

November 9, 2023

The Honorable Gail M. Chiodo
The Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission
Re: The Pittsburgh Water and Sewer Authority Request for Rate Increase

I am an individual who filed a complaint against having the proposed rate hike by the PWSA and I am responding as an "objection" to the Settlement.

First, I wish to thank you for notifying me about the proposed Joint Petition for Settlement regarding activities within the PWSA. Positive strides have definitely been made in negotiations. Nonetheless, I do object to the proposed settlement.

1. The residents of Pittsburgh should not have to absorb the high cost of PWSA business practices via significant increases including those we have received over the recent past. Based on my readings, we are now responsible for every drop of water that hits the ground such as storm water, wastewater and, of course, the water we consume. Is this equitable? Should we have to be billed for all these elements?
2. The suggested bill for the average individual customer could well push residents past their monthly budgets (yes, some responsible individuals budget out their expenses to reasonably live). Maybe the Authority should continue to review their fiduciary responsibilities. Do we as residences of Pittsburgh have the responsibility to pay for every drop of water that hits the ground or is there another manner in which this can be taken care of?
3. There is no cap (percentage) as to how much the next increase can be. Hence, we can wind up with the same scenario we are currently facing. What accountability will there be for increases?

Regarding Customer Service – Low Income

I must commend the essence of some of the proposals. Specifically, behind Point #8 agreeing to expand the Bill Discount Program and also for Point #7. However, the Authority is not a welfare agency. Are there not welfare programs in place that can help individuals regarding water bills? I assume the loss of income here will be absorbed by the residents it serves??? My concern is who is paying the final monthly bill to satisfy the cost of these special provisions and are there no other programs in place that can help absorb these costs?

Regarding Operations

Points #14 and #15 are definitely positive actions that I applaud being incorporated into this Settlement. Thank you for consideration of my thoughts.

Sincerely,
Renee Abrams
1433 Browning Road
Pittsburgh, PA 15206
Email: reneabrams@aol.com