

Antonia Hover

From: Betty Leland
Sent: Tuesday, April 23, 2024 7:25 AM
To: Commissioner Correspondence
Subject: Docket #20240032
Attachments: Docket #20240032; RE: Docket #20240032-SU; Docket #20240032-SU

Good Morning:

Please place this email in Docket #20240032.

Thanks.

Betty A. Leland, Executive Assistant to
Commissioner Art Graham
Florida Public Service Commission
bleland@psc.state.fl.us
(850) 413-6024

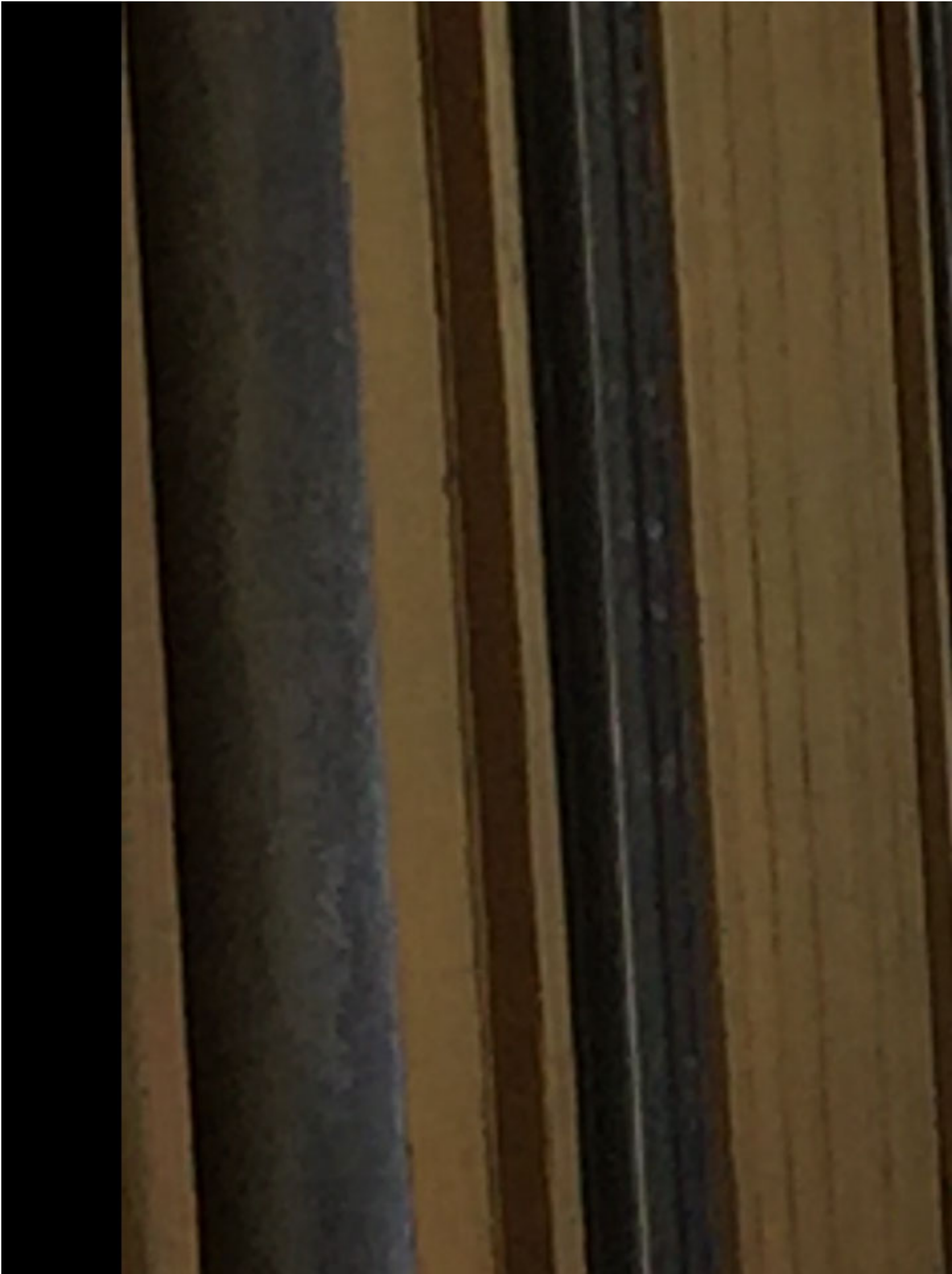
Antonia Hover

From: Roy & Wendy Petteway <oranges@embarqmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, April 23, 2024 6:34 AM
To: Records Clerk; Office of Commissioner Passidomo; Office of Commissioner Graham;
Office of Chairman La Rosa; Office of Commissioner Clark; Office of Commissioner Fay
Subject: Docket #20240032

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I have photographs you may be interested to see concerning the water utility service provided by the Petitioner, Environmental Utilities, LLC. Before Hurricane Ian we had a fire hydrant in the back of our home at 9744 Little Gasparilla Island. During the cleanup of storm debris, heavy equipment broke the fire hydrant and as you can see from recent photos, it has never been replaced. They are aware of this as they capped off the pipe and left it. This is an example of the haphazard service provided by Environmental Utilities, LLC and leaves the homeowners on the south end of LGI by our home with no fire protection.

Wendy Petteway
9744 Little Gasparilla Island
Placida, FL



6:13 AM Tue Apr 23



6:13 AM Tue Apr 23



LIVE ▾



Sent from my iPad

Antonia Hover

From: leerobertsdpt@gmail.com
Sent: Monday, April 22, 2024 10:39 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: RE: Docket #20240032-SU

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Dear Public Service Commissioners:

My name is Lee Roberts and I, along with my family, own a home at 8302 Little Gasparilla Island. I write this letter in opposition to the central sewer system proposed by Jack Boyer via Environmental Utilities (EU). I ask the Public Service Commission (PSC) to deny EU's application for wastewater service. It is appalling to me that the citizens in my area are being subjected to this request again after it was rejected by the PSC when it was last brought up less than two years ago.

My opposition is based on many issues. My family has owned our residence since 1985. We greatly enjoy the "old Florida" feel of the island. Unfortunately, Jack Boyer has tried to edge out that feel in preference to his desire to monetarily benefit from the citizens on the island. Several years ago, Mr. Boyer was able to convince the Charlotte County Board of County Commissioners to change their own planning document, Charlotte 2050 Comprehensive Plan (Charlotte 2050), for future safe growth in the county in favor of Mr. Boyer and Gasparilla Water Utility. After that decision, the PSC awarded Mr. Boyer the highest water meter (base) rates in the entire state of Florida by almost double the nearest rate for another utility. Public counsel at that time advised against doing this.

We are now forced to work with EU again trying to put in a sewer system on the island. Mr. Boyer has never installed a sewer system and based on his previous installment issues with water, I am very concerned. As I stated in previous letters, Mr. Boyer seems to believe that he has "eminent domain" to go wherever he wants in installing his systems. His lack of trust from many on the island is of grave concern with regards to his intentions. From the aforementioned Charlotte 2050 plan, I refer you to several areas which should preclude consideration for this proposed sewer system. In the subsection referring to Coastal Services Planning, **CST Policy 1.1.3: Protection of Coastal Planning Area** states that "The County shall not approve projects that adversely impact the social, economic, or environmental productivity, integrity, or values of natural resources in the CPA" (Coastal Planning Area). In the second section of this planning is **CST Policy 1.2.3: Barrier Island Protection** which states that "The County shall require that all construction activities on or off the shore of the barrier islands shall not detrimentally impact the barrier island system and shall support local and State regulations pertaining to construction seaward of the Coastal Construction Control Line (CCCL). And in the fifth section of that area of the plan is **CST Policy 1.5.1: Coastal Construction** which states that "All construction activity is prohibited seaward of the CCCL except as permitted by the FDEP under Beach and Shore Preservation, Chapter 161, F.S." Many homes are seaward of the CCCL and could not be served by a sewer project nor a water system.

Moving forward to the section on Future Land Use, you will find numerous other policies that preclude central sewer installation on the island. The explanation for subsection three denotes that "To protect the existing rural character of those areas of the County within the Rural Service Area (FLUM Series Map #3) and thereby ensure this lifestyle is preserved for existing residents and remains available to future generations." On FLUM Series

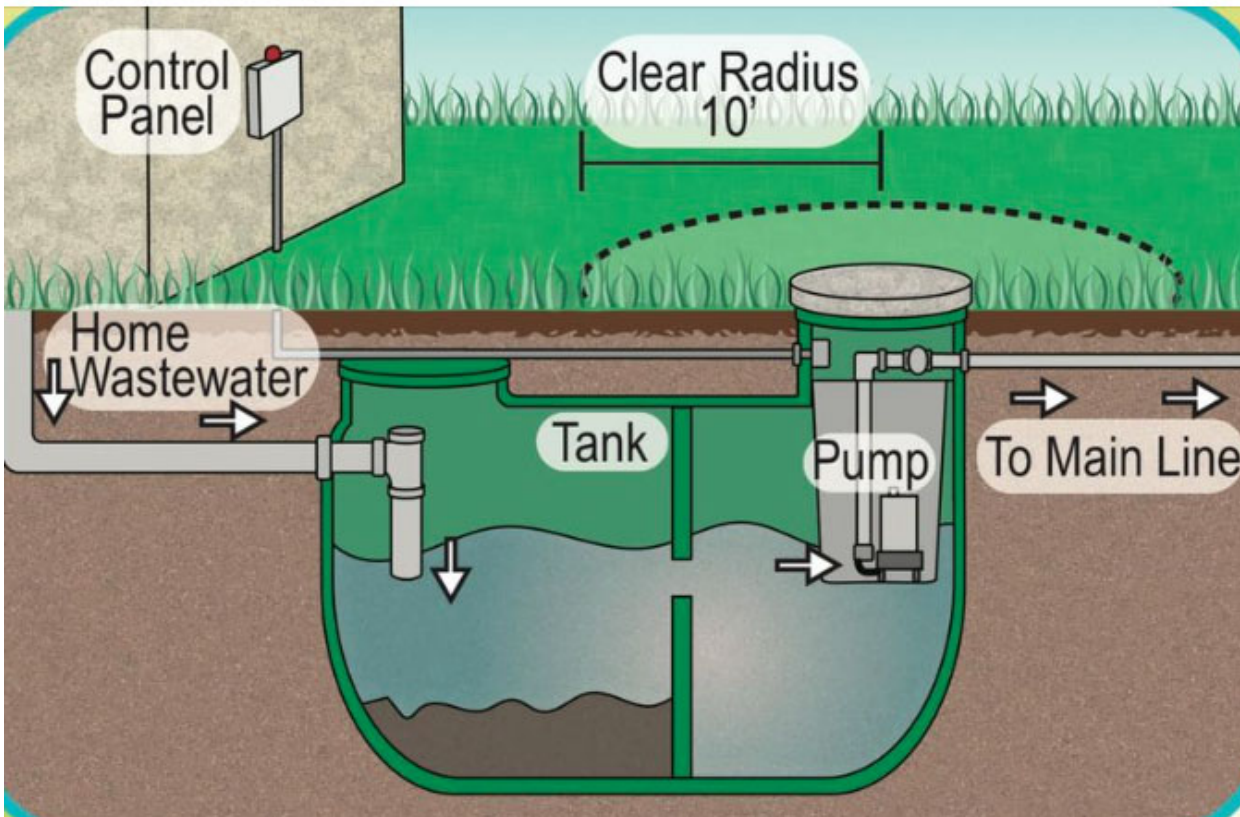
Map #3, Little Gasparilla Island is designated as a Rural Service Area. This policy is further strengthened in **FLU Policy 3.2.4: Limitation on the Extension of Urban Infrastructure** where it clearly states “Infrastructure such as water and sewer utilities and stormwater facilities within the Rural Service Area shall reflect a rural level of service and shall not be modified to the point that it allows for urban development. The County shall prohibit the provision of water and sewer infrastructure within the Rural Service Area and shall: 1. Continue to rely primarily upon individual on-site wells as the method of providing potable water to the residents and other occupants; 2. Continue to rely primarily upon individual on-site septic systems as the method of disposal of wastewater; 3. Require that new development shall not be designed nor constructed with centralized potable water or sanitary sewer systems with the following exceptions: a. Rural Community Mixed Use community; or b. It is clearly and convincingly demonstrated by the proponents of the system expansion that a health problem exists in a built but unserved area for which there is no other feasible solution. 4. Not require developments to connect to any central potable water or sanitary sewer services if these services are extended into the area except in those situations listed in 3. above.” My question is why would the PSC even consider this proposal when land use policy for Charlotte County is already in place stating that it will not be allowed. If “residents” or “owners of property” on the island come forward in favor of this request, I would suggest that the PSC mail each of those persons at their home addresses to verify their support thereby ensuring integrity for any requests. Please examine document 01108-2024.pdf and you will see that many of the letters asking for sewer installation are not home/land owners on Little Gasparilla Island and I have verified this by looking them up on the Property Appraiser’s website. I have spoken to no one who is in favor of this proposal.

I question the need for the proposed service as well. Mr. Boyer has previously suggested that the Charlotte Harbor “could” have increased algae counts based on an article that examined the water quality in the Indian River Basin on the east coast of Florida. He is now pushing a study, Science Supports a Septic-to-Sewer Conversion on the Barrier Islands of Charlotte County, Florida by Brian E. Lapointe, Ph.D. Ironically, most of Dr. Lapointe’s work has been on the east coast of Florida including the Indian River Basin and in the Keys. His research is severely flawed in that it attributes all of the algal blooms, etc. in Charlotte Harbor to septic tanks. If Dr. Lapointe were to look a few miles east he would see the discharges from Lake Okeechobee into the Charlotte Harbor. These same discharges have been directly linked to algal blooms and Red Tide in the Gulf of Mexico. Other than this report, and another one which he was paid to complete by the Charlotte County Commission, there is no direct link from those blooms back to septic systems. This is an example of poor research based on a wrong hypothesis. Additionally, as a medical provider, I value research that is published in peer-reviewed journals where validity is therefore assured. I do not see where any of Dr. Lapointe’s articles are in peer reviewed journals. I would like to ask the commission to inquire as to who or whom paid Dr. Lapointe for this study as he does not list his financial agreements in the content of the report.

In addition to his questionable installation practices and dishonest PR campaign, the fees he is proposing, both start up and monthly, are unfathomably high. Mr. Boyer, in his current proposal for this system, has stated that hookup fees will be \$13000 with the expectation that this would be paid up front, in full, by the homeowner. This is an astronomical amount of money to expect homeowners to pay for a project up front, especially one that most of us oppose. This ridiculous start-up cost isn’t the only exorbitant financial expectation of the homeowners. There is an additional \$1097 for sewer lateral installation fee (the charge to un the pipe from the road the location of the equipment). The proposed base rate for the sewer is \$107 monthly, and that is if the system is completely unused. The average monthly bill for a homeowner on Little Gasparilla Island for water and sewer if this proposal is approved will be \$183.08. That rate is more than double or even triple what other utility providers are charging. For example, just across the bay in Englewood, the average homeowner bill for both water and sewer is \$48. How can this be considered fair and equitable to homeowners? It simply cannot.

Additional costs are also noted that will lead to further financial hardship for the homeowners. The system proposed by EU requires a separate electric panel, installed by a licensed electrician at the expense of the homeowner to power the pump. There is discussion about the homeowner needing a generator for the system in the event of power disruption. Add to that the cost of tree/brush removal to access the septic area as well as the cost to bring in someone to crush and fill the septic tank. All of these expenses are to be covered by the homeowner in addition to the hookup fees, bringing the actual start-up costs for this project to upwards of \$20K

at a minimum. This also does not solve anything. On the graphic below regarding low pressure sewer systems provided on the Charlotte County website, the tank with solid products will still need to be pumped out again at additional cost to the homeowner.



For me personally, having the past experiences with Mr. Boyer that I have had, I am most concerned about the lack of oversight for this project. It is my understanding that there will be no “contract” and no single point of general oversight. Even with highway projects, there are bonds set up to protect the public from someone walking away from a project. EU is not a contractor that has won a bid to install sewer. There is no performance bond required, and we have no single point of recourse in the event of cost overruns or project failure. I would suggest that the PSC conduct a survey of all residents/landowners to ascertain their preferences. My father worked in the paving and excavation business for years. He was never able to walk in with a plan and not have at least one other bid placed to look at whether his proposal was viable and cost effective. Why is this not the policy in this case as well?

Little Gasparilla Island is a beautiful place that many people have grown up calling home. It is a retreat from the hustle and bustle of most other beaches in Florida. For a long time, it was an affordable place to own a home and vacation. My kids grew up visiting here. They learned to fish, swim, star gaze and find shark teeth. My grandkids are starting to do the same. If this new requirement passes, our family will not be able to afford the new system and will likely have to sell, as will other people who have called this place home for decades. Some homeowners will be forced to rent to cover costs or will sell to people who intend to rent, bringing more people and environmental impact to this beautiful barrier island. Mr. Boyer’s proposal has huge negative implications to the people who live here and to the environment. The costs are exorbitant, unnecessary, and frankly only benefit him.

With all of these concerns, I ask the PSC to deny EU’s proposed central sewer system.

Thank you for your time.

William Lee Roberts
Candace Anderson Roberts
22245 Stillwood Drive
Land O Lakes, FL 34639
(813) 230-1632

Willie Vance Brewer
Cathy Marie Brewer
5317 Falkirk Drive
Durham, NC 27712
(919) 215-0326

Cc: Martin S Friedman, Esquire
Dean Mead
420 S. Orange Ave.
Suite 700
Orlando FL 32801

Antonia Hover

From: Jenny Dang <jenny_n_dang@yahoo.com>
Sent: Monday, April 22, 2024 7:19 PM
To: Office of Chairman La Rosa; Office of Commissioner Clark; Office of Commissioner Passidomo; Office of Commissioner Fay; Office of Commissioner Graham; Records Clerk
Subject: Docket #20240032-SU

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

To all the Commissioners and Clerk addressed here:

My name is Jennifer Dang, and my husband (Tri) and I are property owners on **Palm Island in Placida, Florida.**

I respectfully request that the PSC **DENY EU's application for wastewater service once again** due to the following reasons:

(1) **Is there an environmental safety need?** I continue to believe that there is **NOT a proven need for EU's persistence to provide wastewater service on the Island when clearly the residents of Palm Island have voted against the proposal for years.** Currently, we live in rural Virginia, and our house has not only a well but also a septic system. My parents' house in Georgia also used a septic system for decades. **If enforced and maintained appropriately, septic systems are very efficient and safe to the environment.** To date, the islanders are not aware of any ongoing water quality issue with the current individual sewage systems that require a need for a central sewage system proposed once again by EU. I continue to reiterate this ---- **"If it's not broken, don't fix it."** This ongoing saga with EU's proposal and you all - the commissioners are dealing with this **AGAIN, got to stop especially when folks on the Island are opposing to the EU proposal.**

(2) **The will of the people** --- As I stated above, the majority of owners on our island are opponents of the proposed service from EU.

(3) **Costs** --- Given the recent proposal provided by EU, the **added costs incurred by EU to the residents of Palm Island will be astronomical.** For instance, it would cost (a) \$12K for the initial hook up plus \$1,097 for the sewer lateral installation and not to mention an initial deposit of \$414, (b) the monthly bill of \$264 per month based on **PSC's estimated** average household usage of 4,000 gallons/month, (c) and other additional costs such as pump out, maintenance, electrical installation for the system and a generator to prevent possible sewage backup to the individual residences in case of a severe storm/hurricane, etc.

4) **The unknown** --- Since the County is not responsible for this project (so to speak), the homeowners on the Island will have no control over future costs due to rate increases over the years.

5) **Individual rights violation (most important of all)** --- Now from a personal perspective regarding individual rights, I would like to make a few statements. My husband and I are planning to finally break ground in 2025 for the construction of our retirement (forever) home on the lot that we purchased on the Island in 2013. We'll be

living full time on the Island in three years and cannot wait when that time comes. We both grew up in a communist regime (Vietnam) when we were little. We have been living in the States for close to 50 years now. **Freedom and individual rights especially during this tumultuous time that we as a country has been experiencing recently are very sacred to us**, and the state continues to allow EU to force their proposal down our throats is unacceptable and un-American. **As I stated in my previous communications to the Commissioners and Clerk, freedom and individual rights mean more to us than probably most folks because we know what it was like not to have it. My whole issue with this proposal is that when the majority of homeowners oppose to this proposal from EU over and over, why continue to force it down our throat again? And why are we (as property owners on the Island) have to endure this agony every few years because someone like EU thinks that they know best how we should all live. This is ABSURD. Again, as Americans, we cannot be forced to do something that we strongly oppose over and over (especially when there's no proven environmental safety need) just because someone believes that their proposal is better and good for the environment.**

I respectfully urge all PST commissioners to once again consider the long-term financial impact to the homeowners. As I stated a few years ago in my email to most of you, **please ask yourself this question, if you were the homeowner, what would you do and do you think that it's appropriate to allow someone continually forcing something on people that will have significant negative, long-lasting effects on people's lives especially when islanders are still dealing with the significant financial burden from the aftermath of Hurricane Ian. To me, again this practice is Un-American. Personally, this is something that you only see in third-world countries or what my husband and I used to experience in a communist regime when we were little kids and still carry those negative effects with us 50 years later - - where we didn't have a say on our daily lives.**

I hope that it is time we bring an end to this agony and again respectfully request that the PST settle this matter once for all (we thought you ALL did last time) ---- that **FREEDOM** to choose from the homeowners on the Island prevail. I thank you again in advance for your consideration.

Respectfully yours,

Jennifer Dang

Email: jenny_n_dang@yahoo.com