

Nickalus Holmes

From: Nickalus Holmes on behalf of Records Clerk
Sent: Wednesday, September 24, 2025 8:18 AM
To: 'sgidumal@virtuscapital.com'
Cc: Consumer Contact
Subject: FW: Docket No. 20250023-WS
Attachments: PSC Comment - Docket No 20250023-WS Extreme Water Rate Increase Grenelefe
RAFH 9-3-25.pdf

Good Afternoon

We will be placing your comments below in consumer correspondence in Docket No. 20250023, and forwarding them to the Office of Consumer Assistance.

Thank you,
Nick Holmes
Commission Deputy Clerk II
Office of Commission Clerk
Florida Public Service Commission
850-413-6770

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From: Steve Gidumal <sgidumal@virtuscapital.com>
Sent: Tuesday, September 23, 2025 5:43 PM
To: Records Clerk <CLERK@PSC.STATE.FL.US>
Cc: 'Steve Gidumal' <sgidumal@virtuscapital.com>
Subject: Docket No. 20250023-WS

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Dear Public Service Commission:

Please review and give this letter careful consideration. The letter was written by Katrina Anarumo, the founder and owner of Rent a Florida Home property management service. Ms. Anarumo has built a successful business placing tenants with available rental units in the Orlando, Kissimmee and Haynes City area. She is managing over 1,500 units (although it may be much more now) and is handling approximately 15 properties in her area of Florida for my company, Virtus Capital Advisors LLC, including six units in Grenelefe.

Ms. Anarumo's basic point is that with a potential monthly water rate and wastewater increase going from a combined \$30.00 a month to \$309 a month for rental units approximately \$1,100/mo, the tenants will be simply unwilling or unable to pay for these high combined rates; which would be among the highest in the country (including California!). This will lead to a mass exodus of both tenants and then soon after landlords. As you heard at the Hearing on September 15, owners living in their units will also be unable to pay for this exorbitant increase with many saying on the call that they would have to file for bankruptcy or simply abandon their home.

Turning Grenelefe into a ghost town falls squarely on the shoulders of the PSC. While not solely PSC's fault – much fault lies with Scott House, owner of the ineffective water utility – the PSC does deserve much of the blame. Approving a plan with Scott House that he or the PSC seem to be unable to live up to, was a material breach of responsibility and trust. Undoubtedly before so many innocent individuals file for bankruptcy, there will be a merging of the interests of the angry and deceived home and condo owners and the creation of a class action suit against the responsible parties. And the fact that this increase and thousand unit bankruptcy is happening in Florida – a state the rest of the United States has turned to for guidance since the Covid shutdown excesses – will make this a National story.

Please, we urge you to reconsider options. Some of us have been told that Scott House is willing to live up to his original agreement to fund the \$20 million repair bill upfront – which was the basis for the PSC approving his purchase of the water utility, just a few short years ago – and this seems like a sensible way out. Please strongly consider holding Mr. House to his promise to the owners of Grenelefe properties to fund the \$20 million upfront, a promise he also made to this Public Service Commission, and which was a significant factor in **your approval** his purchase offer.

This is a self-created mess of which the PSC is right in the middle of. The PSC also has the power to fix this disaster by holding Mr. House to his promise. If he cannot afford to fix the plant without creating over 1,000 units of bankrupt, vacant homes, then pull his license to operate and put the water utility up for sale with a requirement that the next owner has the resources to fix this PSC/House disaster.

This is a national story, a 1,000+ housing disaster, that none of us want.

Sincerely,
Steven Gidumal

Steve Gidumal
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Katrina Anarumo

Property Manager & Licensed Real Estate Broker
Rent A Florida Home

2850 Deer Creek Commerce Lane Davenport Florida 33837

9/3/2025

Re: Docket No. 20250023-WS — Opposition to Extreme Water & Sewer Rate Increase for Grenelefe Utility

Florida Public Service Commission
Office of Commission Clerk
2540 Shumard Oak Blvd.
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0850
Email: clerk@psc.state.fl.us (Please include Docket No. 20250023-WS)

Commissioners:

I write as a property manager and real estate broker who has served the Grenelefe community and the Greater Orlando market for 17 years. My team and I manage a significant portfolio of homes and condos here and regularly counsel buyers, sellers, and investors whose decisions hinge on the total cost of ownership and quality-of-life factors.

The staff-assisted rate proposal for Grenelefe Utility would raise monthly water and sewer bills by several multiples, pushing typical residential charges into the **hundreds of dollars per month**. Florida PSC materials illustrate the scale: a sample 5,000-gallon **water** bill would jump from **\$14.31 to \$107.41**, and a 2,000-gallon **wastewater** bill from **\$15.84 to \$201.60** — increases of 7× to 13× before taxes and fees. These figures far exceed what we see across Central Florida systems, where combined residential water + sewer bills for 5,000–6,000 gallons typically land in the **\$75–\$120** range depending on city and usage.

Beyond being out of market, the proposal appears to shift costs that **Polk County had planned to fund through growth** — via CDD assessments and connection fees for major upgrades — back onto existing homeowners. Residents were told “growth pays for growth.” The staff recommendation effectively reverses that principle and puts disproportionate burden on current owners. (Community notice summarizing the county plan and the PSC process; PSC docket confirms the Sept. 15 virtual customer meeting at 2:00 p.m.)

Why this would harm Grenelefe immediately?

1. **Occupancy collapse & forced vacancies.** At hundreds of dollars per month, many long-time residents and tenants (especially seniors and fixed-income households) simply cannot absorb the shock. Landlords are already preparing to **vacate units rather than operate at a loss**. That spiral drives blight and reduces fee revenues, the opposite of what the utility needs.
2. **Property values and marketability.** Buyers comparison-shop regionally. When a community posts utility bills multiple times higher than surrounding areas, **demand shifts elsewhere**. Lenders and appraisers factor fixed monthly costs into affordability — higher utilities reduce qualifying purchase power and comps, translating to lower values and slower sales.

3. **Business climate & investment flight.** Investors will redirect dollars to Davenport, Haines City, Winter Haven, and Lakeland submarkets where operating expenses are predictable and in line with regional norms. Once confidence leaves, it is slow to return.
4. **Equity concerns.** Many owners effectively paid for system capacity in the price of their homes. Shifting major capital recovery onto existing households now is perceived as **double-charging**, undermining trust and compliance.

A better path forward...

- **Adopt “growth pays for growth.”** Revisit the Polk County approach using **CDD assessments and connection/impact fees** on new development for major upgrades, rather than loading extraordinary increases onto current residents. (The docket record reflects competing approaches; the Commission should weigh this carefully.)
- **Phase-in any necessary increases** over a multi-year glidepath to avoid economic shock and allow leases and budgets to adjust.
- **Set rates at or near regional medians** for comparable usage and meter sizes; benchmark against OUC/Orlando, Pasco, Pinellas, and similar systems to maintain market competitiveness.
- **Targeted customer protections:** hardship programs, leak-adjustment policies, and lifeline tiers to protect seniors and fixed-income households.
- **Transparency & accountability:** require a clear capital plan, third-party engineering review, and performance reporting before authorizing any final rate structure.

Request:

On behalf of my clients and the broader Grenelefe community, I respectfully request that the Commission **reject the staff’s recommended rate structure** as presented and direct the parties to return with a plan that: (1) phases in reasonable, data-based increases; (2) leverages growth-funding tools for major capital; and (3) keeps total monthly bills within regional norms for comparable usage.

I will also encourage our owners and residents to participate in the **virtual customer meeting on Monday, September 15, 2025, at 2:00 p.m.**, and to file written comments to the Clerk referencing **Docket No. 20250023-WS**.

Thank you for your consideration and for safeguarding both the financial viability of our utility and the livability of Grenelefe.

Respectfully,

DocuSigned by:

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Katrina Anarumo
Property Manager & Real Estate Broker