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September 12, 2002

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

RE: Objection to Application for Certificate to Provide Wastewater Service
Docket 020-745

Dear Director:

We are the owners of two properties on Little Gasparilla Island. We are writing because we have major concerns about the proposed wastewater service and are filing our objection.

The largest concern is the lack of information about the proposed utility. No responses to the Public Service Commission's deficiency letter have been made available and we are therefore required to make a decision about objecting in an information vacuum.

Related to this concern is whether or not there is a need for wastewater services on Little Gasparilla. There are few year-round residents. Most dwellings are occupied only a few months a year and produce little sewage volume. The little that is produced is well-handled by the sandy surface and septic systems.

Another concern is that we are not convinced that the water utility, whose principals are involved with the proposed wastewater utility, provides an adequate and dependable level of service. Problems with dependability would be greatly magnified with sewage. It is one thing to have the water supply interrupted--this causes no environmental damage. It is a much bigger problem if the interruptions in sewage service were as frequent as the water interruptions. This could have grave environmental consequences.

Another problem with the water utility is the lack of timeliness on progress with expanded service. We were contacted in December 2000 by one of the parties making the above wastewater application, Jack Boyer, with an offer to provide our residence with a hook-up to the water utility. Mr. Boyer requested a deposit of \$500, with a total fee of \$4500 for hook-up when service was provided. In a phone conversation with Mr. Boyer, he estimated that the work would begin within 6 months (by June 2001). We investigated the service record of the water utility, and learned that service has been irregular, with water outages, and the water is aggressive. We ultimately decided that installing our own water treatment system was a better and more dependable option, even though the cost of our system was roughly two times that of the water hook-up. To date, to the best of our knowledge, the water utility has provided no additional water hook-ups on the island, in a

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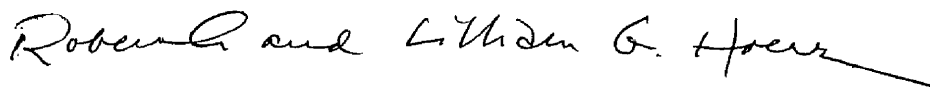
period that is now over 20 months, despite holding funds in escrow. This history makes us question how reliable the wastewater service would be if operated by the same group.

We are greatly concerned that the above application provides no detail with respect to timing, cost of installation and hook-up, monthly charges, environmental impact, or maintenance plan. In order to consider whether such a wastewater service was appropriate for our island, we need to have answers to the following:

1. Whether service hook-up is voluntary (we have a new septic system and do not believe we need wastewater service).
2. What the cost of hook-up is estimated to be, and whether this will be set by the commissioners.
3. How monthly fees will be calculated (sewage volume is usually estimated from water volume usage, and more than half of the island currently does not have service by the water utility). A flat monthly fee for dwellings that produce no sewage during many months seems unreasonable.
4. How the utility proposes to install the lines. Will they disrupt the sensitive barrier island environment (mangroves, dunes, beach grass)? Will our narrow roads, which are currently maintained not by the county but by property owners, be damaged? How much heavy, noisy equipment will be brought to the island to install the lines, and how long will this disruptive process take?
5. What the environmental remediation plan is.
6. What the utility's maintenance plan is. What happens if the lines are disrupted during storms? Will 24-hour service be available for broken lines?
7. What the history this particular utility has for providing wastewater service.
8. How the wastewater will be treated, and where it will be treated.

Given that the existing septic systems are more than adequate, that the application by this utility is clearly deficient, and that there is a potential for real environmental damage to this sensitive barrier island, we urge the Commissioners to deny this application. The above-mentioned concerns need to be fully and publicly addressed by the proposed utility, with sufficient time for this information to be distributed to affected residents, many of whom, like us, have permanent residents outside of Florida.

Sincerely,



Robert and Lillian Hoerr

Cc: Charlotte County Commissioners
Martin S. Friedman, Esq.
Karen Donohoo, Esq.
Florida Department of Environmental Protection
Florida Department of Community Affairs, State Department