

Jenae Thornberry

From: Jenae Thornberry on behalf of Records Clerk
Sent: Monday, October 28, 2024 8:09 AM
To: 'Meryl Schaffer'
Cc: Consumer Contact
Subject: RE: RE. Docket #20240032-SU

Good Morning,

We will be placing the comments below in consumer correspondence in Docket No. 20240032, 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

PLEASE NOTE: Florida has a very broad public records law. Most written communications to or from state officials regarding state business are considered to be public records and will be made available to the public and the media upon request. Therefore, your email message may be subject to public disclosure.

From: Meryl Schaffer <msdonpedro@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, October 27, 2024 5:29 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: RE. Docket #20240032-SU

CAUTION: This email originated from outside your organization. Exercise caution when opening attachments or clicking links, especially from unknown senders.

This email and attached letter are being sent on behalf of Barbara DeYulio, President of the Bocilla Islands Conservancy, Inc.

Thank you for your consideration.

The Bocilla Islands Conservancy, Inc.



Bocilla Islands Conservancy, Inc.

PO Box 881, Placida, FL 33946

info@bocillaislandsconservancy.org

941-830-4179

June 14th, 2024

RE.: Docket # **20240032-SU**

To the Commissioners of the Public Service Commission:

I represent the Bocilla Islands Conservancy, Inc. (BICI), including our members and Board of Directors, and I am writing to express our opposition to the proposed central sewer system on our bridgeless barrier islands by Environmental Utilities, LLC.

BICI, a non-profit organization serving Thornton Key, Knight Island, Palm Island, Don Pedro Island, and Little Gasparilla Island, is committed to preserving open spaces and sensitive habitats through property acquisitions and conservation easements. Additionally, we focus on environmental education, offering parks, gardens, seminars, educational resources, and social media campaigns.

Over the past eight years, BICI has acquired eight properties, four conservation easements, and formed a strategic partnership with the West Coast Inland Navigation District (WCIND) to oversee their six properties and a 26-acre parcel. In 2022, we established the "Palm Island Neighborhood," which the National Wildlife Federation (NWF) certified as a Community Wildlife Habitat in January 2023. This area consists of Knight Island and Don Pedro Island north of the state park, covering a significant portion of the service area considered for the septic-to-sewer conversion.

Although BICI supports initiatives for clean water, the disadvantages of this central sewer project surpass its benefits.

Our islands serve as protection for the mainland against hurricanes, absorbing the brunt of destructive winds, storm surges, and tidal washes. Implementing a central sewer system would necessitate extensive wastewater piping, including an underwater crossing beneath the Intracoastal Waterway. A rupture in a main sewer line would result in a more severe point-source pollution event compared to isolated septic system failures, which would have comparatively minimal impact.

Additionally, the specifics of the potential service area under examination must be considered. The extensive excavation and construction required for this project will cause irreversible damage to our sensitive ecosystem. Once disturbed, the land cannot revert to its original condition, and the native flora and fauna may be lost forever.

Moreover, there is no conclusive test or empirical data to suggest that the septic systems in the "Palm Island Neighborhood" are contributing to the deterioration of Charlotte

Harbor. Given the lack of a public health concern, BICI continues to investigate and support alternative solutions. Currently, we advocate for the adoption of nitrogen-reducing septic system technology in new constructions and for necessary repairs or upgrades to individual septic systems.

For the above reasons and other considerations, we are asking you to deny the application submitted by Environmental Utilities, LLC for certification of the service area inclusive of our Palm Island Neighborhood.

Thank you for your time and attention to this matter.

Yours truly,

Barbara DeYulio

President, Bocilla Islands Conservancy, Inc.