

Yvette Gillespie

From: Office of Commissioner Passidomo
Sent: Wednesday, April 17, 2024 11:43 AM
To: Commissioner Correspondence
Subject: Docket No. 20240032
Attachments: DOCKET 20240032-SU; Docket #20240032-SU; Septic - Palm Island; Request For Wastewater Service : Docket #20240032-SU

Please place the attached in Docket No. 20240032.

Thank you!

Yvette Gillespie

From: laurie gaines <gaines555@earthlink.net>
Sent: Wednesday, April 17, 2024 10:57 AM
To: Office of Commissioner Passidomo
Subject: DOCKET 20240032-SU

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TO: COMMISSIONER PASSIDOMO

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

From: Randy Blalock <randyrblalock@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, April 17, 2024 10:53 AM
To: Records Clerk; Office of Chairman La Rosa; Office of Commissioner Clark; Office of Commissioner Passidomo; Office of Commissioner Fay; Office of Commissioner Graham
Cc: Paul Blalock; Randy Blalock
Subject: Docket #20240032-SU

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Public Service Commission

RE: Docket #20240032-SU

To: Whom it May Concern,

We are writing to you today to ask the Public Service Commission (PSC) to please deny the recent Application for certificate to provide wastewater services in Charlotte County by Environmental Utilities, LLC. (Docket # 20240032-SU). My husband and I purchased our home on Don Pedro Island last June because we loved the old Florida lifestyle that this island offers. When looking at homes on the island we were pleased to know that it had a septic tank vs sewer system. To be proactive, we chose to have our septic system replaced so we would not question the condition of an existing tank, knowing we will properly maintain our new septic tank. Having lived in Florida for our entire lives, we have seen how sewer system pollution has become a problem throughout the state, especially in coastal areas where flooding occurs after major rains, storms, and hurricanes. We are opposed to the new proposal for a central sewer system. Our concerns for our island are the following:

1-We have not heard of or had a conversation with any of our neighbors on the island that requested the change from septic to sewer. Who is requesting this change? Is there a large group of property owners that are in favor of the change?

2-We have not been given or found any factual evidence that a central sewer system is more environmentally friendly, has more advantages, or is better than a septic system.

3-What experience does Environmental Utilities have in wastewater systems? Do they have the financial backing to support emergency situations and constantly maintain their systems over the years to prevent leakage and harm to our beautiful island and surrounding waterways?

4-The costs associated with the new system (Hook-up, increased electric bills, generators, tree removal) will be a hardship on many and without proven evidence of the advantages. This change should be our choice and not one of someone who does not live on the island.

5-The infrastructure of our island will be disrupted with the placement of a new system that will affect property owners, wildlife (some endangered), property rights, and traffic.

6-Potential leaks in future if not maintained or damaged.

We personally would not choose to have a central sewer system installed on Don Pedro Island and hope you will consider denying the recent application for certificate to provide wastewater services in Charlotte County by Environmental Utilities, LLC. (Docket # 20240032-SU). We have stated our concerns and our desires as property owners at 391 Kettle Harbor Dr., Placida FL and strongly feel that it should be the island property owners that make this decision because we are the ones that live and care for our special island.

Please feel free to reach out to us if you have any questions and thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Mr. and Mrs. Paul and Randy Blalock

391 Kettle Harbor Dr

Placida FL 33946

(863) 698-0767

randyrblalock@gmail.com

paulblalock505@gmail.com

Yvette Gillespie

From: Sharon_saad <sharon_saad@yahoo.com>
Sent: Wednesday, April 17, 2024 10:45 AM
To: Office of Commissioner Passidomo
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

From: G.S. Buhler <gsbuhler@aol.com>
Sent: Wednesday, April 17, 2024 10:15 AM
To: Records Clerk
Cc: Office of Chairman La Rosa; Office of Commissioner Passidomo; Office of Commissioner Clark; Office of Commissioner Fay
Subject: Request For Wastewater Service : Docket #20240032-SU

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Commissioners:

I have been a property owner on the island for over 20 years and I am 100 percent in favor of adding a central sewer system. The local PIE group has been sending out many emails and posts that are focused on the cost of this project - this group is very uneducated on the environmental impacts. It would be very beneficial to send someone to the island to host an educational meeting. Whether we add wastewater service today or not - it will happen sometime in the next few years - every year the cost will increase.

As commissioners, you are tasked with making the good decision for the people, county, and environment. It is our responsibility to protect our environment - and sometimes it will cost. Electric cars cost more than gas, but that is our future. There have been many case studies on septic tanks and the communities around them - they all agree they are very bad for the environment. They are all leaking into our waters. There has never been one single example that was not negative on septic tanks.

One more point - lets keep in mind that this program has been in place for several years on the North end of Palm Island - specifically in the resort and the street to the South. All run by a private company. I lived in this section for several years and it was great!!

Thank you,
Gary Buhler
gsbuhler@aol.com
53 Bayshore Circle