

Brian Schultz

From: Brian Schultz on behalf of Records Clerk
Sent: Monday, March 24, 2025 7:17 AM
To: 'Ember Harker'
Cc: Consumer Contact
Subject: RE: RE. Docket #20240032-SU

Good morning,

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.

Sincerely,

Brian Schultz

Commission Deputy Clerk II
Florida Public Service Commission
2540 Shumard Oak Boulevard
Tallahassee, Florida 32399
850.413.6770

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From: Ember Harker <ember@launchsnap.com>
Sent: Saturday, March 22, 2025 11:13 AM
To: Records Clerk <CLERK@PSC.STATE.FL.US>
Subject: RE: Docket #20240032-SU

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Dear Commissioners,

After reading the staff's recommendation to approve EU's sewer application, I am in complete shock. Were they at the same hearings I attended in January?

Did they not remember the laughter when EU's engineer, Jonathan Cole, made it abundantly clear he had no real understanding of what this project would entail on our islands? He claimed, "It's the same cost to put one pipe on the ferry as a thousand pipes," and stated, "I don't know of any tidal impact to a construction project down there." How could he not know? If his numbers are being used by EU's financial expert, Deborah Swain, to estimate costs, shouldn't he have at least a basic understanding of how the ferry operates, the inevitable building delays, or even the type of roads we have?

Let me paint a real picture: it cost over **\$150,000** in barge fees alone to build my modest 1,800 sq. ft. home just two years ago. Cole's estimate of **\$600,000 for all barge fees is laughable**. Plus, when tides are low or winds

are high, large trucks can't cross. Just this past January, we went **three weeks** without trash pickup because Waste Management's **smallest truck** couldn't make it over.

When asked about potential delays, Cole dismissed concerns, saying there's only a "short line in the morning" and that we have "sand roads or whatever they have out there." This made it crystal clear—he has **never even been here**. In reality, contractors face an hour-long wait to get onto Palm Island each morning, and it's even longer at quitting time. This project would make that situation far worse.

Did the staff forget that **hundreds of islanders** showed up to oppose this sewer project? We shared real, lived experiences—many of us lost nearly everything in recent storms, but the one thing that remained intact was our septic systems. Jack Boyer claimed he walked the islands and saw "septic tanks popped up everywhere." That is simply false and quite honestly absurd. I was here just days after both storms and did not see a single tank "popped up." A few tanks on the beach had lost their lids and filled with sand. **Perhaps instead of forcing a central sewer system on us, we should be discussing ways to better secure septic lids.**

Did they notice that only **a handful of people** supported this project? I personally handed out opposition stickers—remember the red circles with a line through them? Out of **500 printed**, I came home with less than **100**. Fewer than **15 people** refused a sticker. The number of speakers in favor? Less than **10**, and nearly all of them were either not stakeholders in this application at all or they are directly related to the applicant—his **son-in-law, daughter, and wife**, who stand to **profit** from this project. These same family members tried to mislead the room with absurd claims of "turds floating around" (which we all know is nonsense), or gave tearful speeches about their children—only to be called out and admit they were related to the applicant. Then they sulked out of the building.

It was a circus!

EU has **not** done its due diligence.

- They have **not** proven a need for this project.
- They had **three years** since the last application—did they conduct **any** water testing? **No**.
- Do they have **any** quantifiable data showing storm damage to island septic systems? **No**.
- Could they have gathered real data from residents? **Sure**. But did they? **No**.
- Do they have realistic cost estimates? **No**.

After listening to these hearings, I wouldn't hire Jack Boyer to mow my lawn—**let alone** install a private sewer system. The fact that anyone would recommend approving this application is **mind-blowing**.

Here's why we **do not** want this:

- **There is no proven need.**
- **It will cost homeowners tens of thousands of dollars, upfront and out-of-pocket.** Do you have \$30,000, \$40,000, or even \$50,000 just lying around? Because I don't.
- **EU is a private company.** They can (and will) charge whatever they want. Our water company already does! Did you know we pay more for water than most people in the U.S.?
- **The pump system they propose is one of the worst technical choices available.**
- **The project will wreak havoc on our island—environmentally, logistically, and financially.**
- **Each homeowner will bear the burden of pulling permits, installing electrical, plumbing, and backup generators for outages.** Have they even factored that into the cost? **I doubt it.**
- **There is no performance bond.** If Boyer botches this project (as he has others in the past) or costs spiral out of control, we have **zero recourse**.

So I ask again—**why on earth would staff recommend granting this application?**

Were they even listening?

I hope you are.

Sincerely,

Ember Harker
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