

Jenae Thornberry

From: Jenae Thornberry
Sent: Wednesday, September 11, 2024 12:53 PM
To: Consumer Contact
Subject: FW: Docket #20240032-SU

Please see the consumer correspondence below.

-----Original Message-----

From: Jenae Thornberry On Behalf Of Records Clerk
Sent: Monday, September 9, 2024 8:20 AM
To: 'Novak, Richard M' <rmnovak@uic.edu>
Subject: RE: Docket #20240032-SU

Good Morning Richard Novak,

We will be placing your comments below in consumer correspondence in Docket No. 20240032-SU, and forwarding them to the Office of Consumer Assistance and Outreach.

Thank you.

Jenae Thornberry
Commission Deputy Clerk I
Florida Public Service Commission
2540 Shumard Oak Blvd
Tallahassee, FL 32399
JThornbe@psc.state.fl.us
(850) 413-6457

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-----Original Message-----

From: Novak, Richard M <rmnovak@uic.edu>
Sent: Sunday, September 8, 2024 10:46 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: Docket #20240032-SU

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Dear Clerk and Commissioners:

I am a current homeowner on Little Gasparilla Island, and have been for the past nearly 10 years, but I have been a regular visitor prior to ownership for the last 19 years. My address is 9498 Alborado Rd, LGI. I want to express my strongest opposition to the plan to centralize the sewage system as proposed by Environmental Utilities. This island is a unique island ecosystem and habitat for numerous sea birds, reptiles and amphibians. The waters around the island are home to manatee, dolphins, and a rich marine environment which is really quite fragile. We witness this first hadn't when overflow from Lake Okeechobee is allowed to drain into the Caloosahatchee, flooding our coast with organic material that leads to large bacterial blooms, consuming all the oxygen in the sea waters along the coast, and resulting in huge die off of sea life, with beaches littered with dead fish (this is distinct from red tide).

We currently manage our sewage with decentralized septic systems, which each individual household has.

A centralized system is a high maintenance system dependent on mechanical pumps and sewer lines running across the intracoastal waterway. Any interruption in this system from a broken pipe or pump failure would result in sewage back up to all the homes on the island. Any work that would have to be done on the system on our bridgeless barrier island would have to be brought by barge. If a sewer spill occurred, it would be devastating to the natural habitat, and would take months to clean up, since trucks would have to be brought by barge to the island at huge expense. Environmental Utilities is not equipped to do this, and has no experience working on a bridgeless island. Their costs estimates for building this system are underestimates: they claim the cost to each home owner would be only 13,000 plus a new monthly utility fee: already a financial burden. But the reality is that other counties that are centralizing their sewer systems are estimating 35,000 per capita, and they are not bridge less barrier islands, but rather on the main land. Environmental Utilities has not sought or received any grant support, and plans to pass all the costs on to the home owners.

This plan in its entirety appears to be an attempt to a money grab by a group with little expertise working in this environment, and to force the homeowners who already have satisfactory sewage management to pay for it. Once in place, they have limited or no ability to maintain it, and Charlotte County states clearly in the docket that they will not be responsible if the system fails. A number of these systems exist throughout Florida and when they fail, the results are disastrous to local residents and communities. Why would anyone want that?

While there does not appear to be an existing problem, the homeowners of LGI would prefer to investigate newer, decentralized septic systems that would be environmentally friendly and improve on existing systems and to seek grant support to bring these to the island. We wish to maintain the low density occupancy on the island that allows the natural beauty and wildlife to coexist.

Please reject the above docket and rule against Environmental Utilities as you have done in the past and send them packing once more.

Sincerely,

Richard Novak
9498 Alborado Rd
LGI