

Lisa Smith

From: Lisa Smith on behalf of Records Clerk
Sent: Wednesday, March 16, 2022 12:42 PM
To: 'Nicolas Caussade'
Cc: Consumer Contact
Subject: RE: Docket #20200226-SU

Good Afternoon, Nicolas Caussade,

We will be placing your comments below in consumer correspondence in Docket 20200226-SU and forwarding them to the Office of Consumer Assistance and Outreach.

Thank you.

Lisa Smith

Commission Deputy Clerk I
Office of the Commission Clerk
Florida Public Service Commission
2540 Shumard Oak Blvd.
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0850
850-413-6770

PLEASE NOTE: Florida has a very broad public records law. Most written communications to or from state officials regarding state business are considered to be public records and will be made available to the public and the media upon request. Therefore, your email message may be subject to public disclosure.

From: Nicolas Caussade <ncaussade@yahoo.com>
Sent: Wednesday, March 16, 2022 11:43 AM
Subject: Docket #20200226-SU

My name is Nicolas Caussade and I am a resident of Palm Island: my residence is specifically on Don Pedro Island.

I am opposed to the central sewer system being considered and request that Environmental Utilities application for wastewater service be denied for the following reasons:

- I do not believe there is a need for wastewater service on a sparsely populated barrier island that is primarily second homes
- My understanding is that Environmental Utilities has no experience developing or managing a wastewater system

- I have no knowledge of Environmental Utilities financial wherewithal to develop and operate a wastewater system and neither do they since based on the information presented they have not been able to effectively communicate the costs of developing and operating the system
- The proposed charges for the system, that would be imposed on this small community, appear excessive in comparison to the perceived benefits

My understanding is that the main rationale for implementing a wastewater service is due to environmental concerns. I purchased my home on Don Pedro Island in 2005 and have been visiting the island since the mid 1990s and have never been aware of any issues with the water quality stemming from wastewater. I am not aware of any water quality testing in the area that supports the need for a wastewater system. This project risks the potential of increased development of the island by opening the door to increased residential density that would result in the potential destruction of habitat and interference with the local flora and fauna, such as sand dunes, sea turtles, nesting sea birds, and tortoises. I would also add that a central wastewater system like the one proposed with a subaqueous crossing of the intracoastal waterway, poses greater risk of contaminating Lemon Bay than the risk of one or more septic systems developing leaks: I have personally experienced this in other parts of the country where underwater sewer pipes leaked for days prior to realizing there was a leak and repairing said leak.

The information presented shows that Environmental Utilities has no experience developing or operating wastewater systems, which is evident from their initial application that showed they did not know what type of system they would install, the costs to them, or the ultimate costs to the residents which would have no choice but to connect, given current Charlotte County regulations, and pay any cost overruns, and ongoing operating costs well in excess of those paid by residents on the mainland. Since Environmental Utilities has not addressed how the system will be serviced in the event of failure during a storm or other adverse conditions, the reliability of the system is questionable.

My understanding based on what has been presented is that the cost of the now proposed system would result in an average residential bill of \$180/month, which is twice the amount a resident in Rotonda pays for both water and sewer: I already pay approximately \$80/month for water. Additionally, the proposed system would place undue burdens on the residents of the community given the proposed system with the limited capacity grinder pump. This system, in addition to the connection costs that are not well supported, will potentially require each resident to:

- incur costs for preparing for the hookup, including costs to gain access to crush & fill the septic tank
- incur additional costs for potentially upgrading the electric system to accommodate the needed equipment
- incur additional monthly electricity costs for the pump equipment
- potentially incur the costs of installing a generator to ensure the pump works during prolonged power outages to avoid a sewage backup
- incur costs associated with replacing the equipment at each residence, since this equipment will be the responsibility of the homeowner

In addition to these costs, Environmental Utilities is going to claim ownership of a utility easement that will go from the sewer equipment, located near the house to the connection in the road without compensating the homeowners.

In closing, Environmental Utilities is applying to install and operate a wastewater system, having no experience in developing and managing such systems, with no perceived benefit for the residents of the community. The system would be developed at an uncertain cost that will be borne by the residents, and will provide guaranteed profit to the ownership of Environmental Utilities given residents will be required to hook to the system (septic systems will not be grandfathered even if recently installed and operating reliably) and pay rates sufficient to cover the utilities costs and guaranteed return. Note that the costs of connecting to the system, if approved, will be the responsibility of the homeowners and there is no financing plan proposed.

Based on the above, I request that Environmental Utilities application for wastewater service be denied.

Respectfully,

Nicolas Caussade
ncaussade@yahoo.com
Palm Island Resident