

April 23, 2014

Secretary  
Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission  
400 North Street  
Harrisburg, PA 17120

Re: AQUA bill for account #0002868670286867

To whom it may concern:

I have the pleasure of representing Joel Marcus regarding his legal matters and I am writing to contest the water bill issued to Mr. Marcus by AQUA Pennsylvania on March 12, 2014 in the amount of \$3,907.25.

It is my understanding that a pipe burst in Mr. Marcus's basement while he and his wife were in Florida, even though Mr. Marcus took all reasonable precautions to prevent such an accident. He left the heat on and uninterrupted the entire time they were away and shut off the water to the water heater and washing machine. While in Florida, Mr. Marcus learned that the temperature in Pennsylvania had dropped lower than usual. Accordingly, he asked his son-in-law to go check on the house. It is my understanding that, when Mr. Marcus's son-in-law arrived, he discovered a notice from AQUA Pennsylvania on the door indicated that AQUA had been unable to gain entry to the house in order to read the water meter. He also discovered a leak in the pipes and immediately shut the water off. Mr. Marcus's son-in-law then called a plumber, who came out and repaired the pipe the next day.

As you are no doubt aware, this has been a particularly severe winter. By leaving his heat on and uninterrupted and having his son-in-law check on the property when he heard the temperatures were especially low, Mr. Marcus made every effort to prevent his pipes from bursting. In addition to the stress and financial hardship of repairing resulting damages to his property, Mr. Marcus has recently received the aforementioned water bill from AQUA Pennsylvania, Inc., charging him close to four thousand dollars for water he never used. According to Mr. Marcus's use history, his water bill rarely exceeds sixty-five dollars. The amount charged on the March 12, 2014 bill is nearly sixty times that amount.

Mr. Marcus contacted AQUA Pennsylvania on March 21, 2014 to contest his bill. He also submitted a Leak Adjustment Form, which is an application for an adjustment to an account when a leak on the customer's side of the meter causes excessive consumption, along with a

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receipt indicating that he had immediately repaired the pipe upon learning of the leak. Mr. Marcus also made a payment on March 21, 2014 in the amount of 64.16, which more closely reflects the uncontested charges for his actual monthly consumption.

Instead of receiving notification of a decision regarding his request, Mr. Marcus received a 10 Day Shut Off Notice from AQUA's Department of Collections dated April 10, 2014, in spite of his March 21, 2014 payment. This notice indicated that if Mr. Marcus did not pay the amount indicated on the bill (3,843.09) by April 23, 2014, his service would be shut off. Mr. Marcus called AQUA's Department of Collections on April 18, shortly after receiving this notice. Only then was he notified that an entry was made on April 16, 2014 granting a \$771.31 reduction in the amount owed. Mr. Marcus received no notice of this decision. The agent then informed Mr. Marcus that the only way to avoid shut off of his service was to either pay the full amount of the bill or get on a payment plan. They were told they qualified for such a payment plan but AQUA refused to further reduce the amount owed. Under this payment plan, Mr. Marcus will have to pay \$15 per month for 209 months.

Given that Mr. Marcus has a residential account, I believe that a bill for over 377,000 gallons of water is unreasonable on its face. Further, considering the fact that this is a first time occurrence, as well as the fact that Mr. Marcus and his wife have already experienced significant hardship resulting from the stress and expense of repairing their home, the March 12, 2014 water bill is also unreasonably high under the circumstances. Mr. Marcus and his wife are retired and receiving social security in the amount of \$22,000 a year. They have no pension and only marginal income from additional investments. Considering the above, the reduction of \$771.31, which is less than 20% of the total amount owed, is insufficient.

Therefore, we are asking that AQUA Pennsylvania further adjust the amount of the bill so that it more closely represents Mr. Marcus's actual water usage based on use history over the last several years. I appreciate your assistance in this matter.

Very truly yours

ALYSA M. CASTRO

cc: Joel and Martha Marcus