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

Re: Comments on Pennsylvania American Water's Proposed Wastewater Rate Increase
Docket Nos. R-2023-3043189 (Water) and R-2023-3043190 (Wastewater)

Dear Commissioners:

I am writing as a customer of Pennsylvania American Water (PAAW) to express my concerns about the company's request to increase wastewater rates. I understand the importance of maintaining and improving our water and sewer systems, but the proposed increase raises several issues that I believe should be carefully reviewed.

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1. The Increase Is Too Expensive for Many Households

PAAW states that it needs this increase to help fund **$1.2 billion** in system upgrades. According to the company, the typical residential wastewater bill could go up by **about $10 per month**, and some customers who also receive stormwater service might see increases of **up to $20 per month**. For many families—especially seniors, people on fixed incomes, facing food insecurity

resulting from loss of food stamps, those struggling with recent hikes in insurance coverage and lower-income households in general—this is a major added cost.

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2. Lack of Transparency for Project Financing

PAAW mentions upgrades and replacements to systems and structures; however, as valuable shareholders, consumers like myself have not been given clear, easy-to-find information about:

- Where the projects will occur
- When they will be completed
- How much each project will cost
- What direct improvements customers can expect

It would be unjust to take more money from consumers for projects that are only broadly described and lack clear details about the disbursement of such funds. Before approving any increase, the PUC should require PAAW to fully explain each major project and show exactly how customer money will be spent.

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3. Limited Support for Low-Income Customers

While PAAW mentions two programs the **H2O Help to Others** (existing program) and the **Renter Assistance Pilot Program (RAPP)** (new, but only a pilot); noteworthy, a pilot program may help only a small number of people. Moreover, many low-income customers may not qualify or may not know about it. If the PUC approves any increase, it should require PAAW to expand its assistance programs so more people can receive help.

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4. Review of Company Profits and Previous Rate Increases

The PUC recently approved a rate increase for PAAW in 2024, which already raised customer bills to help support earlier system upgrades. Before approving another increase so soon, the PUC should review:

- Whether the improvements from the last rate increase have been completed
- Whether the company stayed on budget
- Whether customer service has actually improved

- How much of the new increase would go toward shareholder profit rather than essential system work

Customers should not be asked to pay more if past promises were not fully met.

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5. Need for Clear Service-Quality Requirements

If PAAW receives more money, customers deserve better service. The PUC should require the company to meet specific performance standards, such as:

- Fewer sewer backups and line breaks
- Faster response times
- Regular public updates on project progress

Customers need assurance that higher bills will lead to better service.

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6. Fairness in How the Rate Increase Is Structured

PAAW is proposing a new "Deduct Adjustment" for summer wastewater billing. While this may help some customers, it does not reflect everyone's usage patterns. The PUC should explore whether more fair options exist, such as:

- Tiered rates
- Income-based rate assistance
- More flexible billing adjustments

In conclusion, because of the above concerns, I respectfully ask the PUC to:

1. Require clear, detailed project plans and spending information from PAAW.
2. Expand low-income assistance programs before allowing any rate increases.
3. Carefully review PAAW's profits, past spending, and prior rate increases.
4. Require the company to meet measurable service-quality standards.
5. Ensure the rate design is fair and does not place an unfair burden on vulnerable customers.

Thank you for taking the time to review my concerns. I appreciate the Commission's role in protecting consumers and ensuring that utility rates are fair and reasonable.

Yours sincerely,

V. Casanova

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