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R-2024-3047822
R-2024-3047824



Senate of Pennsylvania

COMMITTEES
ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES
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August 7, 2024

RCVD PUC SEC BUR
AUG 9 2024 AM 11:00

Secretary
Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission
400 North Street
Commonwealth Keystone Building, 2nd Floor
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17120

RE: Public Comment on Docket Numbers R-2024-3047822 and R-2024-3047824

Dear Secretary Chiavetta,

I am writing to respectfully request that the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission (PUC) deny Aqua Pennsylvania's proposed rate increase. Affordable, quality water and wastewater services are a necessity for all people.

At a time when many are already facing rising consumer costs on everything from food to basic goods and services, this increase will place a significant burden on residents and working families in communities across my district, especially senior citizens and those on fixed incomes.

Aqua's proposed rate increase means water bills would increase by nearly 20 percent and wastewater bills would rise by almost 19 percent. The proposed increase would impact 1.5 million Aqua Pennsylvania customers and families, including many in Chester County and southeastern Pennsylvania.

While I understand the need for utility companies to make necessary infrastructure repairs to improve services, safety, and responsiveness, Aqua is proposing this rate hike to increase its annual operating revenues by approximately \$112 million for water and \$14.6 million for wastewater. Many of my constituents are already paying more for monthly water and wastewater service than they ever have before. Asking them to pay even more absent any investment in improvements to service, simply does not seem fair.

Please also keep in mind that Aqua last received a rate increase in 2022, increasing water rates by 10 percent and wastewater rates by 50 percent. It also received an increase in 2019, increasing water rates by nearly 10 percent and wastewater by nearly 35 percent. When ratepayers are asked to pay more for water and wastewater services every two years, the impact

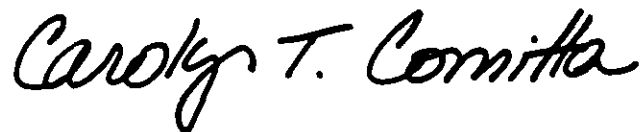
is cumulative – it snowballs – on working families and people who are already struggling to make ends meet.

Lastly, I am again compelled to point out that the company continues to purchase and aggressively pursue the acquisition of municipal water authorities across the Commonwealth and the southeast region, including the Chester Water Authority. I hope that the PUC considers weighing Aqua's financial ability and eagerness to expand its footprint when it asks customers again and again to pay more – this time to increase its operating revenue.

Again, I oppose this increase and respectfully ask that the PUC carefully consider its potential impacts on all our communities, especially our most vulnerable friends, neighbors, and families.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Carolyn T. Comitta". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Carolyn Comitta
State Senator – 19th District



**STATE SENATOR
CAROLYN T. COMITTA**

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PHILADELPHIA PA 190

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RECYCLE

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