
PA Public Utility	
Commission,	
v.	
Pennsylvania American	
Water Company - Water	
And	
PA Public Utility	
Commission,	
v.	
Pennsylvania American	
Water Company - Wastewater	
In-Person Public Input	
Hearing	

Docket Nos.:
R-2025-3057983
R-2025-3058051

Pages 469 - 574

Scranton University
Brennan Hall 5th Floor
320 Madison Avenue
Scranton, PA

Thursday, January 15, 2026
Commencing at 6:00 p.m.

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Docket Nos. R-2025-3057983, R-2025-3058051

Hearing Date: January 15, 2026

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Written Testimony



Nathan Eachus Testimony (PUC - PA American Water - Scranton University):

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on the record. My name is Nathan Eachus, and I am here tonight in direct opposition to Pennsylvania American Water's conduct and its proposed 17 percent rate increase, particularly as it relates to data center infrastructure. The PUC has already voted 5–0 to investigate Pennsylvania American Water's rate increases. In testimony before the Pennsylvania State Senate Majority Policy Committee on August 11, 2025, at Valley View High School, PA American Water's Vice President of Engineering, Tony Nokovich, P.E., acknowledged that *"an average size water-cooled data center can use sixteen million gallons of water in July, with a maximum day demand of up to three million gallons."* This admission underscores the extraordinary scale of water consumption associated with data centers and raises serious concerns about water availability, water system capacity, and the fairness of shifting infrastructure costs and risk onto local communities and ratepayers.

At the same Senate Majority Policy Committee Hearing at Valley View High School, Andrew Dehoff SRBC executive director said, *"But it needs to be noted that, at the hyperscale level, a single data center campus can evaporate millions of gallons of water per day, potentially putting a significant strain on the local water resources."* To summarize, hyperscale data centers require millions of gallons of water per day significantly impacting the local community's drinking water quality. Mr Dehoff also mentioned, *"So hyperscale data centers pose high demands on water supplies in two ways when traditional cooling techniques are used – both in cooling the centers and in operating the power plants that fuel them. A modern gas-fired combined cycle power plant, which is what are typically proposed, can have evaporative water demands of 6 to 10 million gallons a day."* Between methane-fired power plants and water-cooled hyperscale data centers, at least 10 million gallons of water per day are required, highlighting the enormous and continuous demands these paired systems place on local water resources putting communities at high risk.

While PA American Water speaks about fairness and transparency, the reality in Salem Township, Berwick, and Nescopeck is just the opposite. Water, led by PA American Water, is being pulled from Berwick and Nescopeck for data center cooling without a single public hearing held in either community, denying residents notice, input, and a voice in decisions affecting their water supply. There was no transparent disclosure by PA American Water at local Salem Township or Berwick meetings, no upfront discussion of water allocation priorities, and no honest accounting of the cumulative risks especially in an Environmental Justice Zone like Berwick. Even more troubling, the public was never clearly informed that water used for industrial-scale data center cooling would ultimately be discharged back into the Susquehanna River at extremely warm temperatures impacting aquatic life. The Susquehanna River is a primary source of drinking water for downstream communities, supplying homes, schools, hospitals, and businesses. Any increase in thermal loading raises legitimate concerns about water quality, treatment costs, and cumulative impacts on a shared public water resource.

Additionally in Salem Township, Pennsylvania American Water is responsible for supplying and managing the water used for the QTS data center's so-called "closed-loop" cooling system, involving corporate partners such as Blackstone and PPL. Yet residents of Salem Township are being asked to accept this project with setbacks of just 75 feet from homes, while massive data center infrastructure's height will be 100 feet next to residential homes.

Despite labeling the system “closed loop,” Pennsylvania American Water has not publicly disclosed how many gallons of water per day will be withdrawn, replaced, or consumed to operate this system. A closed-loop designation does not eliminate water use, it only limits discharge. Communities have a right to know the actual daily and annual water demand, the source of that water, and how it will impact local drinking water supplies, especially during drought or emergency conditions.

This lack of transparency mirrors ongoing concerns across the region which is that utilities and data center operators are making major infrastructure decisions without full public disclosure, while ratepayers and nearby residents shoulder the risks.

Pennsylvania American Water has a long-standing obligation to provide the community of Dimock, Pennsylvania with a clean, permanent water supply. That obligation arose in 2009, when Dimock’s aquifer was polluted by fracking-related methane contamination and other drilling-associated pollutants. For sixteen years, residents of Dimock have endured unsafe and unreliable water while waiting for a solution that was promised but never delivered.

Pennsylvania American Water has been identified as the entity responsible for constructing the long-overdue water line, yet meaningful transparency has not been provided. At a minimum, PA American Water should publicly post comprehensive, ongoing water-quality testing results for Dimock to demonstrate that any water supplied is truly clean and safe. Given Dimock’s documented history of oil and gas impacts and private well contamination, full transparency and independent verification are essential to restoring public trust and protecting public health.

Communities are being asked to absorb higher rates and greater risk so multinational corporations can operate data centers, while basic questions about water security, thermal pollution, PFAS exposure, and cumulative impacts remain unanswered. Ratepayers should not be forced to subsidize private data center infrastructure through higher bills, especially when PA American Water has failed to meet its basic obligation of transparency, public engagement, and protection of existing customers. This rate increase should be rejected, and Pennsylvania American Water should be required to fully disclose, justify, and come clean on shifting the communities drinking water supply to industrial cooling data center operations and methane fired power plants. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

Respectfully,

-Nathan Eachus

Concerned Pennsylvania Citizen

Eastern PA Coalition for Abandoned Mine Reclamation

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January 15, 2026

Public Input Hearings Scheduled for Proposed Rate Changes by Pennsylvania American Water Company; Regarding Document Numbers R-2025-3057983 R-2025-3058051

Good evening Your Honor,

My name is Robert E. Hughes, and I serve as the Executive Director of the Eastern PA Coalition for Abandoned Mine Reclamation (EPCAMR), a nearly 30 year old, regional non-profit environmental organization located in Ashley, PA, dedicated to the reclamation of abandoned mine lands, restoration of watersheds impacted by abandoned mine drainage (AMD), and economic redevelopment of abandoned mine lands impacted by past mining practices throughout the Anthracite and Bituminous Coal Fields of Northeastern and Northcentral PA. We work across the service region of PA American Water and several other water utility companies and have been a community partner with the company for nearly 20 years on a variety of projects, programs, events, and educational opportunities in the coalfield communities across our region to restore lands, waterways, and watersheds impacted by past mining practices.

Our mission is to advocate for the reclamation of these abandoned mine lands, improve water quality from the polluted abandoned mines, revitalize the often underserved coalfield communities through restoration projects, environmental education and outreach, community environmental action and cleanup projects, watershed monitoring, and abatement and stream, habitat, and wildlife improvement projects with a myriad of partners from local municipal governments, regional non-profits, coal companies, utilities, local businesses, conservation organizations, academic and high school/colleges, schools, and private industries.

Partnership with PA American Water

I would like to share just a few examples of community partnerships that have been successfully implemented by EPCAMR thanks to the support of the PA American Water. PA American Water has been a long-standing community partner to EPCAMR. The Water and Environment grant is part of the American Water Charitable Foundation's Keep Communities Flowing Grant Program and has supported EPCAMR to reach into our communities and youth impacted by legacy past mining over the last few years. In 2024, EPCAMR was awarded an \$18,000 American Water Charitable Foundation 2024 Water and Environment grant where only 60 incredibly competitive grants were awarded across the country with over \$3M in requests and \$1M being funded. The funds have been directed to boots-on-the-ground watershed assessment work by EPCAMR Staff and community volunteers, to spend the time necessary to engage the local community, partners, the State Game Lands 260, 224,55 Land Managers, and residents to determine water quality, reclamation, wildlife habitat improvement projects, culvert replacements, or streambank issues can be identified or can be recommended for future implementation grants within the Shickshinny Creek watershed and two independent tributaries (Paddy Run and Rocky Run) that flow directly into the Susquehanna River from the State Game Lands 260, a heavily impacted public recreational destination in the southern Wyoming Valley's southern tip of the Northern Anthracite Coal Fields.

Funds were granted to also allow EPCAMR to purchase a new Hach field spectrophotometer and a YSI Multi-parameter Pro Quatro probe to assess the water quality quickly and scientifically and added to the increased technical assistance services we can now continue to provide to our community partners throughout the EPCAMR Region.

Aquatic connectivity for the fish populations in the area has been inventoried by the EPCAMR Staff who are already certified and trained in conducting culvert and bridge assessments and measurements. No recent collection of chemistry or flows of suspected abandoned mine drainage (AMD) in the areas below the State Game Lands 260 or the former Stackhouse Colliery grounds has been collected in the last decade. Funds were utilized for on-the-ground field investigations around publicly accessible lands, culverts, bridges, and several water quality aquatic insect sampling sites were chosen representative of the areas along the major tributaries to Little Shickshinny Creek.

A report will be in draft production with recommendations on projects that can be implemented by the community, municipalities, other partners in the watershed area, and the PA Game Commission. EPCAMR applied for additional funds through the PA Council of Trout Unlimited's Coldwater Heritage Partnership program and was awarded an additional \$10,000 due to the private matching funds to complete the entire watershed assessment to complete a comprehensive coldwater conservation plan like we have done for many other watersheds throughout the Wyoming Valley.

We hope to involve the local PA American Water Staff in the Spring in several planned cleanups of illegally dumped trash within the watershed that we've identified or riparian tree plantings, and educational programs as they are scheduled in the Spring 2026 and other possible implementation projects that we hope our partners seek funding for based on our recommendations in the Final Coldwater Heritage Conservation Plan. EPCAMR has maintained a strong relationship through our long-standing educational programming with Susan Turcmanovich, External Affairs Manager for Northeast PA and are looking forward to working with Alana Roberts, who was recently hired on to PA American Water.

In 2025, on Earth Day, the American Water Charitable Foundation selected EPCAMR through yet another competitive grant process when over \$1.5 million was granted to only 79 organizations in 12 states. We received \$10,000 to expand our outreach efforts and borehole awareness campaign in the Lackawanna and Wyoming Valleys where nearly 43 boreholes exist that historically had been used as monitoring locations into the underground mine pools across both valleys by the State Bureau of Abandoned Mine Reclamation until they lost funding for the monitoring and maintenance of them.

Today, many of them are paved over, need to be daylighted, cleared of debris, recapped, rethreaded, and monitored occasionally to obtain mine pool elevations as they tend to fluctuate with rainfall events that could lead to flooding, mine subsidence, blockages, and can be used to obtain chemistry samples at various depths in the historic underground mines. EPCAMR has created a database of the conditions of these boreholes in both Counties through locating them and working with local municipal road departments, PA DOT, and the State Bureau of Abandoned Mine Reclamation to provide data on the water levels beneath the ground in the underground mines that will help with quality and quantity determinations of the mine water volumes in the underground mine pools that are connected to numerous abandoned mine drainage (AMD) discharges. We plan to hire local contractors to help us daylight a few of the boreholes that we need opened to obtain mine pool water elevations that will help us better establish the boundaries of where the water is laying underground and how it is flowing.

A final example of our long-standing partnership is one that most importantly reaches the youth in our region. EPCAMR annually participates in the PA American Water Camp that is held along the Lackawanna River in Peckville at the Valley Library. Several dozen youth attend the Camp annually and some are returning youth that I have come to know for over 5 years who can literally be my assistant at this point in conducting the hands-on activities that we teach them. They learn about the importance of our work to clean up the River, what the aquatic macros that we find in the stream indicate about the stream health and ecology, and how we clean up polluted mine water and how PA American Water manages reservoirs and drinking water supplies above the coal measures.

PA American Water purchases recycled iron oxide pigment from EPCAMR each year that we in turn use to fund materials and supplies for our environmental education programs. The iron oxide pigment is used annually to create AMD Tie-Dye t-shirts that the youth really enjoy wearing and creating. We play macro-BINGO speed rounds for candy, and they get to take photos with our two oversized trout puppets each year that are a big hit. The youth learn to identify more than 20 species of macros commonly found in both clean and polluted streams before the day is over and they get to actively get their feet wet, so to speak, while in muck boots and waders, to join EPCAMR Staff in the River to kick for the macros while PA American Water, Penn-State Master Watershed Stewards, and Staff from the Lackawanna River Conservation Association teach them and oversee them from the trail below the Library.

In closing, Pennsylvania American Water's investment in EPCAMR contributes to healthier streams, a better understanding of our surface legacy AMD impacts and underground mine pool hydrogeology, more resilient neighborhoods in our coalfield communities, a cleaner environment, a more educated youth, increased volunteerism with EPCAMR, and infrastructure and stream and watershed improvements within their service area.

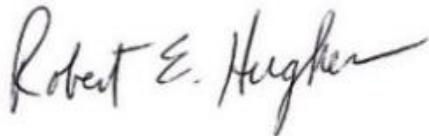
These programs help young people understand where their water comes from, the legacy of mining in their communities, and the importance of modern water infrastructure and conservation. From EPCAMR's perspective, Pennsylvania American Water is not just a water and wastewater utility; it is a committed community partner.

Their grants, charitable giving, and employee volunteerism translated into tangible environmental improvements, educational opportunities, and community benefits in our region through their support of our work.

Based on our direct experience working with them, I can say that Pennsylvania American Water's investments in organizations like EPCAMR help protect and enhance the very watersheds that supply our communities, and they contribute meaningfully to quality of life and long-term community resilience needed in our coalfield communities.

Thank you for the opportunity to share our experience.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robert E. Hughes". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Robert "Bobby" E. Hughes-EPCAMR Executive Director