

CALL TO ACTION #1: EMAIL THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

Our attorney has advised that these letters should be **personalized**. We are not providing a template for your use but have supplied some guidance below.

Email the PSC by 5:00 PM Monday, January 24th, 2022. **Object to the proposal and ask the PSC to deny the Application for Original Certificate of Authorization** for this proposed central sewer system. Please urge your spouses, partners, friends and neighbors to write as well. **Every email counts.**

EMAIL TO:

Clerk of the Commission clerk@psc.state.fl.us

Commissioner LaRosa: Commissioner.LaRosa@psc.state.fl.us

Commissioner Clark: Commissioner.Clark@psc.state.fl.us

Commissioner Passidomo: Commissioner.Passidomo@psc.state.fl.us

SUBJECT: Docket #20200226-SU

Please send an email to each of the Commissioners as well as the Clerk of the Commission and include:

- Your **name**.
- Identify yourself as a **property owner** within the proposed service area [name which Island].
- Your **arguments in opposition** to the proposed central sewer.
- Make sure you state that you are **formally requesting that the PSC deny** EU's application for wastewater service.
- Finish with your name and **email address**.

Tell the Commissioners why you object to EU's proposal. Remember, the Commissioners have no idea how we live here -- our environment, our lifestyle, our car ferry. If you have had any experience with the owner/operator, include it in your email. Your objections should align with one or more of the following **criteria that the PSC will use to grant Certification**:

1. **NEED FOR SERVICE** (environmental impacts, development concerns)
2. **FINANCIAL ABILITY** of the applicant
3. **TECHNICAL EXPERTISE** of the applicant
4. **FAIR & EQUITABLE RATES & CHARGES**

We have provided below a punch list of arguments and concerns, but this is **for your convenience to help identify issues** that might be important to you. *We do not want you to copy and paste these issues.* Provide your own narrative of **why you object** to this proposal and **how this proposed sewer will affect you**.

Potential Impacts to Stakeholders:

- **Uncertain Hook-up Cost:** When EU first presented to PIE, the connection fee was estimated at approx. **\$20K per unit**. When the rates and tariffs were finally submitted by the applicant, the requested Service Availability Charge per ERC was reduced to total estimated **\$13,221**.
- **Average Residential Bill: \$178.78**, which is roughly twice the amount that a ratepayer on the mainland in Rotonda pays per month for *water and wastewater combined*. Note that the average cost to EU per customer per month is \$97.18.
- **Electric:** the system pump requires a separate electric panel, installed by a licensed electrician at the expense of the owner.
- **More electric:** If the owner has maxed out their main electric grid with pool equipment or other large-draw items, the panel will need an expensive upgrade to accommodate the new panel.
- **Generator:** the grinder pump has a limited capacity (60 gal) and in the event of a power outage will be unable to function for long. Homeowners will need a generator to keep the system running to avoid sewage back-up.
- **Tree removal:** Landscaping and hardscaping around the septic area will need to be cleared at the expense of the homeowner to gain access to crush & fill the septic tank.
- **No pay-over-time plan:** Ratepayers may need to take loans to cover the cost of connection
- **Mandatory Hook-up:** Charlotte County regulations require all homes to connect to central water and wastewater within 1 year of availability.
- **No grandfathering of septic systems:** regardless of age or condition.
- **No “contract” and no single point of general oversight:** EU is not a contractor that has won a bid to install sewer. The PSC approves certification solely based on the 4 criteria above and regulates rates and charges. Each of the other agencies (County, DEP, Army Corps, etc.) is responsible for supervising only their specific area where regulation and/or permitting is involved. There is no performance bond required and we have no single point of recourse in the event of cost overruns or project failure.
- **Access to homes:** Some properties have physical constraints that will complicate how the applicant gains access to the property without leaving the boundaries or damaging the grounds.
- **Disruption of traffic:** Vehicles have only one point of entry/egress -- the car ferry. With normal traffic, service and construction trucks, delays at the ferry line in season can be an hour or more. This project could result in years of traffic issues.
- **New easement giveaway:** Most utility easements are placed in the road right-of-way. EU has claimed ownership of a utility easement that will go from the sewer equipment, located near the house to the connection in the road without compensating the homeowner.

- **System maintenance and emergencies:** The applicant has not addressed how the system will be serviced in the event of failure during a storm or other adverse conditions.
- **Lifespan of the equipment:** Salt air takes a heavy toll on mechanical and electrical equipment here. Equipment will need replacing when it fails, possibly at 5-year intervals. This proposal places too much responsibility on the homeowner at too great a cost.
- **Environmental concerns:** No water quality testing has been done in our area to prove a need for sewer. This project brings the potential for destruction of habitat and interference with endangered species such as the gopher tortoise.
- **Potential of sewer spill in the Intracoastal:** The risk of a central sewer leak with a subaqueous crossing is greater than the risk of one or more septic systems developing leaks.