

**Yvette Gillespie**

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**From:** Office of Chairman La Rosa  
**Sent:** Wednesday, April 17, 2024 11:20 AM  
**To:** Commissioner Correspondence  
**Subject:** Docket Correspondence - 20240032  
**Attachments:** DOCKET #20240032-SU; Septic - Palm Island; New Docket #20240032-SU ; Palm Island - Request for Wastewater Service; Request for Wastewater Service; objection to Environmental Utilities LLC sewage project. Palm Island; For Centralized Sewer on LGI

Good morning,

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

Thank you.

## Yvette Gillespie

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**From:** laurie gaines <gaines555@earthlink.net>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, April 17, 2024 10:56 AM  
**To:** Office of Chairman La Rosa  
**Subject:** DOCKET #20240032-SU

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TO. Commissioner LaRosa

FROM: Laurie and Buddy Gaines  
8814 Grand Avenue  
Little Gasparilla Island, (Placida) FL. 33946  
815-440-0001

SUBJECT: DOCKET #20240032-SU

It has been brought to our attention that once again, a small local company is attempting to force LGI residents to connect to a proposed sewer system on our remote barrier island.

We have several objections to this proposal and would request that you deny the application.

**First and foremost, we do not need central sewer and have never asked that this service be provided.** We have been successfully using septic systems for the over 40 years that we have owned on the island. We maintain the system dutifully, have had it pumped when necessary and have never experienced any leakage or overflow. In addition, the island now has access to “city” water (also forced upon us recently at significant expense) so there is little to no concern about septic contamination of ground water for drinking, since we no longer have shallow wells to provide drinking water.

**Secondly, being forced to hook up to this utility will cause undue financial hardship for many island residents.** Most of us are still recovering from the devastating effects of Hurricane Ian and still fighting with insurance companies in order to complete needed repairs. Adding the financial burden of a forced hookup to septic services when many of us have paid thousands and thousands of dollars already — and in some cases hundreds of thousands — in unreimbursed hurricane repairs puts an unnecessary strain on the finances of most of our island neighbors. Many of us are senior citizens/retirees on fixed incomes and simply cannot afford the hookup fee (rumored to be in excess of \$20,000.) Many of our neighbors have also just replaced their aging septic systems with brand new, extremely expensive systems. This is simply an unfair expense for them.

Third, however — and perhaps most important — is the fact that many of us are not actually opposed to sewer service as long as it is affordable (monthly payments or property tax assessments possibly) and well-managed by a reputable entity. However, we **prefer that the services be provided by Charlotte County** which at least has a regulatory structure in place and offers financial stability. **Environmental Utilities is an unknown company with absolutely NO EXPERIENCE WHATSOEVER in managing a wastewater utility.** We believe something as critical as wastewater treatment needs to be handled by a professional entity, not a local individual merely looking to profit. I am not privy to all details, but whether the option is to pump waste off the island under Placida Bay OR treat it on the island, handling of this waste is of paramount importance to

maintain the quality of the water in the Bay and to maintain the quality of life on the island. We do not believe that Environmental Utilities has the knowledge or experience to properly deal with any unforeseen circumstances, much less effectively manage it on an ongoing basis.

We respectfully request that you deny this application.

PS: I originally sent this email on April 8 but did not receive confirmation that it was received. So I am sending it again. Can you acknowledge receipt of this communication?

Respectfully,  
Laurie and Buddy Gaines

## **Yvette Gillespie**

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**From:** Sharon\_saad <sharon\_saad@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, April 17, 2024 10:44 AM  
**To:** Office of Chairman La Rosa  
**Subject:** Septic - Palm Island

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Stewart & Sharon Saad  
29 N Gulf Blvd  
561 N Gulf Blvd  
571 N Gulf Blvd

We have personally and professionally known Jack, Diane, and all the Boyer children in our 20+ years on Palm Island, we support treated wastewater and commend their continued efforts to improve the island like they always have.

### **Environmental Considerations**

In our opinion, there is nothing more disgustingly irresponsible than to continually flush millions of gallons of human sewer waste into poorly maintained, uncertified, and decades old septic drain fields. Simply put, there is nothing more environmentally destructive island residents, renters, and owners can do to the water quality of our bays, canals, and subsoils of our lots and beaches.

### **Increasing Volumes**

Time is of the essence for island sewer, the number of full-time residents and visitors to our island(s) has greatly increased over the last 5+ years, probably doubled; meaning the human waste volumes have doubled over historic levels. The environmental impacts of the dramatic increase in sewer volumes should be addressed, the impacts of raw sewer being dumped into islands groundwater system should not be ignored any longer.

Sent from my iPhone

## Yvette Gillespie

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**From:** shannon ridings <sridings10@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, April 16, 2024 6:00 PM  
**To:** Office of Chairman La Rosa; Office of Commissioner Clark; Office of Commissioner Passidomo; Office of Commissioner Graham; Office of Commissioner Fay  
**Subject:** 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,

I am writing to request that you AGAIN deny the request by Environmental Utilities to provide wastewater services to Little Gasparilla Island. There has been no demand for this type of service, nor any indication such service is warranted. There have been no health concerns identified, nor any water quality issues. If this were an issue, then why does the County still issue permits for new septic systems on the island? So it makes me wonder what has changed since the first denial?

### Concerns:

1. Our properly maintained septic system is still more appropriate than the proposed system, which requires EU to remove or abandon our septic tank to install their septic tank. How is that a better solution? Several homeowners have just put in new septic systems and others have spent thousands on improvements. In addition, EU's system needs to be connected to each homeowner's electrical service, on a separate electric panel at the cost of homeowners. The system will also require the installation of a pump at each homeowner's expense. During power outages, which occurs frequently, each homeowner would also need to have a backup generator installed in order to prevent a sewage backup. Again, this responsibility and expense would fall upon the homeowner, not Jack Boyer. Being on a "bridge-less" island it takes several hours and sometimes even days for the electricity to be restored to the island. Several of the homeowners do not live on the island full time to monitor this, therefore, this system is a horrible idea and would be a disaster. In addition, this type of system costs considerably more to maintain and operate. Not to mention the initial "estimated" cost to homeowners of \$12,000-\$15,000 is astronomical. Then there's a base facility charge, and a monthly charge, and a connection charge and so many unknown charges. A true cost has not been provided by EU, all is speculation. What recourse does the homeowners have in case of failure? These "estimated" fees don't even include the water bill that EU currently charges, which is radically much higher than the water costs on the mainland. Very apparent it's now all about making money.

2. Also of concern is the question of possible easements to our personal property for EU's proposed system. In Mr. Boyer's presentation he requests that our private property be given to him at "no cost". There has been no discussion of access, or how much property is required or negotiations with homeowners to obtain any reasonable compensation, or how future easements would be granted. The majority of the island is not occupied by full time residents or renters. There are no bridges to the island, nor any real roads. The island is transversed mainly by golf carts, or on foot via sand paths. Basically the entire island is land locked and not suitable for high density development.

3. EU is a private, "for profit" company with no financial history or technical expertise needed to operate a wastewater system on a barrier island, nor have they provided any documentation of any qualified professionals. EU should be required to provide a history of all sewer projects of this magnitude, especially since it involves environmentally sensitive areas, but they cannot. Isn't that a red flag? How will the system be

serviced in the event of a disaster or an emergency? If the County has changed its mind and now desires the barrier islands to implement a wastewater system then why doesn't the County do it themselves?

4. The environmental impact of this proposal is extremely high not only due to the septic issues that will surely arise due to electrical issues but to the environmental disruption of habitat and endangered species on the island itself.

This is my formal objection to the wastewater proposal by EU. I request that PSC again deny EU's certificate for wastewater services and also deny any future requests without us all being required to address this over and over.

Shannon Ridings  
[sridings10@gmail.com](mailto:sridings10@gmail.com)  
LGI Dock 21

## **Yvette Gillespie**

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**From:** Chad Durrance <chad@durranceappraisals.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, April 16, 2024 5:50 PM  
**To:** Office of Chairman La Rosa  
**Subject:** Palm Island - Request for Wastewater Service

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Commisioner LaRosa-

I have been a property owner on Palm Island for over 20 years, first having lived in Palm Island resort and I am currently building a home at 461 North Gulf Boulevard. I would very respectfully request that you vote in favor of centralized wastewater service for the entirety of the island for a number of reasons.

1. I am in the process of building a home and in probably about 12 months will be spending a little over \$20,000 for a septic tank and drainfield system that most government agencies and scientific bodies would tell you is not as beneficial to the environment as a centralized waste water system. So not only is it better financially for my particular situation, but as with everybody else it is overall better for the water quality surrounding the island. I realize there are some folks that have recently built a house and therefore recently spent money to install a new septic and drain field and they are against centralized sewer simply because of the cost. I understand their position and am I sympathetic, but I will let them write their own letter to the council and plead their case.
2. A raised drainfield and septic system takes up about a third or more of my lot area outside of my home footprint. With centralized sewer I could be using that area for a lot more productive uses by freeing up the space.

As with most communities, persons on the island see issues through different sets of lenses and from different perspectives. I respect everyone's opinion and position that writes to this commission but wanted to let you know there are long time property and homeowners on the island that would like to see a centralized wastewater system. Thank you for your consideration.

**Chad Durrance, MAI | Cert Gen RZ987**

Durrance & Associates  
300 S. Hyde Park Avenue, Suite 201  
Tampa, Florida 33606  
(D) 813.258.8464 | (C) 813.477.3388

## Yvette Gillespie

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**From:** jack murray <jkmurrayiii@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, April 16, 2024 5:45 PM  
**To:** Office of Chairman La Rosa  
**Subject:** Request for Wastewater Service

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Hello- I own Lot 28 on Palm Island and would appreciate it if you would support the extension of wastewater services to the Island. I am in the process of building a home there and based on the amount of money I am investing there, as well as the amount of taxes I pay there, I feel this is an appropriate request. These services will greatly enhance the community in a number of ways. Thanks for your consideration in this matter.

Jack Murray

**Jack Murray III**  
Partner, Murray – Bertron, LLC

1700 South MacDill Ave., Suite 220  
Tampa, FL 33629

813-223-2424 (Main)  
813-229-3702 (Fax)

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## Yvette Gillespie

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**From:** Jan Behnke <sodacreek@qwestoffice.net>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, April 16, 2024 12:59 PM  
**To:** Office of Chairman La Rosa  
**Subject:** objection to Environmental Utilities LLC sewage project. Palm Island  
**Attachments:** objection to Environmental Utilities LLC sewage project. Palm Island.docx

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**PETER STIMMEL**

**P.O. Box 961**

**291 Kettle Harbor Drive/Don Pedro Island**

**Placida, FL 33946**

**[peteyrotten@gmail.com](mailto:peteyrotten@gmail.com)**

**(970) 819-8972**

April 16, 2024

RE: Docket #20240032-SU

Commissioner LaRosa

[Commissioner LaRosa@psc.state.fl.us](mailto:CommissionerLaRosa@psc.state.fl.us)

I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed sewage project on Palm Island. As a contractor in Colorado, I bid on and won both city and federal government projects. We were provided extensive blue prints and spec sheets. There was always a minimum of 3 bidders. The winner was vetted and bonded. Having one bidder on what sounds like an unusual, far-from-standard project gives me pause. Cost, guarantees and qualification in similar projects should all be taken into consideration.

The islanders were all but unanimous in rejecting Mr. Jack Boyer dba Environmental Utilities LLC and this project just last year. I have never met the man but in my 7+ years living on the island full-time, I have never heard a positive word said about him. Most of the negativity comes from a water project on LGI that sounded like some questionable steps were taken, leading to an arrest. Have water quality tests been completed identifying the need for a new system in light of the fact that very few residents live on the island year-round (most being 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> homes with occasional weekenders)? Has a study been done as to the reliability of a pump and suction sewer system in other locations?

It seems a lot more questions need to be answered before the bidding process should be reopened to contractors qualified to guarantee such a system. Since we, the islanders, will bear the brunt of the cost and inconvenience of such a project, we deserve more research to be done and more information provided. When a community spends well over \$100,000 fighting a project like last year, I believe our concerns are real and should be considered.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Peter Stimmel

## Yvette Gillespie

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**From:** Karress Slattery <karress.slattery@shorepointhealth.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, April 16, 2024 12:53 PM  
**To:** Office of Chairman La Rosa  
**Subject:** For Centralized Sewer on LGI

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Good afternoon commissioners,

I have lived on Little Gasparilla Island full time now for almost 5 years. I would like to be very clear that I am FOR sewer systems on our island. There is a huge need for them. One example, No septic trucks have come out to the island since Hurricane Ian hit back in September 2022. There is a list with dozens upon dozens of people waiting to get their septic pumped. Two on that list are my neighbors. They have been needing and waiting for their tanks to be pumped for almost two years. Our own septic tanks is getting close now and we can't even get on the list because it is so backed up. This is just ONE example.

I don't allow my children to go play in the rain, or play in the water on a high tide due to constant septic tank flooding and overflow. After Idalia there were several septic tanks that floated up entirely and drained all over our island.

The constant fish kill, change in our seagrasses, the newly formed jelly fish that are surrounding our island and waters, all from Septic in my opinion. The research proves it all.

Please consider servicing our beautiful island who has worked so hard to recover from Ian. Septic is that last thing that needs to go.

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