
Pennsylvania Public
Utility Commission
v.
Aqua Pennsylvania, Inc.

Telephonic Public Input
Hearing

Docket Nos.:
R-2024-3047822 (Water)
R-2024-3047824 (Wastewater)

Pages 988 - 1094

Judge's Chambers
Commonwealth Keystone
Building - Plaza Level

400 North Street
Harrisburg, PA

Wednesday, August 14, 2024
Commencing at 6:00 p.m.

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Docket Nos. 2024-3047822/R-2024-3047824

Hearing Date: August 14, 2024

<u>NUMBER</u>	<u>FOR IDENTIFICATION</u>	<u>IN EVIDENCE</u>
Morris Exhibit 1		
Statement	1031	1032
DelRosso Exhibit 1		
Statement with		

Photographs

Confidential

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Rafferty Exhibit 1

Statement

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To PUC

First, I want to start out by saying that Pennsylvania's minimum wage rate is one of the lowest wages in the country at \$7.25 per hour. The average hourly rate for most blue collar household workers is between \$10-12 per hour. The average social security benefit for retiree's or people with disabilities is \$900-\$1200 a monthly fixed rate. The average increase in benefits is 1.3%. Based on these numbers alone provides enough evidence that this second rate increase is unethical and if passed, will further burden low income families who cannot afford it. Aqua's asking for more money from their customers is beyond reasonable. Are you aware of Governor Shapiro's bill to stop big corporations, like Aqua, from rate hikes of this extreme? I made Governor Shapiro aware of this meeting in the hope that you will do what is best for the hard working people of Pennsylvania, who are just trying to make ends meet.

The second thing I want to mention are the PFAS and PFOS that are in our water. Aqua has made no attempts or plans for a filtration system to remove the toxins from our water. The township had raised close to \$900,000 in grants to get them to clean these poisonous forever chemicals from our water but they refused to take the grants. They claimed it would not be good for their share holders.

In 2016 our then State Rep. Madeline Dean held a local meeting in Glenside for all the towns who are on the Aqua wells. Aqua and the EPA were informed of the Town Hall meeting and were invited to attend, but they did not think it was important to come. Since then, my household volunteered to be a part of the Pennsylvania Multi-site Health Study group. The results of the clinical study determined that both of us have moderate levels of PFAS in our systems that has caused permanent disabilities.

In order to have safe, clean water, we had a whole house P.O.E water filtration system installed in our house, because we heard that Aqua's water is not treated in a safe clean manner. The filtration system cost over \$4000.00, with ongoing costs for replacement filters. Aqua uses high levels of cheap low cost chloramines, which have been banned in many countries because of their toxicity, to clean their water. These chemicals pose hazards to people's sinus, lungs, and skin; and, it also causes upper respiratory infections and weakens all household appliances by half their lifespan.

Aqua has refused to put a filtration system in place that will safely and permanently clean our water, because their only goal is for profit. The new EPA regulations require water companies to remove the PFAS, PFOS and other contaminants from our water, and since they have declined the township's grants set to help with the cost of doing so, they are going to ask for another 20% increase in the peoples water rate to offset their cost. At a time when all of our politicians running for election are promising to reduce the cost of living for hard working American families who are struggling with the high cost of necessities, it is unreasonable and outrageous to further increase those costs by raising the cost of our water! I speak for the retired and disabled on fixed incomes, this increase cannot happen! Most men and women who work in this country have never received a pay raise anywhere close to the outrageous hikes Aqua is asking for. The public should be allowed to vote on all of your salaries. If Aqua's Board, high paid CEOs and upper management employees earned what low and moderate workers earn, they may know what a struggle it is for us. These rate increases are unethical and criminal, and it would be scandalous if they were to be passed. How could Abington ever be voted the best place to live when this kind of unethical water gouging, which is up 50%, is allowed to happen?

Regards,

Elizabeth Morris

& Wendy Morris

Janelle Rafferty and Kenneth Rafferty

610 287-3410 Hearing

610 308 2954 Prior to Hearing

Janeyc515@gmail.com

Please include:

Dear Judge,

I am writing to express my deep concern regarding the proposed rate increase for Aqua Sewer. The rising cost of utilities is already a significant burden for many residents in our community, and another increase would exacerbate an already challenging situation for numerous families and individuals.

Many members of our community are struggling to make ends meet due to various financial pressures. Seniors on fixed incomes, for example, are particularly vulnerable to any increases in their monthly expenses. With the rising costs of living, including essential items like groceries and medications, these individuals are already stretching their limited resources to the breaking point.

Single parents also face immense challenges, often supporting their families on a single income while juggling multiple responsibilities. For them, every dollar counts, and an increase in sewer rates would impose an additional financial burden that many simply cannot afford.

Veterans who have served our country, often returning home with physical or mental health challenges, deserve our support and understanding. Many are living on fixed incomes, disability benefits, or pensions that do not increase with inflation or rising utility costs. An increase in sewer rates would place unnecessary strain on their already limited finances.

Families like my daughter who are dealing with astronomical medical debt due to unforeseen circumstances, such as pediatric cancer (Christopher - our grandson in first grade is now in remission; he fought cancer 2x starting at 16 months or those with brain trauma or other life threatening illnesses are another group that would be disproportionately impacted by a rate increase. These families are already facing overwhelming emotional and financial stress as they care for their loved ones and navigate the complexities of the healthcare system. Adding to their financial burdens with higher utility bills would be both unfair and detrimental to their well-being.

Our community cannot afford another rate increase from Aqua Sewer. The cost of living is already too high for many, and this proposed increase would only deepen the financial struggles faced by our most vulnerable residents. I respectfully urge you to consider the serious implications of this rate hike and to deny Aqua Sewer's request for another increase.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this important matter.

Sincerely,

Janelle Rafferty

Limerick Township, Pa