

ORIGINAL

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405 Nassau Street South
Venice, FL 34285
September 13, 2002

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Re: Objection to Island Environmental Utilities, Inc. intent to provide wastewater service to Little Gasparilla Island

Director, Division of Records and Reporting
2540 Shumard Oak Boulevard
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0850

Dear Director:

I am writing this letter to object to a proposal by Island Environmental Utility, Inc. to provide wastewater services to Little Gasparilla Island

Little Gasparilla Island is a unique barrier island in that it is comprised of residential properties and no commercial establishments. The reason I purchased property in the late 1980's was that it is probably the most unspoiled piece of Florida remaining. I am attracted to the natural beauty of the dunes, mangroves, beaches, etc., and the lack of paved roads, street lights, and other "amenities" of urban and suburban areas.

Few homes on the island are occupied by full time residents. Most of these homes have shallow wells to provide water and septic systems which are very adequate in handling the wastewater. A water or wastewater system is simply not necessary. Charlotte County is currently still issuing permits to install septic tanks on Little Gasparilla Island.

I am also concerned about the company who is proposing to provide wastewater services and to extend water services. First of all, the method of notification of intent to apply for a certificate aroused suspicion. The letter arrived in a plain envelope with no return address. The letter inside provides a post office box number as the address of Island Environmental Utility, but when I tried to contact the company by phone for more information on their plans, I found there is no telephone listing. I did find that the corporation was registered with the State of Florida on April 29, 2002.

One of the principals in the corporation owns the Little Gasparilla Water Utilities which does not have a reputation of providing reliable services to the customer. In addition to this concern of how the waste would be managed, I am concerned because I have not been able to find any answers to many questions that I have concerning this proposed wastewater system. Would it be an above ground system or an underground system? Where would the wastewater be treated? How would this volume of waste be disposed of after treatment? How would it be possible to construct this on an island which has very few deeded roads—much

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of the property is privately owned? Would a wastewater system destroy our shallow well systems which is only 3-4 feet underground? Would retention ponds be necessary which would further contribute to the mosquito population? How is it possible to provide a wastewater system when not all residents are connected to a central water system—or is that part of a plan to make that mandatory? Is it purely coincidental that yesterday I received a letter from the Little Gasparilla Water Utilities, asking me to respond as to whether I am interested in being connected to its proposed expansion or if I am not interested at this time. The letter requires a signature and a lot number, and there is no response which says I am not interested at all.

I strongly object to the proposal to allow Island Environmental Utility, Inc. to provide a wastewater system to Little Gasparilla Island. I am convinced that this system would do nothing to improve the quality of life or the environment, and that it would destroy the fragile ecosystem and natural beauty the residents now enjoy.

Please notify me if and when a hearing will be scheduled on this proposal.

Sincerely,



Sharon B. Belcher

Cc: Martin S. Friedman, Esquire
Florida Department of Environmental Protection
Charlotte County Board of County Commissioners