EMERALD COAST
UTILITIES AUTHORITY

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April 17, 2014

Mr. Larry Tucker
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Ecological Services Field Office
Southeast Region
1601 Balboa Avenue
Panama City, FL 32405-3792

Mr. Tommy Barfield
FDOT – District 3
District Secretary
1074 Highway 90 East
Chipley, Florida 32428-0607

Re: SR 292 (Perdido Key Drive) Proposed Mouse Crossings;
FDOT FPN: 430786-2-52-01;
Conflicts with ECUA Facilities

Dear Mr. Tucker and Mr. Barfield:

The Emerald Coast Utilities Authority (ECUA) is the water and sewer provider for most of southern Escambia County, including Perdido Key. We are writing you to discuss the referenced project and its impacts on our utility system and our ratepayers.

We ourselves are stewards of the local environment, so we can identify with your agencies' wildlife protection goals associated with this project. Still, we believe there should exist a reasonable balance between project design, effectiveness, and overall cost to the community.

About a month ago, ECUA received detailed plans regarding the four proposed mouse crossings along with the detailed locations of ECUA's 8" water main, 12" water main, and 12" sewer force main at each proposed crossing. Upon detailed review, we can confirm to you that the currently designed mouse crossings will cause conflicts with all three of our utilities at each of these four locations, for a total of 12 conflicts. Ten of these conflicts are considered to be a direct conflict with the proposed crossing, while the remaining two are considered to be an indirect conflict caused by the actual construction of the crossings.

Preliminary estimates to relocate these utilities at all twelve conflict locations range from $500,000 to $1,000,000. We feel it is paramount for us to communicate directly with you about this magnitude of cost and the physical impacts on our water and sewer systems. Listed below you will find a partial list of the items adding to the complexity and cost associated with relocations based on the current design:

Vicki Campbell
District One

Lois Benson
District Two

Elvin McCorvey
District Three

Dale Perkins
District Four

Larry Walker
District Five

- Relocation plan would require extensive surveying and complicated engineering design to find new utility locations due to existence of numerous underground utilities, sandy conditions, right-of-way limitations, road location, etc.
- Sandy conditions cause excessive open cut trench widths and impacts to the roadway, other utilities, etc.
- Need for numerous temporary construction easements (TCE's) where relocations would be installed close to the existing right-of-way
- Impacts to sand dunes and vegetation outside of right-of-way due to construction located near right-of-way
- Impacts to and relocation of privately owned landscaping and irrigation systems located both in the right-of-way and on private property
- Potential impacts to and relocation of miscellaneous private property
- High groundwater table requiring extensive dewatering efforts
- Installation of numerous system valves to help isolate sections
- Substantial customer outages and business interruptions
- Increased risk of sewage spills when working around sewer mains and/or making new connections, and an increased risk of sewage spills due to the substantial amount of sewer bypass pumping required
- Due to re-connections and service transfers, nighttime work would be a necessity
- Relocations would require numerous lane closures, to possibly include full road closures which are all but untenable due to the lack of detour options
- Future four-laning of this road will almost certainly require removal and replacement of the proposed mouse crossings as well as any utilities that were required to relocate

To date, the only crossing design we have seen from the FDOT and its consultant is that of a standard concrete pipe cross drain with headwalls, a design normally used with stormwater drainage systems. We have not been offered any alternatives which might serve to mitigate the impacts to ECUA. Our local FDOT counterparts have expressed their understanding of ECUA's situation, but unfortunately they do not have the utility knowledge or experience, nor is it their responsibility, to communicate to you the full extent of this project's impact to ECUA.

We would therefore like our three agencies to meet together and in person to discuss these issues. ECUA will bring some design alternatives to the table, as we hope your agencies will do as well. We feel confident in finding an alternative that should meet most of your needs while at the same time substantially lessening the impacts to our facilities. Thanks for your time and assistance.

Sincerely,

Michael N. Hamlin, PE
Manager of Utilities Development

cc: Stephen E. Sorrell, PE, MPA; ECUA Executive Director
William E. Johnson, Jr., PE/LS, Director of Engineering/ECUA
Brandon Knight, PE; ECUA Project Engineer
Harry Shoemore; ECUA West Region Supervisor
Jonathan Harris; FDOT District Utility Manager
John MacDonald, PE; Atkins/FDOT Area Utility Manager