

Antonia Hover

From: Office of Commissioner Fay
Sent: Monday, March 24, 2025 4:59 PM
To: Commissioner Correspondence
Subject: Docket No.20240032-SU
Attachments: RE. Docket #20240032-SU; RE. Docket #20240032-SU; RE. Docket #20240032-SU

Please the attached emails in Docket No. 20240032

Antonia Hover

From: Ember Harker <ember@launchsnap.com>
Sent: Friday, March 21, 2025 5:14 PM
To: 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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Dear Commissioners,

After reading the staff's recommendation to approve EU's sewer application, I am in complete shock. Were they at the same hearings I attended in January?

Did they not remember the laughter when EU's engineer, Jonathan Cole, made it abundantly clear he had no real understanding of what this project would entail on our islands? He claimed, "It's the same cost to put one pipe on the ferry as a thousand pipes," and stated, "I don't know of any tidal impact to a construction project down there." How could he not know? If his numbers are being used by EU's financial expert, Deborah Swain, to estimate costs, shouldn't he have at least a basic understanding of how the ferry operates, the inevitable building delays, or even the type of roads we have?

Let me paint a real picture: it cost over **\$150,000** in barge fees alone to build my modest 1,800 sq. ft. home just two years ago. Cole's estimate of **\$600,000 for all barge fees is laughable**. Plus, when tides are low or winds are high, large trucks can't cross. Just this past January, we went **three weeks** without trash pickup because Waste Management's **smallest truck** couldn't make it over.

When asked about potential delays, Cole dismissed concerns, saying there's only a "short line in the morning" and that we have "sand roads or whatever they have out there." This made it crystal clear—he has **never even been here**. In reality, contractors face an hour-long wait to get onto Palm Island each morning, and it's even longer at quitting time. This project would make that situation far worse.

Did the staff forget that **hundreds of islanders** showed up to oppose this sewer project? We shared real, lived experiences—many of us lost nearly everything in recent storms, but the one thing that remained intact was our septic systems. Jack Boyer claimed he walked the islands and saw "septic tanks popped up everywhere." That is simply false and quite honestly absurd. I was here just days after both storms and did not see a single tank "popped up." A few tanks on the beach had lost their lids and filled with sand. **Perhaps instead of forcing a central sewer system on us, we should be discussing ways to better secure septic lids.**

Did they notice that only **a handful of people** supported this project? I personally handed out opposition stickers—remember the red circles with a line through them? Out of **500 printed**, I came home with less than **100**. Fewer than **15 people** refused a sticker. The number of speakers in favor? Less than **10**, and nearly all of them were either not stakeholders in this application at all or they are directly related to the applicant—his **son-in-law, daughter, and wife**, who stand to **profit** from this project. These same family members tried to mislead the room with absurd claims of "turds floating around" (which we all know is nonsense), or gave tearful speeches about their children—only to be called out and admit they were related to the applicant. Then they sulked out of the building.

It was a circus!

EU has **not** done its due diligence.

- They have **not** proven a need for this project.

- They had **three years** since the last application—did they conduct **any** water testing? **No.**
- Do they have **any** quantifiable data showing storm damage to island septic systems? **No.**
- Could they have gathered real data from residents? **Sure.** But did they? **No.**
- Do they have realistic cost estimates? **No.**

After listening to these hearings, I wouldn't hire Jack Boyer to mow my lawn—**let alone** install a private sewer system. The fact that anyone would recommend approving this application is **mind-blowing.**

Here's why we **do not** want this:

- **There is no proven need.**
- **It will cost homeowners tens of thousands of dollars, upfront and out-of-pocket.** Do you have \$30,000, \$40,000, or even \$50,000 just lying around? Because I don't.
- **EU is a private company.** They can (and will) charge whatever they want. Our water company already does! Did you know we pay more for water than most people in the U.S.?
- **The pump system they propose is one of the worst technical choices available.**
- **The project will wreak havoc on our island—environmentally, logistically, and financially.**
- **Each homeowner will bear the burden of pulling permits, installing electrical, plumbing, and backup generators for outages.** Have they even factored that into the cost? I **doubt it.**
- **There is no performance bond.** If Boyer botches this project (as he has others in the past) or costs spiral out of control, we have **zero recourse.**

So I ask again—**why on earth would staff recommend granting this application?**

Were they even listening?

I hope you are.

Sincerely,

Ember Harker
381 Kettle Harbor Drive, Placida FL 33946

Antonia Hover

From: Dale Novak <dnovak@novakcreative.net>
Sent: Friday, March 21, 2025 11:26 AM
To: Records Clerk
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 implore you to deny this request by Environmental Utilities (EU).

Please put your self in our shoes.

The VAST amount of homeowners on these islands have perfectly functioning septic systems. The DON'T require electricity to operate. Many of these septic systems are practically new (and at a great cost to each homeowner). They are tested and approved by Charlotte County — and comply with all the current rules and regulations.

Please imagine if you can another storm like Helen or Milton. We as Islanders certainly can. The island is under water again. Only this time, we have potentially thousands of ELECTRIC POWERED pumps, grinders and lift stations all over the island. Every one of them have been now destroyed by seawater. They won't power on — or they potentially become fire hazards when the power to the island is restored. Shorting out or simply freezing up from sandy, dirty, turbulent seawater infiltrating each pump, grinder and lift station.

Now what happens?

If is highly logical that the EU will not be able to restore these systems in a timely manner. They are too small, inexperienced and lack any practical knowledge of dealing with a complete shut-down of the sewer system. This means we won't be able to return to our homes for potentially for many months — or possibly over a year.

Where do we go? Our home on the island is our residence — not a seasonal property. After both Helene and Milton we were back in our home in under two weeks. With Helene, it was a matter of days. FPL had power restored in both instances fairly quick. Our septic system was 100% operational. We even had it inspected after Milton and it required NO repairs or service. Keep in mind, even when the power was off, our septic system still functioned.

This won't be the case with the EU's proposed system. The entire sewer system will be shut down. All the electric motors will be destroyed and they won't be fixable. They will require replacement.

How long will this take? How much will it cost? WHO will pay for? I'm assuming that the EU will simply bill every homeowner all over again for replacing the motors and pumps at each home.

The people who live on these barrier islands are extremely resilient. We don't shy away from hard work or fixing our properties. But we DON'T own a money printing press. We can not sustain paying the EU for every aspect of their business — and that is precisely what the EU is demanding each homeowner does — pays them for every expense. It's just not feasible for this to be a successful plan. It will crush us financially and emotionally.

And I also ask you — what happens to a homeowner when they can't pay for all of this? Get a loan? That's not a plan. If you can't afford it, getting a loan is akin to just plugging a few holes in a sinking ship — it just takes a bit longer to sink. I assume many people will be FORCED to sell their homes and likely at a huge loss. It just seems there should be no way a "private for profit" company and our local and state government should be able to force us from our homes. They get rich, we get poor.

Please let us breathe after dealing with two horrific back-to-back storms. I can't imaging how devastating this will be to our islands, and the people who live here, if it gets approved.

Sincerely,

Dale & Julie Novak
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Antonia Hover

From: Dale Novak <dnovak@novakcreative.net>
Sent: Sunday, March 23, 2025 3:43 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

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

Dear Commissioners:

I implore you to deny the application (again) made by Environmental Utilities (the EU). This will crush us both financially and emotionally. The PSC must take into consideration the islanders — who will be footing the entire cost for a private “for profit” company. It’s truly hard to believe that this proposal has even made it this far.

As we we continue to recover from three powerful storms, we are now faced with bracing for the potential of another storm, this time financially. This system will not have any benefits to our island. It will only enrich a private company on the backs of the homeowners on these barrier islands. It will disrupt, tear apart, and destroy our island to the likes that we have never seen before.

Here are the facts, which simply can’t be ignored:

- 1) The EU has no experience with a central sewer system. Zero. None.
- 2) The EU does not have the financial experience or expertise to fund this project.
- 3) The system will fail (island wide) in an epic manner if we have another storm like Helene or Milton.
- 4) The EU will NOT be able to restore service to the island unless all the costs are passed on to the homeowners.
- 5) These type of sewer systems use outdated technology that is prone to constant failure.
- 5) Many of our septic systems are nearly new and work perfectly.
- 6) Most, if not all, of our septic systems, are inspected every year.
- 7) There is NO environmental issue with our water quality and there is NO need for this service.
- 8) Most of the homes are seasonal and have little to no impact on the ground water.
- 9) Installation of the system will harm or even kill protected wildlife.
- 10) The cost to each homeowner is unjustified, unpredictable, and overwhelmingly excessive.
- 11) The EU will “take” our land without just compensation to the homeowner. Lawsuits will be filed.
- 12) All the costs will be passed on to the homeowners. Some owners will be forced to sell.

Please, for the love of our islands, our unique lifestyle, and the massive impact to our island and household budgets, deny this request — again.

Regards,

Dale & Julie Novak
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