on behalf of Records Clerk
Sent: Thursday, April 25, 2024 1:24 PM
To: 'Todd Belden'
Cc: Consumer Contact
Subject: RE: RE. Docket #20240032-SU

Good afternoon Todd J. Belden,

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: Todd Belden <todd.belden@onedigital.com>
Sent: Thursday, April 25, 2024 12:48 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>; mfriedman@deanmead.com; cbelden@huff.com
Subject: RE. Docket #20240032-SU

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Dear Clerk, Commissioners, and Mr. Friedman,

As homeowners effected by the above application, we object to EU's application to provide wastewater services. Here are several reasons:

Hook-up Cost: According to the application, the initial connection fee will be \$12,000. There is an additional \$1,097 "Sewer Lateral Connection" fee 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. That's a total of \$13,511.00.

Note that costs could exceed the estimates by large measure and homeowners will likely be saddled with additional burdens.

Average Residential Bill: The rates and tariffs submitted to the PSC shows a base rate of \$115.81 per month just to provide wastewater service. In addition, the monthly residential service charge is \$39.64 per 1000 gallons. EU estimates average household usage at 2,500 gallons/month. Based on this, the monthly billing would be \$207.00/month. However, when the PSC prepared a Rate Case summary that was distributed at the 2022 Administrative Hearing, they cited a more realistic average household usage estimate of 4,000 gals/month. Using this average the monthly billing would be \$263.57/month for wastewater service alone. This is exclusive of your water bill.

Electric: the system pump requires a separate electric panel, installed by a licensed electrician at the expense of the homeowner.

More electric: If the owner has maxed out their main electric grid with pool equipment or other large-draw items, the panel will need an expensive upgrade.

Generator: the pump has a limited capacity (60 gal) and in the event of a power outage will be unable to function for long. Homeowners will need a generator to keep the system running to avoid sewage back-up.

Tree removal: Landscaping and hardscaping around the septic area will need to be cleared at the expense of the homeowner to gain access to the crush & fill the existing septic tank and install the new one.

No pay-over-time plan: Ratepayers may need to take loans to cover the cost of connection.

Mandatory Hook-up: Charlotte County regulations require all homes to connect to central water and wastewater within 1 year of availability.

No grandfathering of septic systems: regardless of age or condition.

No "contractor" and no single point of general oversight: EU is not a contractor that has won a bid to install sewer. The PSC approves certification based solely on four criteria: need for service, financial ability of the applicant, technical expertise of the applicant and fair/equitable rates and charges. Each of the other agencies (County, DEP, Army Corps, etc.) is responsible for supervising only their specific area where regulation and/or permitting is involved. There is no performance bond required and we have no single point of recourse in the event of cost overruns or project failure.

Access to homes: Some properties have physical constraints that will complicate how the applicant gains access to the property without leaving the boundaries or damaging the grounds.

Disruption of traffic: Vehicles have only one point of entry/egress -- the car ferry. With normal traffic, service and construction trucks, delays at the ferry line in season can be an hour or more. This project could result in years of traffic issues.

New easement giveaway: Most utility easements are placed in the road right-of-way. EU has claimed ownership of a utility easement that will go from the sewer equipment, located near the house to the connection in the road without compensating the homeowner.

System maintenance and emergencies: The applicant has not addressed how the system will be serviced in the event of failure during a storm or other adverse conditions.

Lifespan of the equipment: Salt air takes a heavy toll on mechanical and electrical equipment here. Equipment will need replacing when it fails, possibly at 5-year intervals. This proposal places too much responsibility on the homeowner at too great a cost.

Environmental concerns: 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.

Potential of sewer spill in the Intracoastal: The risk of a central sewer leak with a subaqueous crossing is greater than the risk of one or more septic systems developing leaks.

Please STOP this ridiculous ask!

Todd J. Belden
171 Bocilla Drive
Placida, FL 33946



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