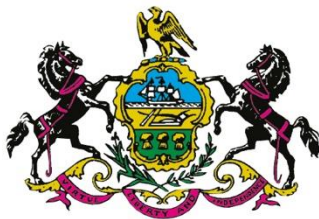


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Senate of Pennsylvania

Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission
Keystone Building
400 North Street Keystone Bldg.
Harrisburg, PA 17120

RE: Docket No.: [M-2016-2543193](#)

Dear Commissioners,

Thank you for considering ways to increase public awareness and consistency in evaluating the acquisition and valuation of municipal or authority-owned water and wastewater systems under Section 1329 of the Public Utility Code. I appreciate the opportunity to submit comments on these proposals.

As you know, this has been a point of considerable concern for my constituents in Chester County, as well as those in communities across the Commonwealth. As private companies continue to acquire municipal water and wastewater systems, access to affordable service appears to be growing further out of reach for far too many residents and families.

In fact, due to these very concerns, last spring, Willistown Township in Senate District 19 voted to terminate an agreement to sell the township sewer system. Following conversations with ratepayers, members of community organizations like Neighbors Opposing Privatization Efforts, my legislative colleagues, and the Office of Pennsylvania Consumer Advocate, it is clear that meaningful reform of Section 1329 is needed.

I support the PUC's willingness to revise its current procedures and guidelines related to the evaluation of Section 1329 applications, including enhancing public meeting and notification requirements. Ratepayers frequently report that they do not learn of sales until it's too late and without clear information on what the sale of the water/wastewater system means for their rates and how they can engage in the process. Requiring that rate impact notices are communicated to customers well ahead of time is an important and positive step. I also encourage the PUC to expand the number of required public meetings beyond two, especially considering that when rate increases are sought, multiple public input hearings are held. Lastly, any meetings must be structured to ensure ample opportunity for review and comment for all members of the public.

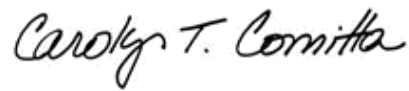
I also appreciate the PUC's consideration of implementing additional guiderails in the process to enhance uniformity in the process and better protect consumers. I am interested in

learning more about the proposed Default Weights for Appraisals and Reasonableness Review Ratio, but without more context and information on how they will be used, it is difficult to gauge their potential impact and benefits.

Clean, reliable, affordable water and wastewater service is a basic necessity for all Pennsylvanians and all people. Currently, there is no shortage of policy options and legislative proposals to address the impacts of Section 1329, ranging from reform to sunseting of Act 12. As those discussions continue. I appreciate the PUC putting forth proposals to better protect our public, ratepayers, and municipalities.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Carolyn T. Comitta".

Carolyn Comitta
State Senator – 19th District