

Antonia Hover

From: Antonia Hover on behalf of Records Clerk
Sent: Monday, January 27, 2025 11:48 AM
To: 'Dave Mulvaney'
Cc: Consumer Contact
Subject: RE: RE. Docket #20240032-SU

Good Morning, Dave Mulvaney.

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
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From: Dave Mulvaney <davemulvaney@comcast.net>
Sent: Monday, January 27, 2025 10:42 AM
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>; Office of Commissioner Fay <Commissioner.Fay@psc.state.fl.us>; pie@palmislandstates.org
Subject: RE. Docket #20240032-SU

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RE. Docket #20240032-SU

Hello Commissioners:

Thank you for giving us the opportunity to address a concern that is becoming more and more common in our communities: the idea of for-profit private sewer systems, specifically the proposed installation of a low-pressure sewer (LPS) system by Mr. Jack Boyer dba Environmental Utilities LLC on Palm Island. We have firsthand knowledge of installing a new sewer system and removing a perfectly fine septic system. The new sewers were implemented by the County we were living in about 30 years ago, the County helped offset the costs of installation with grants and 0% interest loans. The disruption to our daily lives due to contractors and heavy equipment ruining our roads and our property were

not easily forgotten along with the financial burden that was placed upon us at the time. We are dreading the possibility of reliving that same scenario again if you approve the request for private sewers.

We are full-time residents living on the island and we have carefully considered all the implications. We want to explain why we believe this is not a viable option for our property, for our environment, for our wallets and for our neighbors.

First, let's talk about the environmental impact. LPS systems rely on pumps to move wastewater from homes to the larger sewer infrastructure. While they may seem like a quick fix, these systems are harmful to the environment. The pumps can fail, leading to untreated wastewater being released into the ground, nearby water sources, or even directly into our local canals, rivers, and streams. These pumps will fail when we lose electricity unless we install an expensive backup generator. This failure can potentially contaminate drinking water supplies and create significant harm to wildlife and our fragile ecosystems. In addition, these systems require frequent maintenance/replacement and are more prone to clogging or breakdowns, leading to potentially catastrophic failures.

But there's another serious issue: flooding from extreme weather events which we have experienced just recently. We have had back-to-back hurricanes which caused unprecedented severe flooding on our island. LPS systems are particularly vulnerable during heavy rain or flooding and are unreliable during these types of events. When floodwater overwhelms the system, the pumps can become inoperable, leading to backflow and wastewater spilling out. This not only increases the risk of contamination but also places additional stress on already overwhelmed stormwater management systems. After a hurricane or flood, island residents may find themselves not only dealing with water damage to their homes, but also the risk of untreated sewage affecting their property and local environment.

Now, let's consider the financial burden of installing and maintaining a private for-profit sewer system. The initial cost of installing a new sewer line to a residence can be astronomical. Not only do we have to pay for the installation of the pipes and pumps, but we also face the expense of permits, excavation, new electrical lines and labor. This is an enormous one-time investment that many homeowners simply cannot afford. Mr. Boyer continues to move the goal posts on the cost of installation. The first estimate a few years ago was approximately \$10,000.00 and has now swelled to well over \$50,000.00 with no end in sight. But it doesn't stop there—the ongoing costs of maintaining an LPS system can be just as high, if not higher. From pump repairs and replacement to regular inspections, the long-term maintenance can easily run into thousands of dollars over the years. In addition, these systems may not increase the resale value of a property, and in some cases, could even decrease it because of the perceived risk and the added costs.

On the other hand, our current in-ground septic system has been in place for over 30 years, and it has operated without any issues. This system, when properly maintained, is a proven and reliable solution for wastewater management. Unlike the LPS system, which requires frequent monitoring and repairs, our septic system is much less prone to mechanical failure and doesn't depend on pumps that can break down during flooding or extreme weather. The ongoing costs of maintaining a septic system are far more manageable, typically limited to periodic inspections and occasional pumping. It's also better for the environment when managed correctly, according to the EPA, as it naturally filters and treats wastewater through the soil, reducing the risk of contamination.

There's also the risk of putting too much responsibility on the homeowner. Unlike a public sewer system, which is regularly maintained and managed by professionals, with a for-profit private system, the responsibility falls squarely on our shoulders. In the event of a failure, it's up to us to repair or replace costly equipment—and there's no guarantee that we will be able to fix the problem quickly or affordably. Mr. Boyer has no experience with running a start-up sewer company, he cannot or will not provide the scope of work necessary for such a large-scale project. Mr. Boyer is telling island residents to trust him and his financial backers who remain anonymous at this point. We do not trust Mr. Boyer, to our knowledge, there are only a few of his friends who want the for-profit sewer system.

Another serious concern that we have is the fact **“Mr. Boyer was charged with and indicted for larceny as it relates to a utility as well as criminal mischief for stealing water from Don Pedro Island State Park to serve his own water utility on Little Gasparilla Island”.** Florida Park Patrol Case #96 J29 0153, Charlotte County. Mr. Boyer should not oversee running a Utility given his past dishonesty towards the County and island residents.

We have endured several natural disasters over the past 2-3 years, the emotional and physical toll takes years to recover. Jack Boyer is now telling island residents that he wants to inflict more emotional stress on us for several years while he destroys our island for his personal financial gain. While Mr. Boyer has a successful water utility company on island, we have more concerns. The water rates at which Mr. Boyer's water company continue to increase will become

the highest in the State of Florida in a short period of time. This shows precedent that Mr. Boyer does not try to contain costs, he continually increases them for his financial benefit.

We have not received any communication directly from Mr. Boyer or Environmental Utilities LLC to date regarding the plan to disrupt our lives. Thankfully, several of our neighbors have pointed us to various websites to obtain knowledge of what Mr. Boyer believes is beneficial to the island, we disagree. Mr. Boyer and his associates, along with a few select individuals with inside deals will be the only beneficiaries of this flawed plan.

Ultimately, a for-profit private LPS system simply isn't a sustainable or responsible solution. It's costly, it's prone to environmental damage, it's vulnerable to flooding, and it can create an ongoing burden that many of us cannot afford or take on with confidence. Our current septic system, on the other hand, has served us well for over 25 years and presents far fewer risks to the environment, our finances, or our peace of mind.

We ask of you to deny the request once again for private sewer on the island.
Thank you for your time and consideration.

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