

Charlie Smith

From: Betty Leland
Sent: Thursday, May 9, 2024 10:02 AM
To: Commissioner Correspondence
Subject: FW: Docket #20240032-SU: Formal Objection to EU's Application for Wastewater Service

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
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Good Morning:

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

From: Jennifer Aulsebrook <jennifersue_12@yahoo.com>
Sent: Wednesday, May 08, 2024 8:34 PM
To: Records Clerk <CLERK@PSC.STATE.FL.US>; 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 Fay <Commissioner.Fay@psc.state.fl.us>; Office of Commissioner Graham <Commissioner.Graham@PSC.STATE.FL.US>
Subject: Docket #20240032-SU: Formal Objection to EU's Application for Wastewater Service

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Property Owners: John and Jennifer Aulsebrook

Property Address: 396 North Gulf Boulevard, Placida, Florida 33946

Mobile Phone Number: (720) 560-9775

Good Afternoon Commissioners LaRosa, Clark, Passidomo, Fay, Graham and Clerk of the Commission,

We (John and Jennifer Aulsebrook) are writing to you as the property owners within the proposed service area (Don Pedro/Knight Islands) contained in the application from Environmental Utilities, LLC [EU] for central sewer for Docket No. 20240032-SU. We are incredibly disheartened to find ourselves writing this email once again to firmly object to the EU's application for certificate to provide wastewater service in our area.

Our rationale for this objection is as follows:

- **Ethical Practices:**

- The EU has moved forward with this filing, once again, without fully informing the homeowners of the impact this project. To date, we have yet to see a breakdown of costs per homeowner for the initial investment and the proven need that our perfectly functioning septic needs to be replaced with a sewer system. Furthermore, the EU has never owned or operated a wastewater company and has provided no documentation on how this business will function, its quality control practices, emergency back-up plans, etc. While this documentation is not required to present to homeowners, this communication would provide assurance that this business will be run with integrity. This is a service that none of us has asked for or want, yet it's something that we could be forced to partake and pay for. The lack of information gives us great concern about the EU's ability to complete this project ethically and fairly. Furthermore, with this initial behavior, this leads us to believe the continued maintenance and service will also be conducted in this manner.

- **Repetitive Filing:**

- We find these continued filings incredibly disturbing as it is essentially allowing a company to repeatedly apply, taxing the homeowners once again to fight a battle we've already won twice. We respectfully request to know how many times one specific entity is allowed to apply? Will they be able to apply until we are so beat down and out of money that we can fight no more? We implore you to strongly consider that we have made our case before, twice, and have won. It doesn't seem fair on any level to let this continue with repetitive applying.

- **Financial Burden, impacting Health:**

- As stakeholders in the proposed service area, it is important to have all the relevant information regarding the proposed central sewer including the connection fees. While we have been provided a Rate Case Overview for basic costs, this information is sparse at best. The rate sheet does not disclose the additional fees for: Electric (the system pump requires a separate electric panel), Generator (homeowners will need a generator to keep the system running during an outage to avoid sewage back-up), Landscaping / Hardscaping around the septic area, Septic Removal, and continuous Pump Outs. These additional expenses (all at the homeowner's expense) can and will add up, incurring a great burden for us. Additionally, there is concern for other, unexpected fees not listed here; therefore, we still do not feel we have been informed of the **full** financial impact of this project.

- The residential service bill for 4,000 gallons of usage is expected be \$263.57/month. This is almost triple the amount a homeowner would have to pay on the mainland and distinctly above the national average by 400%. We have also been informed that the EU will incorporate increases at a maximum and where possible. We have never paid this much for sewer service in our life and this will have detrimental impact to our finances. We find it absolutely abhorrent that these fees are even being considered, further outlining the EUs ability to conduct themselves in an ethical manner. Why are we even being provided with such outlandish fees and why wouldn't these fees be regulated? This simply should not be allowed to occur.

- For this section, I will convey our situation in 1st person: While I do not typically share financial and/or health situations outwardly, I feel it's best to provide this information in this sensitive situation. My husband suffered a heart attack as a result of extreme stress. He and I both suffer from osteoarthritis in our spines, as well as, other health issues. We made the conscious decision to sell our home in Colorado and move to the island, strictly for our health and well-being. This island is a healing place for us, quite literally. Unfortunately, my husband is no longer able to work; therefore, we only have one income that is fixed and no wiggle room for exorbitant budget items such as a sewer system that we do not need or want. Quite simply, we absolutely cannot afford the expense of the initial start-up, nor can we afford the atypically high monthly service bill. We are also not able to get a loan (it's absolutely not an option). For us, the approval of this sewer system would financially devastate us. This is utter honesty and without exaggeration. We would have to consider moving away from the island, which would, in fact, impact our overall health. The alternative to moving away from the island would be for me to obtain a second job, which would also impact overall health. The ramifications of this decision are vast and I am sharing this to give you a sense of who we are as people and what this could mean for our future. There are often assumptions made about the islanders...that we are wealthy and can frivolously afford things like this without a problem. I'm writing this to inform you that is absolutely **not** the case with us...and that is not the case for many of us (as I have been made aware). In complete vulnerability, we are two humans, trying to care for our health and well-being, counting our pennies along the way so we may have the necessary blessings that this healing island provides. For us, this island carries incredible meaning and importance to our livelihood.

- **Purpose (need for service):**

- We have a perfectly working septic system that follows the Charlotte County requirements for maintenance. It is in excellent condition as we are required to follow our Operating Permit and Maintenance Agreement required by state law and provisioned through the Florida Health Department. We fully adhere to the operating permit/required maintenance, including but not limited to, conducting bi-annual inspections, septic pumping as required within the specified timeframes, ensuring a fully functional aerator with alarms, mitigating root growth, ensuring the drain field has proper vegetation, blower and air filter cleaning, etc. There is absolutely no consideration for homeowners that

have a well-maintained, functional, environmentally-safe septic system to be grandfathered. Additionally, we have not heard adequate rationale for the need to replace our existing septic system with a sewer line. We haven't seen one report (testing our specific septic systems) to indicate there is any reason to transition to a sewer line. We haven't seen any water quality testing performed in our area whatsoever to gather the appropriate data to make an informed decision regarding this application. How can this even be considered without appropriate scientific evidence that there is an absolute, without a doubt need to replace our existing system?

- **Environmental Concerns:**

- We have conducted thorough research on both septic and sewer systems. We have serious concerns with the environmental impact of the installation, operating, and maintenance of a sewer system. As we understand it, in terms of the environment, our controlled and highly maintained septic system does not have the impact on the environment that a sewer system does. We are incredibly concerned about the wastewater that could potentially enter our ocean (as has been seen time and time again with many sewer systems). The spills from wastewater plants in the state of Florida are truly mind-boggling. Should this application be accepted, it will have a detrimental impact on our ecological system, including but not limited to, our protected Sea Turtles, Gopher Tortoises and Birds.

In summary, any potential project with regard to sewer installation would impact us immensely and would be devastating to our finances, our overall health, and the environment; therefore, we are formally and respectfully requesting that the PSC deny the EU's application for wastewater service once again.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

John and Jennifer Aulsebrook

aulsebrook@comcast.net

jennifersue_12@yahoo.com

Kind Regards,

Jennifer Aulsebrook