

Antonia Hover

From: John Plescow
Sent: Tuesday, September 30, 2025 8:19 AM
To: Consumer Correspondence; Consina Griffin-Greaux
Subject: FW: Issue with Utility Company
Attachments: Sewage Letter.pdf

Please, add to docket 20240068.

From: Consina Griffin-Greaux <CGriffin@psc.state.fl.us> **On Behalf Of** Consumer Contact
Sent: Tuesday, September 23, 2025 4:56 PM
To: John Plescow <JPlescow@PSC.STATE.FL.US>
Subject: FW: Issue with Utility Company

John,
Please forward to clerk's office. Shonna said 20240068
C'Griffin-Greaux

From: Frank Maranto <maranto@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, September 23, 2025 2:28 PM
To: Consumer Contact <Contact@PSC.STATE.FL.US>
Subject: Issue with Utility Company

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

Please see attached concerning a concern about our utility bill with Sunshine Water.
Thank you,
Frank Maranto 239 785-4750

To: Florida Public Service Commission
Florida Public Counsel

September 23, 2025

From: Frank Maranto, Treasurer (maranto@gmail.com)
Cross Creek Community Association
239 785-4750

The **Florida Public Service Commission** is committed to making sure that Florida's consumers receive some of their most essential services — electric, natural gas, telephone, water, and wastewater — in a safe, reasonable, and reliable manner.

The **Public Counsel** was created with the realization that the citizens of the state cannot adequately represent themselves in utility matters, and that the rate-setting function of the Commission is best performed when those who will pay utility rates are represented in an adversary proceeding by counsel at least as skilled as counsel for the utility company.

With the information below, I would like to suggest that both of the above agencies have failed in their responsibilities to provide a reasonable service to residents in my community. I am requesting that both the Commission and the Public Counsel review and correct this egregious disservice.

Background

I represent Cross Creek of Fort Myers Condominium Association, a small condominium community of 905 residents located in Fort Myers, Florida. Our residents are nearly all retired and all but a few properties are 2 bedroom condos having 1 or 2 residents.

History of Sewage Costs

For our community, the average increase for sewage treatment from 2000 thru 2016 was a reasonable 3.8% per year resulting in a 2016 payment of \$288,659. However, in 2017, we were notified that our rate would be going from \$288,659 to \$495,216 an increase of 71.6%. At that point, we filed an official complaint and appealed to various governmental officials including the Public Service Commission, the Office of Public Counsel, our local Commissioner Cecil Pendergrass, and even Governor Rick Scott. Unfortunately, we were unsuccessful in convincing anyone to take up our case.

The 71.6% Increase

In 2017, our rate was increased because we were changed to a “Flat Rate” of \$45.60 based on an assumed usage of 5,000 gallons per month. The table below provided by the PSC shows that the entire Eagle Ridge group was actually using only 2489 gallons per month—less than half of the assumed and charged usage. Even more importantly, our own community of 905 comprised only about 8% of the Eagle Ridge system and our demographics confirm that our own community had significantly lower usage than the average Eagle Ridge user. In fact, during our complaint related to the 2017 increase, we provided information that the water bill for my own community based on actual usage averaged only \$13.51 per month compared to the newly imposed flat rate of \$45.60 for sewage. The cost for sewage was going to be nearly 3.5 times the cost of water!

From the Public Service Commission in 2017

The methodology for computing a consolidated flat rate for wastewater service for those customers currently billed on a flat-rate basis was to first determine the average water consumption for that subset of UIF customers. Only the usage of flat-rate customers of the systems identified in the table was included in the calculation. That calculation appears in the table below.

Docket No. 20160101-WS

In re: Application for increase in water and wastewater rates in Charlotte, Highlands, Lake, Lee, Marion, Orange, Pasco, Pinellas, Polk, and Seminole Counties by Utilities, Inc. of Florida

Test Year Gallons and Bills for UIF Systems with a Residential Flat Rate

System Name	Total Residential Gallons (Flat Rate Customers Only)	Total Residential Bills (Flat Rate Customers Only)	Average Residential Flat Rate Demand Per Customer
Eagle Ridge	27,031,000	10,860	2,489
Tierra Verde	71,909,000	11,318	6,354
Mid County	63,000	22	2,864
UIF-Pasco Orangewood	69,000	36	1,917
Longwood	114,462,000	18,639	6,141
Lake Placid	59,000	36	1,639
Sanlando	26,601,216	7,296	3,646
Total	240,194,216	48,207	240,194,216/48,207 = 4,982 ~ 5,000 gallons

Timing of this new Request

In July 2025, our sewage rate was increased again by another 17%. In addition, our service company Sunshine Water Service (formerly named United Utilities) asked to meet with us on July 31st. The main purpose of the meeting was to inform us that they planned to close our local plant and transfer our services to a nearby plant located in the Eagle Ridge community. During the meeting, we informed the company representatives that we were satisfied with the services and basically had no problem with their moving, but that we were very upset and had suffered greatly from the flat rate imposed on us since 2017. We noted that our flat rate since 2017 compared to our actual usage has been as unfair and unreasonable as (1) a flat income tax whereby billionaires paid the same actual tax as those whose only income was social security, or (2) a flat rate for gas stations whereby compact car owners paid the same amount to fill their tanks as tracker-trailer owners having tanks of 300 gallon capacity. While the Sunshine representatives were understanding and sympathetic, they lacked any authority to make an appropriate rate adjustment.

Summary

Our Cross Creek 905 member community, part of the Eagle Ridge system served by Sunshine Water Services, has been paying a totally unfair rate for sewage since 2017. Why was the PSC allowed to raise our flat rate to be based on a 5,000 gallon demand when their own data published an actual demand of only 2,489 gallons for the entire Eagle Ridge system? Data provided by Sunshine shows that our own subset averaged only 1,404 gallons per month in 2024 and 1,434 so far in 2025. Paying at a 5,000 flat rate means we are paying more than 3.5 times a fair and reasonable rate. Our July 2025 flat rate for sewage was raised to \$73.19 per residence. Given our actual consumption, we are paying about \$52 per 1,000 gallons which is at least 3.5 times a normal Florida rate.

As a result of the unjust raise in 2017, our community will pay over \$6 million for the 10 year period 2017 – 2026. This average of over \$600,000 a year is more than double the \$288,659 paid in 2016 prior to the 2017 jump. We urgently request some assistance in having our rate adjusted to something more appropriate and more reasonable as soon as possible.

Consumption Data Provided by Sunshine Water Services

Cross Creek of Fort Myers Association
Sewage Treatment by Sunshine Water Services
formerly Utilities Inc

Average gallons treated in 2024: 1,404 gallons per residence per month
thru August 2025: 1,434 gallons per residence per month
Since 2017, we have been charged for a flat rate of 5,000 per month
about 3.5 times the actual usage

2024	Total Gallons	Gallons per Household
Jan	2,013,798	2,225
Feb	1,897,000	2,096
Mar	1,970,000	2,177
Apr	1,411,000	1,559
May	924,000	1,021
Jun	952,000	1,052
Jul	901,000	996
Aug	895,000	989
Sept	871,000	962
Oct	1,030,000	1,138
Nov	1,173,000	1,296
Dec	1,209,000	1,336
Total:	15,246,798	16,847
	Avg per Month	1,404

2025	Total Gallons	Gallons per Household
Jan	1,710,000	1,890
Feb	1,663,000	1,838
Mar	1,824,000	2,015
Apr	1,264,000	1,397
May	983,514	1,087
Jun	919,429	1,016
Jul	1,035,834	1,145
Aug	979,575	1,082
	Avg per Month	1,434

Graphical Presentation of the Flat Rate Effect

