

Antonia Hover

From: Antonia Hover on behalf of Records Clerk
Sent: Friday, January 24, 2025 8:30 AM
To: 'Mike Beukema'
Cc: Consumer Contact
Subject: RE: Docket #20240032-SU

Good Morning, Michael Beukema.

We will be placing your comments below in consumer correspondence in Docket No. 20240032, and forwarding them to the Office of Consumer Assistance and Outreach.

Thank you!

Toni Hover

*Commission Deputy Clerk I
Florida Public Service Commission
2540 Shumard Oak Boulevard
Tallahassee, FL 32399
Phone: (850) 413-6467*

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From: Mike Beukema <Mike@westraconst.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 22, 2025 2:20 PM
To: Records Clerk <CLERK@PSC.STATE.FL.US>
Cc: Office of Chairman La Rosa <Commissioner.LaRosa@psc.state.fl.us>; Office of Commissioner Clark <Commissioner.Clark@psc.state.fl.us>; Office of Commissioner Passidomo Smith <Commissioner.Passidomo.Smith@psc.state.fl.us>; Office of Commissioner Graham <Commissioner.Graham@PSC.STATE.FL.US>; pie@palmislandestate.org
Subject: Docket #20240032-SU

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Dear Commissioners,

I am writing to strongly urge you to deny EU the ability to install a private, for-profit, outdated technology low-pressure sewer system in our community. This proposal raises several concerns, including excessive costs, potential environmental damage, and significant traffic impacts due to the limited access to the island by ferry.

The low-pressure sewer system would require mandatory easements on private property, resulting in substantial installation costs for homeowners. I am the owner and President of a Construction company. As a general and underground contractor located here in the Greater Tampa Bay Area with over 40 years of experience building critical infrastructure, I have first-hand knowledge of the challenges associated with such systems. My company is currently in the process of removing a failed low-pressure sewer system for a local municipality, a failure that was precipitated by consecutive storm surges from two hurricanes. I am deeply

concerned that a similar fate could befall the proposed system on Palm Island and in my opinion would have failed during the same hurricane events that just impacted Palm Island that caused failure of hundreds of residents on a low-pressure system in the Tampa Bay area.

I purchased a home on the island over 13 years ago and have been visiting the island for over 28 years. What makes Palm Island a special place is its uniqueness. The sandy roads, the slowed pace of life, the beautiful habitat and animals. Our barrier islands are in the Rural Service Area. The Comp Plan mandates on-site septic systems for the Rural Service Area. So why would a privately owned utility be acceptable?

1. Has there been a water quality / environmental study done on the impact of the current septic systems?
2. EU's lack of experience in owning and running a sewer system should be a major concern.
3. The impact to the island during construction would be tremendous. My company has installed over 1.4 million liner feet of utility pipe in West Central Florida. Installing the sewer system on Palm Island would be unique / tedious and a major impact to the Island, its residents and more so the traffic not to mention the impact to the Island itself.
4. The impact to the environment from the proposed construction would be a large concern. The destructive nature of construction will highly likely have a negative impact on the gopher tortoise population and associated tortoise relocation costs.
5. My company has installed gravity sewer/ Vacuum Sewer and Low-pressure force mains throughout Hillsborough, Pinellas, Manatee, Sarasota Counties, City of Cape Coral and Englewood water district. There would be an immense price tag for such a system to be installed on a barrier island with ingress/egress by means of a barge.

Again, my company is under contract currently on a \$30 mil project to remove a FAILED low-pressure sewer system.

Given the documented inefficiencies and maintenance costs associated with this type of system, I strongly recommend NOT installing the low-pressure system. It is crucial that we prioritize a sustainable and cost-effective solution for our community.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Michael Beukema

