

Hiep Nguyen

From: Hiep Nguyen on behalf of Records Clerk
Sent: Tuesday, December 17, 2024 4:28 PM
To: 'S R'
Subject: RE: DOCKET #20240032 - Letter of Objection to EU's Petition for Sewer Service / Interested Persons

Good afternoon Shannon Roberts and Martin Stirdivant,

Per your request, you have been added to docket 20240032-SU as interested persons. You will now be issued by email any further notices of meetings or hearings, and certain orders pertaining to the docket.

Thank you,

Hiep Nguyen
Commission Deputy Clerk II
Florida Public Service Commission
2540 Shumard Oak Boulevard
Tallahassee, FL 32399
Phone: (850) 413-6746

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

From: S R <shannon_roberts@comcast.net>
Sent: Monday, December 16, 2024 8:05 PM
To: Records Clerk <CLERK@PSC.STATE.FL.US>
Subject: DOCKET #20240032 - Letter of Objection to EU's Petition for Sewer Service / Interested Persons

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

Please list Shannon Roberts and Martin Stirdivant as interested persons in Docket #20240032.

We are also submitting the attached letter.

Thank you,
Shannon Roberts
Martin Stirdivant
shannon_roberts@comcast.net
720-635-0328

Shannon Roberts
Martin Stirdivant
8725 Placida Rd
Suite 7-508
Placida, FL 33946
shannon_roberts@comcast.net

December 15, 2024

VIA EMAIL

Florida Public Service Commission

RE: Docket #20240032

Objection to Environmental Utilities' Application for Sewer Installation on DonPedro/Knight Island

Dear PSC:

We own property at 32 Bayshore Circle on Knight Island and 331 Kettle Harbor on Don Pedro Island. We urge you to disregard Charlotte County Commissioners' support of EU's petition for sewer service and dismiss EU's application with prejudice.

EU misled our County Commissioners in believing there is merely a "vocal minority" who opposes their application to install low pressure sewer systems on the island. As you know from the previous proceedings, nearly the entire island opposes EU's application. The Commission's Final Order in the first proceeding stated, "noting the level of opposition to EU's proposal by its prospective customers, we find that customers are highly unlikely to voluntarily connect to EU's system," and therefore found there was NO NEED FOR SERVICE. Because there continues to be no need for service — especially after 3 major hurricanes in 2 years — EU's Petition must be denied a second time.

We are urging you to disregard the Commissioners' questionable support. There are about 450 homes in our proposed service area. There are over 225 members of Palm Island Estates — the plaintiff opposing EU's application. Please also recall the unprecedented number of letters and public comments that were submitted during the previous proceeding. These same prospective

customers are mustering the strength to express their opposition again after experiencing significant loss and devastation from three hurricanes.

As you know we are designated as a rural area. Rural areas are to remain on septic systems for obvious reasons. We are on a bridge less barrier island only accessible by a private barge that could cease operations at any time. How can a utility providing a basic necessity be approved when it does not have reliable transportation to the very clients it serves? The current barge wait times can be upward of 1 hour with the current level of construction traffic. Can you imagine adding a project of this scale for years when resources are already strained. The lines will be way down Placida Rd which does not have another lane to accommodate this. The ferry service also shuts down or changes hours in response to low tides and severe weather events — the most common time a low pressure sewer system will be damaged requiring repair and service.

It is beyond comprehension that a low pressure system is even being contemplated on a barrier island experiencing multiple hurricanes each year. How did we even get to this point? Our county has failed us. We implore the PSC to see through what's really going on and listen to us — the prospective customers. The PSC would be forcing residents to deal with destroyed or dislodged tanks corroded by salt air, broken connections and pipes, electrical failures, possible spills in the inter coastal, no immediate service for sewage back ups, and multiple issues for vacant homes which cannot be dealt with. It is yet another mechanical item homeowners will be required to maintain when it is already difficult to get a tradesperson to visit the island for a gas leak, plumbing leak, dangerous electrical situations and so on. We watched houses burn after storms because the ferry could not transport EMS to the island. If we can't get consistent service for these situations, how will we get service for a broken sewer system? In rural communities, being self sufficient is paramount.

Since the system pump removes only fluid effluent, our tank will require pump-outs identical to septic maintenance. The system pump requires a separate electric panel, installed by a licensed electrician at our expense. Our main electric grid is maxed out, so we're looking at a major upgrade. The pump has a limited capacity (60 gal) and in the event of a power outage will be unable to function for long. We will need a generator to keep the system running to avoid sewage back-up. Our septic area will need to be cleared at our expense to gain access to crush & fill the existing septic tank and install the new one. The cost of replacing anything more than the "basic landscaping" that the hook-up

agreement states will need to be replaced and will ultimately be the responsibility of us.

Most importantly, EU is misrepresenting the hook up fees. A hook up bill for a low pressure sewer system on the mainland shows the true cost is \$30K, excluding all the retrofitting a customer would be required to do including extra electric panels, adding a generator, moving propane tanks, restoring landscaping ... not to mention being required to give away a substantial easement to EU with zero compensation. We believe over half of the island will be forced to sell if assessed \$30-40K to hook up to sewer....especially after recovering from 3 major hurricanes in 2 years. The devastation is UNDENIABLE. WE INVITE YOU TO VISIT THE ISLAND AND TOUR THE DEVASTATION. MEET WITH HOMEOWNERS. UNDERSTAND WHAT WE ARE FACING. Insurance doesn't cover storm surge damages from Milton and Helene, so out of pocket costs can be well in excess of \$200K for some residents. Many residents are retired on a fixed income. How in good conscience can our elected officials pile this extra expense on them? Property values will likely plummet. Homeowners strained by hurricane repairs, will be forced out from the connection fee. Those affording to stay, will eventually leave as the island becomes more and more unrecognizable and inaccessible during years of mass construction. The island will literally die on the vine if you approve EU's application.

EU is also a private utility, motivated solely for profit, delivering services otherwise provided by public utilities funded by taxpayers. The agreement between EU and Charlotte County specifically states the county bears NO financial responsibility and is held harmless if, for example, EU runs out of money during the project, encounters construction installation issues or cannot afford to maintain the system. We, along with a very small population of homeowners, are left bearing the entire financial risk and responsibility for an ambitious project by an inexperienced private single member LLC motivated solely by profit. There is no performance bond required and we have no single point of recourse in the event of cost overruns or project failure.

We are unaware of official studies substantiating claims that our proposed service area with its extreme low population density, is a source of pollution from septic system runoff or leakage. 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. The application is an attempt by a newly formed single member LLC, with no experience or funding, to gain approval for one of the largest and most

complicated construction projects contemplated in our small island community — with zero experience, motivated purely by profit and propelled by blanket Commissioner support based on inaccurate information.

The community opposition to this petition is overwhelming. There is no demonstrated need. The only obvious fact in this matter is one man's desire to make a quick buck and sell the licenses once issued and a county's desire to make our island someone else's problem. But, our island does not have a problem. We are self reliant citizens who take care of our existing septic systems. Please protect us from the Charlotte County Commissioners' lack of concern or due diligence in this matter. Because the overwhelming number of citizens do not want sewer, and there is not an otherwise compelling reason to force this upon us, please dismiss EU's application and protect our community from the relentless attempts by EU to profit off the backs of our small community.

Sincerely,



Shannon Roberts



Martin Stirdivant
Owners of
32 Bayshore Circle and
332 Kettle Harbor
Knight/Don Pedro Island
shannon_roberts@comcast.net