

Antonia Hover

From: Cristina Slaton
Sent: Monday, April 15, 2024 1:04 PM
To: Commissioner Correspondence
Subject: Docket Correspondence - 20240032-SU
Attachments: FW: Docket #20240032-SU objection to application for certificate to provide wastewater service by Environmental Utilities LLC; Docket #20240032-SU objection to application for certificate to provide wastewater service by Environmental Utilities LLC; Docket 20240032-SU; Re: New Docket #20240032-SU; Docket No.20240032-SU-Knight - Don Pedro Island / EU Re-Application for Certificate of Authorization - OBJECTION TO RE-APPLICATION 04/03/2024; Proposed sewer service on Little Gasparilla Island, docket# 20240032-su

Good afternoon,

Please place the attached emails in CORRESPONDENCE – Consumers & Representatives in docket 20240032.

Thank you.

Antonia Hover

From: bob@rowemitchell.com
Sent: Saturday, April 13, 2024 4:47 PM
To: Records Clerk
Cc: Office of Chairman La Rosa; Office of Commissioner Clark; Office of Commissioner Passidomo; Office of Commissioner Graham; Office of Commissioner Fay
Subject: FW: Docket #20240032-SU objection to application for certificate to provide wastewater service by Environmental Utilities LLC
Attachments: objection to wastewater utility application Public Service Commission.docx

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

Dear Clerk and Commissioners.

See attached letter

Thank You

Robert Mitchell

Robert & Brenda Mitchell
3708 East Forest Lake Drive
Sarasota, Fl 34233

8304 Lil Gasparilla Island
Email bm1962srq@gmail.com

March 13, 2024

Commission Clerk
Office of Commission Clerk
Florida Public Service Commission
2540 Shumard Oak
Tallahassee, Fl 32399-0850

Re; Docket # 20240032-SU

Dear Commissioner;

My wife and I have been property owners on Lil Gasparilla, Island since 2000.

We are writing to express our objections to the Environmental Utilities, L.L.C. application for certificate to provide wastewater service in Charlotte County, specifically the bridgeless barrier islands of Lil Gasparilla, Don Pedro and Knight Island.

Our objections to the application are as follows.

- We do not feel there is a need for a central sanitary sewer on the above barrier islands. To our knowledge there is no general substantiated environmental issue with the existing private septic systems on the 3 barrier islands for single family residences. Furthermore, if there were drastic environmental issues with the existing septic systems why is there no outcry from the state DEP or Charlotte County Health Department?

Re; Docket # 20240032-SU

- We do not know a neighbor or island resident who has requested central sewer service on the noted barrier islands.
- We are very concerned about the financial and organizational stability of Environmental Utilities in the undertaking of such a project. The for-profit utility has demonstrated a profit first attitude with many people on Lil Gasparilla Island over their water service connection demands. Water service that many island residents did not want. Does this sound familiar to objections voiced by islanders during the last application for certificate to provide wastewater service from this same utility and the current sentiment of the islanders? We certainly think so!
- This mom-and-pop run utility lacks the structural/organizational stability and size to respond to major problems that will occur in the operation of a vital system like wastewater disposal. The utility work conducted by Environmental Utilities I have witnessed on the island was like the wild west. FYI I was a Florida Certified General Contractor (1985-2021) that worked with many large site development subs and Utility Contractors and what I witnessed on the Island was never done on our jobsites!
- The rates the utility charges for water are absurdly high based on the small economy of scale of the customer base, the enormous cost for a wastewater project in our current inflationary economic environment will be staggering. Correspondingly the rates charged to a customer will be unaffordable to many.

In these challenging economic times of historic inflation, the last thing we single family homeowners need is another huge expense for a wastewater utility that WE DO NOT WANT ! We islanders just incurred huge expense (emotional/economical) putting our homes and island back together after hurricanes Ian 2022 and Idalia 2023, we cannot afford this wastewater utility and its sky-high costs.

We implore you to see through Environmental Utilities for profit motives and DENY their application for certificate to provide wastewater services.

Sincerely,

Robert T. Mitchell

Brenda S. Mitchell

Hong Wang

From: bob@rowemitchell.com
Sent: Saturday, April 13, 2024 4:45 PM
To: Records Clerk
Cc: Office of Chairman La Rosa; Office of Commissioner Clark; Office of Commissioner Passidomo; Office of Commissioner Graham; Office of Commissioner Fay
Subject: Docket #20240032-SU objection to application for certificate to provide wastewater service by Environmental Utilities LLC
Attachments: objection to wastewater utility application Public Service Commission.docx

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Sarasota, Fl 34233

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Sincerely,

Robert T. Mitchell

Brenda S. Mitchell

From: [William O'Connell](mailto:William.O'Connell)
To: ClerkoftheCommissionclerk@psc.state.fl.us
Cc: [Office of Commissioner Clark](#); [Office of Commissioner Graham](#); [Office of Chairman La Rosa](#)
Subject: Docket 20240032-SU
Date: Saturday, April 13, 2024 7:52:57 AM

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We do not need a sewer system. We will all re write the letter below to express our opposition. We have a great community on LGI and only strengthened by hardships such as Hurricane Ian.

This letter expresses the strong opposition of many LGI residents to the proposed mandatory connection to a new sewer system on our barrier island. We believe this project is unnecessary, financially burdensome, and raises significant environmental concerns.

Unnecessary Infrastructure:

- LGI residents have successfully used septic systems for decades without any reported issues of leakage or contamination.
- The recent addition of "city" water further reduces concerns, as shallow wells for drinking water are no longer in use.

Financial Burden:

- Many residents are still recovering from the financial devastation of Hurricane Ian.
- The rumored \$20,000 connection fee is an unreasonable additional expense, especially for those who recently replaced their septic systems.
- Forcing residents with fixed incomes to connect to a new system disregards their financial limitations.

Environmental Concerns:

- Environmental Utilities, the applicant, lacks experience managing wastewater utilities.
- Proper wastewater treatment is crucial for the health of Placida Bay and our island environment.
- We lack confidence in Environmental Utilities' ability to handle unforeseen circumstances or manage the system effectively.

Alternative Solutions:

- We are open to exploring options for affordable, well-managed sewer service if necessary.
- A system overseen by a reputable entity with a proven track record, such as Charlotte County, would be preferable.

Request for Denial:

We urge you to deny the current application for this proposed sewer system. LGI residents value our existing septic systems, our financial well-being, and the environmental health of our island. We believe alternative solutions can be explored if necessary.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
The Residents of LGI Barrier Island

Antonia Hover

From: Angie Ridings <a.ridings@att.net>
Sent: Thursday, April 11, 2024 6:41 PM
To: Records Clerk
Cc: Office of Chairman La Rosa; Office of Commissioner Clark; Office of Commissioner Passidomo; Office of Commissioner Graham; Office of Commissioner Fay; Pat Ridings
Subject: Re: New Docket #20240032-SU

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

Dear Clerk/Commissioners,

We are truly surprised Environmental Utilities (EU) request has once again been submitted when the prior application was denied in 2022 (Old Document # 20200226-SU). Our objections in regard to EU providing a wastewater service to Little Gasparilla Island have not changed. The conclusions for denial remain the same now as in the original filing.

There has been no evidence provided that supports the need for such service, and no request for such service has been requested or warranted. Nor will it be a request in the future. Little Gasparilla Island is a small private, bridge-less barrier island that we believe falls under the Rural Service Area Classification, which prohibits the county to extend a central sewer service to a bridge-less barrier island. Individual septic systems are already in place. This island is not suited for high-density development.

Again, how does EU plan to use "our" private property and/or easements for their pump stations/waste collection system without cost to them? Our property will just be donated? Access to our private property would be required at all times in order for EU to empty their septic tank. How is installing "their" septic tank and taking out our septic tank any improvement? In addition, their system needs to be connected to each homeowner's electrical service. In Florida, electricity is unavailable quite frequently. Especially on a barrier island, the time it takes to restore electricity can be extensive thereby making the system unusable with the likelihood of a sewer backup. How is that environmentally sound?

The "estimated" cost to homeowners is astronomical. Best guess hook up fee at \$12,000, plus this fee, and that fee and oh yes, that other fee. Not including the wastewater charge and probably a maintenance charge, and I'm sure there is just one more charge to add on. This doesn't even include the water bill that EU currently charges, which is radically high as well. With the recent devastation from Hurricane Ian, many islanders are still engaged in fighting with insurance companies, and many have already paid out large sums to rebuild their homes. Several have just put in new septic systems and others have spent thousands on improvements. This places excessive burden on all the homeowners of LGI.

The owners of EU still have no technical expertise needed to operate a wastewater system on a barrier island, nor have they provided any documentation of qualified professionals who they "may" hire to operate such a system. No health concerns have been identified, nor any water quality issues. IF this were the case why would the County still continue to issue permits for new septic systems on the island?

It makes me ponder, what is the real reason this application is back on the table?
Please consider our concerns. They are the very same as before, nothing has changed.
Best Regards,

> JP Ridings
> pridings1109@gmail.com
> Angela Ridings

> a.ridings@att.net

> On Jan 20, 2022, at 1:01 PM, Records Clerk <CLERK@PSC.STATE.FL.US> wrote:

>

> Good Afternoon, JP Ridings,

>

> 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.

>

> -----Original Message-----

> From: Angie Ridings <a.ridings@att.net>

> Sent: Thursday, January 20, 2022 12:46 PM

> To: Records Clerk <CLERK@PSC.STATE.FL.US>

> Cc: Pat Ridings <pridings1109@gmail.com>

> Subject: Docket #20200226-SU

>

> Dear Clerk of the Commission,

>

> As an interested party in property located on Little Gasparilla Island, We object to the Application of Certificate by Environmental Utilities (EU) for the proposed central sewer system based on the following:

>

> 1. Environmental Impact. Little Gasparilla is a Barrier Island with no connecting roadways or bridges to the mainland of Florida, you arrive only by boat. There are no commercial facilities, no roadways or retail development on the island, only our modest homes. It is old Florida, not Boca Grande. If a sewer pipeline is installed across the intracoastal waterway, how will a pipe leak in the middle of the waterway be detected? Who will be responsible for cleanup of such an environmental catastrophe? Who will be responsible for maintenance and/or equipment failure of such proposed sewer line? A private company with no employees or experience? To our knowledge, no water testing has been performed to determine the actual need of a sewer line vs. the septic systems currently in place. The waste management system in Florida is already overtaxed. If a central sewer system is installed, how will the mainland system handle additional households from the barrier islands, along with any additional development occurring on the mainland itself? Millions of gallons of raw sewage have been spilled into waterways by damaged lines throughout the State of Florida; therefore, is a sewer pipeline across the waterway the correct solution for our island and the environment?

>

> 2. Financial Stability/Experience of EU. Environmental Utilities (EU) is a "for profit" private company with no financial history and unknown sewer utility management experience regarding environmentally sensitive endeavors such as tying a sewer line from the mainland to a private barrier island. EU should be required to provide a history of all sewer projects of this magnitude, especially since it involves environmentally sensitive areas including the intracoastal

waterway. Do they have such history? No, they do not. In addition, how will EU financially complete this project? What happens when EU runs out of money or goes bankrupt prior to the completed project? Where does that leave the homeowners? Where is our recourse?

>

> 3. Unknown Cost to Homeowners. There are so many unknown/hidden costs to the homeowners with this proposal. An estimated upfront hookup fee of \$15,000-20,000 per homeowner has been rumored regarding the system connection and current septic removal. Since there are no "roads" on the island how will large equipment transverse the island to fill or remove all septic tanks without destroying private property? Who pays for that damage? In addition, no estimated cost of monthly rates, no estimated amount of maintenance costs and no estimated operational costs have been provided. What happens when equipment needs to be replaced in five years due to the nature of island living? Will this be our expense directly or indirectly through rate hikes? Power outages occur frequently on the island, what happens if the system uses a grinder pump? The system will be unable to operate without power, resulting in a sewer back-up. Is that more environmentally friendly than septic? Will homeowners be required to purchase and have generators in place to ensure EU's system is operational during power outages? Will the homeowners pay for the charges to run those generators? In addition, if there is an upfront fee required, there should be other payment options available to homeowners such as payments spread over time. Rates should be fair and equitable, not just to the benefit of a private company who can increase rates whenever they want.

>

> 4. 2017 Sewer Master Plan. If this sewer project is state mandated, why is this environmentally sensitive project being proposed by an unknown inexperienced sewer utility management company (EU) and not handled by the County and/or State of Florida?

>

> 5. Location of Lift Station(s)and Sewer Lines. No map has been provided indicating the location of any lift stations, lines, etc. The island is private; therefore, no easements. Homeowners should be provided with a map(s) of the proposed location of all lift stations, lines, etc. and given ample time to review such plans prior to any approval or commencement. IF this project is approved, EU should be required to pay all homeowners current market value for any and all easements they may require for implementation.

>

> Possible Alternatives:

> 1. Perform a Water Quality Test to determine if such a system is necessary.

> 2. Property owners commit to have current septic systems inspected, and upgraded/improved (if necessary).

> 3. County to initiate, complete and maintain the project vs. a "for profit" private company with no financial history or sewer utility management experience.

>

> As a stakeholder in the proposed service area, it is important to have all of the relevant information regarding the proposed central sewer, including but not limited to, the proposed rates, connection fees, maintenance and operational costs, homeowners recourse, and the type of system intended for installation We therefore request that EU's request be denied.

>

> Sincerely,

>

> JP Ridings

> pridings1109@gmail.com

> Angela Ridings

> a.ridings@att.net

Antonia Hover

From: John Baird <jbaird@highlandag.com>
Sent: Friday, April 12, 2024 12:59 PM
To: Records Clerk; Office of Chairman La Rosa; Office of Commissioner Clark; Office of Commissioner Passidomo; mfriedman@deanmead.com
Cc: lane.baird@verizon.net; Bill.Truex@CharlotteCountyFL.gov
Subject: Docket No.20240032-SU- Knight - Don Pedro Island / EU Re-Application for Certificate of Authorization - OBJECTION TO RE-APPLICATION 04/03/2024
Attachments: Docket #20240032-SU (BAIRD).pdf

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

Dear County Commissioners and Public Service Commissioners,

I write to you today with a sense of urgency and deep concern regarding the **ongoing consideration of Environmental Utilities LLC's** application for a Wastewater Certificate in Charlotte County, Florida. **Despite previous rejections and undeniable evidence against the applicant**, it appears that this matter is being revisited, raising serious doubts about the integrity of the decision-making process.

The very fact that Environmental Utilities LLC, an applicant with a criminal background directly related to the industry they seek to enter, is being considered for such a crucial project is **alarming**. The lack of experience, funding plans, and business planning further underscore the unsuitability of this applicant for such a responsibility.

As elected representatives entrusted with the well-being of our community, it is imperative that you uphold the will of the people you serve. The initial denial of the application was a reflection of the community's concerns and the absence of any substantial justification for such a project. **Revisiting this decision undermines the trust placed in your governance and raises questions about ulterior motives.**

I urge you to consider the following points:

1. **Lack of Substantiated Need:** The previous denial highlighted the lack of evidence supporting the necessity of the proposed project. Without empirical data to justify the need, approving this application would be unjustifiable.
2. **Zero Experience in Wastewater Management:** Entrusting such a critical infrastructure project to an applicant with zero days of wastewater systems management experience is reckless and irresponsible.
3. **Absence of Funding Plans and Business Planning:** The applicant has failed to provide any concrete plans regarding funding, business strategy, or environmental impact assessments, further highlighting their unsuitability for this endeavor.
4. **Potential Environmental Impact:** Approving a project without proper planning and justification could have severe environmental consequences, threatening the pristine condition of our properties and islands destroying habitat and interference with species such as the endangered and protected gopher tortoise.
5. **Criminal Record:** Environmental Utilities LLC has a criminal record directly related to the utilities industry, casting serious doubt on their suitability for such a project.
6. **Power Related Issues & Unjustified Financial Burden:** Since we have purchased our home on the island, our property taxes have skyrocketed with no additional support by Charlotte County. Now, in addition, a private utility wants to charge for something that is **unwarranted and unmerited**. How we will use a **basic function** without power, as we lose electricity frequently during the numerous Florida summer storms, has yet to be explained.

I implore you to prioritize the interests and well-being of the community and the native species over any potential special interests or ulterior motives. Uphold the integrity of our governance by rejecting Environmental Utilities LLC's application and ensuring that decisions are made in the best interests of the people you represent.

The eyes of the community are upon you, and your actions in this matter will have lasting repercussions. Please stand on the side of integrity, transparency, and the will of the people.

Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter.

// John and Elaine Baird

John & Elaine Baird

241 Kettle Harbor Drive,

Placida, FL 33946

April 12, 2024

Subject: Urgent Appeal to Reject Environmental Utilities LLC's Wastewater Certificate Application

Docket No. 20240032 – SU – Knight – Don Pedro Island / EU Re-Application for Certificate Authorization

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Baird - 241 Kettle Harbor Dr – Docket No. 20240032 SU – Knight - Don Pedro Island

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// John A and Elaine M Baird

John & Elaine Baird

241 Kettle Harbor Drive,

Placida, FL 33946

Antonia Hover

From: Daniel McMaster <magndan14@hotmail.com>
Sent: Saturday, April 13, 2024 9:28 AM
To: Records Clerk
Cc: Office of Chairman La Rosa
Subject: Proposed sewer service on Little Gasparilla Island, docket# 20240032-su

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

To whom it may concern, I am a home owner on this island house #8550. I strongly oppose the proposal. We do not require sewers, adequate septic systems prevail. The physical trauma and costs of sewer installation on this tiny island are not warranted. The sewage handling capacities on the mainland are already stressed without adding to it. My recommendations are more timely inspections of on island septic systems and restriction on number of renters per unit. Kind regards, Daniel McMaster : cell 9055417578 Sent from my iPad