

Tristan Davis

From: Office of Chairman Smith
Sent: Monday, March 2, 2026 3:38 PM
To: Commissioner Correspondence
Subject: Docket No. 20250052
Attachments: Application for Sewer Rate Increase for Highlands County, Florida

Please place the attached in Docket No. 20250052.

Thank you!

Tristan Davis

From: John Athey <jpatheyjr@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, March 2, 2026 3:25 PM
To: Office of Commissioner Payne; Office of Commissioner Clark; Office of Commissioner La Rosa; Office of Commissioner Ortega; Office of Chairman Smith
Subject: Application for Sewer Rate Increase for Highlands County, Florida
Attachments: CSWR Florida PSC Complaint Response – John Athey, 1.28.26, 158818-0 cc 12926.docx

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

Dear Chairman Smith and all PSC Commissioners,

I am writing this letter and email to alert you to a Huge Waste Water / Sewer Rate Increase that is economically unfeasible, unacceptable and unfair. A rate increase of 255% from CSWR Florida is unheard of and truly unfair to the point CSWR has a monopoly on the wastewater / sewer system.

History

I am the board secretary of the Bluffs of Sebring Condominium Association, thus I am writing to you for help and assistance. We recently received a 255% increase in our sewer bill. It went from \$4000 a month to \$14,000 per month which drastically affects our Association / HOA cost.. I have spoken the city of Avon Park and the city of Sebring. Both Avon Park and Sebring told me there was nothing they could do, as this rate increase was from CSWR Florida. I did speak with CSWR and they referenced the rate increase and told me there was nothing they could do either. I find this to be untrue, thus I am writing and emailing the PSC. I also filed a complaint with the PSC and they again told me it was a rate increase and there was nothing they could do.

We are a 55 and over condo community in Sebring. We are on the Avon Park - Sebring boundary line and receive our water service from Avon Park and the sewer service from CSWR. As you can imagine, an increase of this size is placing a high financial burden on our residents. We do not have the budget funds for an increase of this size. An increase of this size is unacceptable in today's economic climate. We are looking for help in this matter. As I stated, I sent a complaint to the Florida PSC, but received an answer that there was a rate increase. So our residents have to fund an additional \$120,000 per year, which is unacceptable. We desperately need your help in this matter. I am aware of the meeting coming up that the commission will be ruling on the rate increase. Please see the attached document below from the PSC and CSWR. You can see the rates for yourself. Please advise if you and the PSC can help us.

Response:

Effective October 28, 2025, new interim sewer service rates became effective. The Bluffs of Sebring is currently billed for 252 dwelling units and is classified as a commercial property. **The facility base charge has increased from \$16.17 per unit to \$59.43 per unit, and the volumetric charge has increased from \$4.20 to \$15.44 per 1,000 gallons of usage based on water consumption reported by the City of Avon Park.**

Respectively,
John Athey
410 948 0888.

CSWR Florida PSC Complaint Response – John Athey, 158818-0

Complaint Received: 1/28/26

Complaint NO: 1493853W

Escalation: Jean Mclean-Sinatra

Date of Response: 1/30/26

Customer Name: John Athey

Address: 6750 US Hwy 27 North

Service Area: FL-Sebring Ridge

Phone number or email: 410-948-0888

Account: 158818-0

Reason for complaint: Rates

Hello, I am the Secretary for our Condo Association. Our complaint and concern is the cost increase of our sewer bill, which has increased over 255% just this year. The bill has gone from \$4,074 per month in 2025 to \$14,976 per month. Again, this is a 255% increase. How can this be possible? Note, the water usage is the same as 2025 and that bill has stayed the same and not increased in price. So for our association, this sewer increase is an increase of over \$120,000 per year. How can this be? This is totally unacceptable for this type of increase. Our community did not budget for this nor can they afford this increase.

Can you and the Florida PSC please investigate and help? Please advise. If you need a copy of the invoice, please let me know.

Response:

Effective October 28, 2025, new interim sewer service rates became effective. The Bluffs of Sebring is currently billed for 252 dwelling units and is classified as a commercial property. The facility base charge has increased from \$16.17 per unit to \$59.43 per unit, and the volumetric charge has increased from \$4.20 to \$15.44 per 1,000 gallons of usage based on water consumption reported by the City of Avon Park.

Although the interim rates became effective on October 28, 2025, they were applied beginning October 15. an \$18.14 credit was issued to correct charges for service dates prior to October 28. This credit was reflected on the November 20, 2025, invoice.

These interim rates will remain in effect while the PSC completes its review. Once a final decision is issued, any difference between the interim and final approved rates will be adjusted. A copy of the interim rate notice, the most recent bill, and an updated account statement have been attached.

I have attempted to contact Mr. Athey to address his concerns and left a voicemail with my contact information. As of now, I have not received any return calls. Prior to receiving the complaint, we spoke with the customer on January 26 when he contacted our customer service center to discuss the current statement, and he was provided information regarding the interim rates.

We do sincerely hope that this will resolve the concerns expressed by Mr. Athey. If there are any questions or additional items needed, please contact us at ccarter@cswrgroup.com.

Sincerely,

Chelsie Carter

Director, Customer Experience

314-380-8520