

Nickalus Holmes

From: noreply@psc.state.fl.us
Sent: Tuesday, July 14, 2026 11:42 AM
To: markaustin51360@gmail.com
CC: Consumer Contact
Subject: Docket Number - 20250122-WS

Good Morning, Mark Austin,

We will be placing your comments below in docket correspondence in Docket No. 20250122-WS, and forwarding them to the Office of Consumer Assistance.

Sincerely,

Nickalus Holmes
Office of Commission Clerk
Florida Public Service Commission
2540 Shumard Oak Boulevard
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0850
850-413-6770

PLEASE NOTE: Florida has a very broad public record law. Most written communications to or from state officials regarding state business are considered to be public records and will be made available to the public and the media upon request. Therefore, your comments may be subject to public disclosure.

From: markaustin51360@gmail.com
Sent: Tuesday, July 14, 2026 10:58 AM
To: Florida Public Service Commission
Subject: Docket Number - 20250122-WS

Description:

Customer Comment Id: 266

Are you a customer of Sun Communities Acquisitions, LLC d/b/a Buttonwood Bay Utilities: Y

Name: Mark Austin

Phone: 8145589326

Email: markaustin51360@gmail.com

Address: 37 Flounder Dr, Sebring, Highlands, FL 33875

Submit Date: Tuesday, July 14, 2026 10:58 AM

Comment: According to Florida law, the utility requesting a rate increase must prove the increase is necessary and justified. The Commission is not required to approve an increase simply because the utility requests one. The evidence must demonstrate that the asked for increase rates are fair, just and reasonable. According to the 43 page PSC report, the Buttonwood Bay Utility has not met this burden under Florida Law. The applicant Buttonwood Bay Utility has not met its burden of proof because the preliminary staff report identifies unresolved service quality issues, accounting discrepancies and operational inefficiencies that remain under investigation.

Service quality is a statutory consideration. The PSC report expressly states that the quality of service determination has not been finalized pending customer comment testimony. Until the Commission makes a final finding that service quality is satisfactory, it would be premature and inconsistent with Florida law to approve a significant permanent rate increase.

Inefficient operations should not be passed on to customers. The report states that 29.4% of the water used is unaccounted for. The report specifically states this may warrant adjustments in the final recommendation. Customers should not bear the financial burden of excessive system losses. The Commission has historically required utilities to operate efficiently before recovering costs from its rate payers.

There is documented proof of poor service in the PSC report involving, discolored water, sulfur and sewer odors, loss of water pressure, delayed filter maintenance and failure to notify residents that they need to boil their water. Until these issues are corrected a rate increase is difficult to justify.

Buttonwood Bay has increased the water & sewer rates through a price index adjustment effective June 16, 2025. I believe that there was also increases through this process in 2023 & 2024. Because rates have already been raised the past several years, this substantial rate increase should be denied.

Buttonwood Bays financial records raise reliability concerns. The report states that Buttonwood Bay could not provide financial records for many years, had incorrect billing, had duplicate wastewater bills, had accounting errors requiring extensive staff adjustments. Because Buttonwood Bays lack of accounting records and records requiring requiring extensive corrections by the Commission staff, the reliability of the requested revenue is subject to question. Rates should not be increased until more accurate and complete financial records are established.

The rate increase may violate the just and reasonable standard. A proposed 102.65% water increase and a 45.71% wastewater increase is extraordinary. An increase of this magnitude requires extraordinary justification. Given the unresolved operational, accounting and service quality issues identified in the report, the proposed rate increases are not shown to be just and reasonable.

The Commission should give meaningful weight to customer comments and testimony regarding service quality. Approving rate hikes without fully considering that evidence would undermine the purpose of the public hearing process.

Under chapter 367, Florida Statutes, the burden rests on Buttonwood Bay to prove that its requested rate increases are fair, just and reasonable. The PSC report demonstrates that this burden has not been met. The Commission should deny or substantially reduce the requested rate increases.

Thank You,

Mark Austin