

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

April 18, 2024

Re: Docket No. 20240032-SU – Application for certificate to provide wastewater service in Charlotte County by Environmental Utilities LLC

Dear Sir or Madam:

We are writing to **object** to the application referenced above.

My husband, Andreas Hoeft, and I are homeowners of 631 and 621 Bocilla Drive on Don Pedro Island. We are Minnesota residents and use the Don Pedro Island properties for a getaway. We purchased 631 Bocilla Drive in 2022 (contains a home) and 621 Bocilla Drive (vacant lot) recently.

### **Our Island**

Our Island is not what you would expect being so close to the mainland. Don Pedro is completely without a bridge. There is a ferry service with barges that you drive on to get to the island. It is only operated from about 6am-11pm daily. It costs \$55 per car (per round trip) and fits about 8 standard passenger vehicles each trip. Despite the high cost, there are often long lines to get on and off the island.

If you are ever on Don Pedro Island at night, you will hardly ever see lights on in more than half of the houses—there are not many full-time residents. For us, it is a quiet sanctuary to get away from hectic life with our three kids. We come with lots of supplies and stay on the island for many days at a time, because of the ferry/barge. We golf cart around the island for cruises and maybe to the one and only restaurant.

### **Our Objections**

The island is served very well with septic systems. Allowing a private company to force everyone pay huge costs to change systems is completely unwarranted and unwanted.

As it relates to Don Pedro Island, Environmental Utilities, LLC's ("EU") application is **an extreme request that should only be made upon showing of an extreme need**. There is no such need, and in fact, we think it would be a detriment to our property enjoyment and property value. Please protect us from having to pay tens of thousands of dollars to make a change to a system that we don't want or need.

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We are extremely surprised that EU is even allowed to apply for another certificate after being denied in 2022, forcing homeowners to spend more time and money on **another fight against EU two short years later**. EU has still never provided proof that a different (and universal) sewage system is needed. If this application is allowed to move forward, this Commission would be allowing EU to perform a hostile takeover of the wastewater systems on our island. It would allow this for-profit corporation another bite of this apple they see as juicy with profit—our hard-earned money. This Commission should estop EU from going forward, as this has already been considered and decided. Many homeowners (like us) do not have Florida voting power as non-residents, but we still pay the same property taxes. We need the Commission to hear the residents' united objection and work to protect our interests once and for all against EU.

EU should be banned from even applying for this certificate, as it is a conflict of interest. EU is the only one claiming there is a problem and also requesting to be the company to fix it. They are asking the taxpayers to perform extremely expensive and disruptive work that **the taxpayers do not need or want**—for its own profit. They are not providing us with a service we need or furthering any governmental interest of Charlotte County.

The sewer proposed is not much different than the traditional septic systems we all already have—which are much more reliable and cost-effective to maintain. EU is not requesting a conventional city sewer. It is basically a septic system with pipes that carry away the water that would go into the drain field of the septic system.

Switching from a reliable septic system to **a low pressure sewer system is the antithesis of what homeowners want on a bridgeless island—it puts homeowners at risk for even worse damage after a storm**. As a bridgeless island, we are the last to get power restored after storms. The sewer system EU wants to put in in each home will push raw sewage into homes if power is out! After Ian, we were without power and water for over a week and advised not to come to the island. We are working hard to prevent and mitigate future damage from any future storms, and **the proposed new system would add tremendous risk of destructive sewer damage**.

On another note, the traffic from Ian repairs have put a huge strain on the barge that still remains almost two years later. It is hard to get contractors to come to our island because of the ferry. We have been on a waiting list for a contractor to fix our exterior since Ian, and he has finally started in February. EU's application does not address the lack of availability of all the contractors every homeowner would need to comply and does not adequately address "bargeability," the ability of the transit company to get that huge amount of traffic across. Right now, with the sustained increased traffic from Ian repairs, the ferry company is overwhelmed and asking large trucks to only come between 10am and 2pm.

The cost to each homeowner is excessive and reason enough for EU's application to be stopped immediately. We have all had much higher expenses with Ian and Idalia repairs. Many have taken out loans for that work. EU has failed to prove the benefits of the huge

expenses (both initially and monthly) to homeowners and failed to address the additional time and costs to get things done on a bridgeless island. It is extremely expensive for trucks to cross on the barge—a cost contractors put on the homeowners. (See [palmislandtransit.com/rates.html](http://palmislandtransit.com/rates.html), as they charge between \$450-\$700 for large trucks each roundtrip!)

**We vehemently object to EU's application for wastewater service for Don Pedro Island and request that this Commission deny and reject EU's application and bar them from making any other similar request for at least 10 years on our island.**

We also agree with the objections made by the neighborhood group Palm Island Estates, of which we are members, and incorporate them herein by reference.

Thank you for considering our objections.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signatures of Andreas and Amy Hoefft in blue ink.

Andreas & Amy Hoefft  
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