

Antonia Hover

From: Betty Leland
Sent: Friday, January 24, 2025 8:43 AM
To: Commissioner Correspondence
Subject: Docket #20240032
Attachments: RE: Docket#20240032-SU; RE Docket #202240032-SU; Fw: Why We Don't Want a Low-Pressure System 📎; RE. Docket #20240032-SU; Docket #20240032-SU; Environmental Utilities, LLC. DOCKET NO. 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: rebecca newman <mswconch@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, January 21, 2025 4:27 PM
To: Records Clerk
Cc: Office of Chairman La Rosa; Office of Commissioner Clark; Office of Commissioner Passidomo Smith; Office of Commissioner Graham; Office of Commissioner Fay
Subject: RE: Docket#20240032-SU

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Hello, my name is Rebecca Newman and the address I am writing of concern is 23 Palm Dr, Placida, Florida 33946. My home is located on Palm Island, also known as Don Pedro Island. My email address is mswconch@gmail.com.

I was notified a private, for-profit, utility company was requesting to install a central sewer service system on Don Pedro Island where my home listed above is located.

As a home owner I do not understand how this could happen without due diligence.

1. To my knowledge there are no recent studies or testing completed on our island indicating a need for this central water sewer system.
2. And of more concern there has not been a bidding process to allow other businesses to submit their proposals to install. This is a very large and expensive project, how can one, for profit company, be provided the ok to proceed. And why is this a for-profit business. Shouldn't the local government be providing this service, if needed, to the local residents. Isn't water services considered a right of every person with restrictions of profit being considered?

This company EU lacks the experience of owning and installing a wastewater utility company. My understanding is EU wants to install a low-pressure system which Charlotte County won't install anymore due to needed excessive maintenance, which leads to excessive cost.

Our island has protected animals and very delicate eco-systems. Shouldn't more research and information be provided before any company is allowed to proceed?

Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter,

Rebecca Newman

Antonia Hover

From: James Onufrak <jonufrak@aol.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 22, 2025 11:42 AM
To: Records Clerk
Cc: Lilly Onufrak; Office of Chairman La Rosa; Office of Commissioner Clark; Office of Commissioner Passidomo Smith; Office of Commissioner Graham; Office of Commissioner Fay
Subject: RE Docket #202240032-SU

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To Whom it may concern,

My name is Jim Onufrak, 17 Palm Drive - Palm Island resident.

I am writing to let you know we do not want the sewer system installed on Palm Island for a multitude of reasons including the individual wanting to install the system has no experience and will most likely collect our money and has no intention of even starting this project.

Hong Wang

From: James Onufrak <jonufrak@aol.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 22, 2025 5:01 PM
To: Office of Commissioner Clark; Office of Commissioner Fay; Office of Commissioner Graham; Office of Chairman La Rosa; Office of Commissioner Passidomo Smith; Lilly Onufrak
Subject: Fw: Why We Don't Want a Low-Pressure System 📧

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All,

We are at 17 Palm Drive and do not support the sewer system. Earlier today I mentioned the lack of integrity and character of the person proposing the project.

Here are additional reasons

----- Forwarded Message -----

From: Palm Island Estates <pie@palmislandestates.org>
To: Jim & Lilly Onufrak <jonufrak@aol.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 22, 2025 at 04:55:51 PM EST
Subject: Why We Don't Want a Low-Pressure System 📧

[View this email in your browser](#)



**Why We Don't Want
a Low-Pressure
System**

EU is proposing a low-pressure sewer system. It is the least desirable sewer system available.

A surreal illustration of a sewer system. Large black pipes are shown in various configurations, some pouring water. A toilet is integrated into the system. A staircase leads down to a waterfall of water. The background is a hazy, orange-tinted sky with palm trees.

6 DAYS UNTIL THE SEWER HEARINGS

DIG DEEPER

**What's a Low Pressure Sewer?
Hint, It's Bad.**

While there are many reasons to oppose a low pressure system, if you only take away one thing in this email, it's this:

- Due to high maintenance costs, Charlotte County has stopped installing new low-pressure systems unless it is the last possible option.
- County data shows that low pressure sewer systems contribute disproportionately to sewer spills: Despite making up only 25% of the county's sewer systems, they are responsible for over 51% of all reported spills.

Low Pressure Systems Leak

From 2017 through November 2024, Charlotte County data shows that their sewer systems have spilled almost 4 Million gallons of sewage. 22% of those spills, 839,748 gallons, have found their way into our water ways. These massive spills affect our soil, water quality, wildlife, plants and overall ecosystem.

Charlotte County Sanitary Sewer Overflows

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024*
Reported Spills	60	35	40	46	63	151	65	113
Gallons Spilled	389,750	111,743	210,325	629,720	1,279,618	547,017	169,554	519,044
Gallons Entering Waterways	89,430	29,622	168,950	182,270	88,882	88,882	26,500	165,212
Average Spill	6,496	3,193	5,258	13,690	20,311	3,623	2,609	4,593
Named Storms	Irma				Elsa	Ian	Idalia	Helene & Milton

* Partial year, data through 10/29/24

High Cost for Home Owners

Low pressure sewer systems are very costly for the homeowner. Want to know how much this is all going to cost you? [Click here to learn the realistic cost >](#)

They Break More Than Other Sewer Types

According to data from Charlotte County data, low pressure sewer systems contribute disproportionately to sewer spills. **Despite making up only 25% of the county's sewer systems, they are responsible for over 51% of all reported spills.**

Charlotte County 2024 Sanitary Sewer Overflows

Source of Sewer Overflow	Jan	April	July	Nov	Total	% of Total Overflow	% of Customers
LPS Main/Service line / tank	31	32	38	28	130	51.79%	25%
Air Release Valve	1	3	4	4	12	4.78%	
Vacuum Pod	0	0	0	0	0	0.00%	5%
Gravity Line	1	1	1	0	3	1.20%	70%
Force Main	5	7	8	13	33	13.15%	
Manhole	8	6	2	1	17	6.77%	
Lift Station	15	14	10	17	56	22.31%	
Other	0	0	0	0	0	0.00%	
Total	62	63	63	63	251	100.00%	

- **Shortened Equipment Lifespan:** The salt air on the island significantly reduces the lifespan of low-pressure sewer system components, leading to frequent replacements and increased maintenance costs.
- **High Maintenance Requirements:** Pumps and other mechanical parts in a low-pressure system require regular servicing and repairs, which can be challenging and costly in a remote, coastal community.
- **Vulnerability During Storms:** Low-pressure sewer systems are highly susceptible to failure during storms or hurricanes, leaving the community without functional waste management when it is needed most.
- **Power Dependency:** These systems rely on electricity to function, making them prone to outages during severe weather events, requiring backup systems or emergency measures.

Environmental Risks

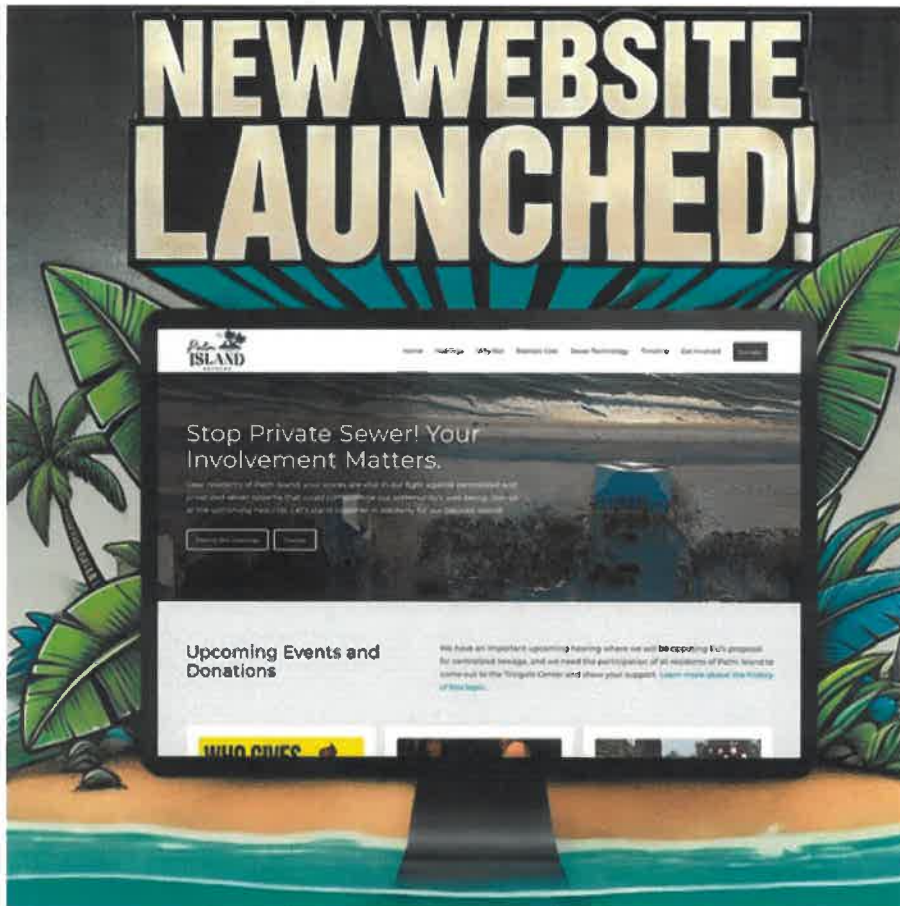
- **Higher Leak Probability:** Central sewer systems carry a greater risk of leaks compared to individual septic systems, potentially impacting larger areas and more properties.
- **Greater Sewage Discharge in Leaks:** Pressurized systems can release significantly more sewage during a leak compared to gravity or vacuum systems, leading to larger-scale contamination.
- **Visible and Hidden Risks:** Leaks in pressurized systems can result in small geysers of sewage or, worse, seep undetected into the ground, contaminating soil and groundwater until noticeable odors reveal the problem.
- **Environmental Contamination:** The potential for undetected leaks in pressurized systems poses a serious threat to the island's ecosystem, affecting soil, water quality, and surrounding habitats.
- **Ecological Impact:** Our unique ecosystem, which supports diverse wildlife and plant species, could suffer irreversible damage from even minor spills and the infrastructure required for low pressure sewer systems.
- **Public Health Hazards:** Leaks from pressurized systems can introduce harmful pathogens into the environment, increasing the risk of health issues for residents and wildlife.
- **Septicity:** In seasonal communities, low-pressure sewer systems can lead to prolonged periods where sewage remains stagnant in force mains. This extended retention time can cause the sewage to become septic, resulting in unpleasant odors, corrosion of infrastructure, and potential environmental concerns.

Intrusive to Personal Property

- **Access:** For any repairs or replacements to the grinder pump, utility operators are required to go onto homeowner's property to do any maintenance which may result in sewage spilling over gardens or lawns. Access may also prove problematic if there are dogs or after dark. (All gravity and vacuum sewer infrastructure is on public land so no access is required.)
- **Easements:** Homeowners are required to simply give up a potentially 15' wide path through their property to the sewer company. This means you can never build or do anything on it. Depending on where the pump is put, this could mean the middle of your land, the space right in front of your golf cart parking or garage. If you refuse to grant this, your land can be seized by eminent domain.

Undue Burden on the Homeowner

- **Electrical Subpanel Installation:** The utility company (EU) will provide the electric subpanel, but you will need to hire a licensed electrician to install it.
- **Permit Requirements:** Either you or your electrician must handle pulling the required permits for the installation.
- **Potential Electrical Panel Upgrade:** If your main electric panel is already at capacity due to heavy-draw equipment like a pool, hot tub, or boat lift, you may need an expensive panel upgrade, which must be arranged through Florida Power & Light (FPL).
- **Plumbing Modifications:** You'll need to hire a plumber to reroute the pipes currently connected to your septic system to connect to the new sewer tank.
- **Plumbing Permits:** You or your plumber will also be responsible for obtaining the required permits for this work.



Sewer Website

If you haven't visited our [new sewer website](#), please do. It's full of great information in an easy to read format. You can learn about:

- [Why Say No to Private Sewer](#)
- [What to Expect at the Hearings](#)
- [How Much This Sewer Will Cost](#)



Info Central:

When: Sat. January 25th, 10AM

Where: At the Firehouse

This town Hall and Q&A will tell you everything you need to know about the upcoming hearings. It is hosted by the PIE Action Committee and our water quality expert witness, Rob Robbins. Who gives a crap? WE DO!



Sewer Hearings:

When: Jan 28th, 29th and 30th

Where: [Trinail Park Recreation Center](#)

We NEED you at these hearings. It is critical that the commissioners both see how strong our opposition is and hear our opinions and concerns. The more they see our opposition, the more it will help our case. [Learn More >](#)

How You Can Help:

Donate

Please consider donating to the PIE Action Fund help with attorney fees, expert witnesses and other related legal expenses. [Learn More >](#)

Attend Sewer Hearings

We NEED you there. The EU called us a "vocal minority." It's imperative that we show the commission that is simply not true. [Learn More >](#)

Write Letters to the Commission

You can write the commission as many times as you'd like. Each letter helps to show our objection and helps our case. [Learn More >](#)

Sign Up As An "Interested Person"

You will receive emails from the Clerk at the PSC each time there is an important change to the docket. [Learn More >](#)

Future Email Topics

We'll be sending emails over the next few days on topics such as:

- Who Are We Talking To At The Hearings? The County Vs. PSC
- Why We Don't Want A Private & For Profit Sewer
- What To Expect At Hearings
- Tips For Preparing Your 3 Minute Speech

Help us make the site better. If you see anything that looks odd, needs to be updated, or have content you'd like included, please email notes and ideally a screenshot to enjoy@palmislandseas.com

PIE Communications Team
Palm Island Estates Association, Inc
<http://www.palmislandseas.org>

Contact us at pie@palmislandseas.org

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PO Box 1111
Pensacola, FL 32546-0111

[All our links are within here](#)

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Antonia Hover

From: Dale Novak <dnovak@novakcreative.net>
Sent: Thursday, January 23, 2025 10:42 AM
To: Records Clerk
Cc: Office of Chairman La Rosa; Office of Commissioner Clark; Office of Commissioner Passidomo Smith; Office of Commissioner Graham; Office of Commissioner Fay
Subject: RE. Docket #20240032-SU

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

Dear Commissioners:

I'm am writing you today in opposition to the Private Sewer Project being proposed by Environmental Utilities (EU). Docket #20240032-SU.

While there are dozens of reason to oppose this “for profit” system such as the massive cost (estimated to be over \$40,000 per property owner), the proven and documented rate of failure of these systems, the ridiculously unqualified “zero experience” credentials of the EU – and the main fact, that there is absolutely no reason (scientific or otherwise) that we need this in our community. One predominantly comes to mind at this time.

As a barrier island community we have been ravage by three hurricanes, Ian, Helene and Milton. Many of the Islanders are still making repairs and battling insurance companies for desperately needed payments. We are reeling from debris and disrupted roads and doing everything we can collectively to get our lives on these precious islands back to “normal.” The process has been slow and enormously costly to the homeowners. But we have been resilient, rolled up our sleeves and collectively gone to work.

Now, in the mist of that, we have another battle on our hands for a private sewer project the vast majority if Islanders don't want – and more importantly – we DON'T need.

To suggest that in the middle of all the chaos of repairs and cost associated with them, Charlotte County and the EU want to kick us some more and force-feed this project down our throats is absolutely appalling. Evidently, they must believe the every homeowner on our island(s) has \$40,000 (+) to just casually write a check for on top of the massive cost of repairing our islands and homes.

What happens, I respectfully ask, when homeowners can't pay these outrageous and utterly ridiculous cost and fees for a private sewer system that seems to have no limits as to how much it will cost each homeowner? Will Charlotte County and the EU start taking each of us to court? Will the County apply a lien on our properties? Will owners be forced to sell — at any cost?

Beat us when we're down. Kick us some more. Who cares what we are dealing with with regards to repairing our islands and homes. It's more important that we force an unwanted “private for profit” project on us and destroy our finances and moral spirit – even to the point that some homeowners will be forced to sell their homes.

To put this in personal terms – I ask each of you? Do you and your family have \$40,000, and potentially much more depending on the circumstances of each installation, to casually spend on on your home's plumbing system?

It just seems to me that not only is this massively opposed project not needed and widely opposed, but the timing of it couldn't be worse for us and our island community.

Put yourselves in our shoes.

Respectfully,

Dale & Julie Novak
611 Bocilla Drive
Don Pedro Island
dnovak@novakcreative.net
920.664.1088

Antonia Hover

From: David Stubbs II <ohiost8buckeyes@yahoo.com>
Sent: Thursday, January 23, 2025 3:26 PM
To: Records Clerk
Cc: Office of Chairman La Rosa; Office of Commissioner Clark; Office of Commissioner Passidomo Smith; Office of Commissioner Graham; Office of Commissioner Fay
Subject: Docket #20240032-SU

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To whom it may concern,

I'm so sorry that I am needed out of town on the day we were to meet again and I would make the same statements as before which is summarized by, I'm still not sure as to why I'm having to even consider the experience again.

With that said, I want to take the opportunity to again express my disapproval of this proverbial S--T Show. I'm a well known industry leading designer of systems and processes for various manufactures and if I had ever come up with this harebrained idea, even if I was paid, it would be certain retirement.... Hummers' maybe that's the plan.

There are so many things that I guess i'll never understand on items like this that are imposed on us, without financial support, especially as it relates to the character (in which we cannot mention) as it relates to the perceived quality of the individuals on the other side of this request.

Luckily for me there was a Facebook post this am, that made me smile as I ponder never hooking up to such a dismal plan. I share this post with you below in case you missed it, its worth the paper I printed it on.

A summary from concerned person

1: NO need has been demonstrated.

2: Cost is outrageous: in addition to hookup , we have to give up an easement , destroy our landscaping, provide power(larger panel and generator)

3: No county or government assistance.

4: The proposed technology is no longer being used due by our countries to the high cost of maintenance.

5: the applicant has no direct experience on a project of this magnitude and has a questionable background involving various arrests.

6: Timing could not be worst: Every owner has been saddled with huge direct costs from Helene and Milton.
TY

7: Speak with any property owner on Lemonbay Lane where they have a low pressure system. They have all experience 2-8k in pump replacements over the past 5 years.

8: the only logical reason this can or is being considered is not being addressed, It will benefit only one person...The Applicant.... Period

I am not saying there is any wrong doing here , but it sure feels like it
Nothing on this issue passes a simple smell test.

Jim Luscombe
420 Bocilla Dr
727-515-0274
Jbluscombe@gmail.com

Be well,

I'll continue to say no in my absence.

David A Stubbs II
352 South Gulf Blvd
Placida, FL 33946

Antonia Hover

From: Lisa Simmons <lisabsimmons@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, January 24, 2025 8:19 AM
To: Office of Commissioner Graham
Subject: Environmental Utilities, LLC. DOCKET NO. 20240032–SU

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

Dear Commissioner Graham,

Here we are again! This is the second attempt by Jack Boyer, Environmental Utilities (EU), to force a sewer system on Little Gasparilla Island and again I am writing this email to formally request that the Public Service Commissioners deny the EU's application for wastewater service on Little Gasparilla Island. The first time Mr. Boyer applied, the property owners on the island were not even aware of the application until it reached the Public Service Commission. We wrote letters, presented witnesses, and spoke against this project, your board voted to deny it. Now, here we are just a short time later fighting the same battle. Only this time, we are trying to recover from two brutal hurricanes that affected us all on the island. I have pictures of water lines totally exposed by the tidal surge. There were also many broken water lines. It is obvious that if these had been sewer lines, we would have had a major sewer spill on the island. I am aware that some of the lids came off of the septic tanks during the storm, (not mine). However, the amount of sewage that overflowed as those tanks filled with water is nothing compared to a sewer pipe leaking or maybe multiple sewer pipes leaking. I have taken the following data from the Charlotte County Records data. "From 2017 through November 2024, Charlotte County data shows that their sewer systems have spilled almost 4 Million gallons of sewage. 22% of those spills, 839,748 gallons, have found their way into our waterways. These massive spills affect our soil, water quality, wildlife, plants and overall ecosystem. **County data shows that low pressure sewer systems contribute disproportionately to sewer spills: Despite making up only 25% of the county's sewer systems, they are responsible for over 51% of all reported spills.**

This does not sound like a good idea for Little Gasparilla Island. I'm not opposed to a sewer system, I just don't think this type of sewer is appropriate for a barrier island if its use has been stopped on the mainland. I have owned a vacation home on the island since 1996. My children and family have enjoyed the tranquility of this island for many years. My intention is to leave this little piece of paradise to my children when I die. After reviewing the expected costs to install a low-pressure wastewater system on the island, I realize that I will not be able to maintain the home I love so much. The costs are prohibitive for me as I am sure it will force many others to sell their places too. The proposed costs far exceed any other wastewater service in the state, and I find that totally unacceptable and unfair. The costs are not equitable to what other people are paying for the same services across the county and state. In addition, the need for a generator as a backup and installation of an additional electrical panel is ridiculous. The standing water caused by multiple hurricanes last Fall and the electrical outages we often experience would not bode well with the system Mr. Boyer is proposing. Most homes on LGI are vacation homes and are unoccupied most of the time. There would be no one there to turn on a generator to run a sump pump for the sewer system. I suggest that the septic tanks be inspected, and ones found to be deficient be repaired or replaced. There is no reason to force this sewer system on us. I also have concerns about the environmental impact this project would have. We have gopher tortoises that have already been affected by the floods we have had in the past year and now would be disturbed by a project of this magnitude. We also have a pair of nesting bald eagles on the north end of LGI. If they are disturbed too much, they will leave the nest and find another home. If there were eaglets in the nest at that time, they would die. Please, I ask you to put yourself in my place and make the right decision for the residents of Palm Island and Little Gasparilla Island. It is truly heartbreaking for me to think about being forced to sell my place because of the exorbitant and unrealistic expense that would be imposed on me. Please vote no!!!

I would like to come to speak at the hearing, but I teach Nursing at Hillsborough Community College and am not able to take two days off to come to the hearings. Especially, not knowing when the public will be allowed to speak. Thank you for considering my objections when voting on this project. We've been through enough out there.

Sincerely,

Lisa Simmons MSN/Ed, CHSE, RN

813-323-4814

Antonia Hover

From: Mike Beukema <Mike@westraconst.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 22, 2025 2:20 PM
To: Records Clerk
Cc: Office of Chairman La Rosa; Office of Commissioner Clark; Office of Commissioner Passidomo Smith; Office of Commissioner Graham; 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

