

625 Spruce St
Philadelphia, Pa., 19106
February 24, 2016

Philadelphia Water, Sewer and Stormwater Rate Board
City of Philadelphia Law Department
Attn: Frances Beckley
1515 Arch Street, 17th Floor
Philadelphia, PA 19102

Re: Proposed 2016 Water Rate Increase.

I am a senior citizen and oppose the proposed water rate increase. While my income does not qualify for a discount, it is nevertheless fixed.

The previous rate request in 2012 brought rate increases of 5.8% in 2013, 5.8% in 2014, and 5.0% in 2015 for a total of 16.6%. I have no other utility service, not even natural gas, in which the rates have risen 16% in 3 years. The current proposed rates will increase rates by 11.7 percent, bringing a total increase to 28.3% since 2012.

The justification language for this increase must have been copied directly from the previous request because the language and justifications are the same. They are not good enough. I think the water department should begin looking for internal cost savings instead of assuming customers are willing or able to pay more. Cost savings can begin by the department being better managers of the funds customers are paying and by not squandering the money on unnecessary projects and activities for example:

The rate increase in 2012 brought customers:

The rebranding project. Over \$200,000 of **our** money was spent to develop a new department name and a picture logo. I can assure you, no customer cares what the department calls itself and we don't need a new picture on correspondence.

A new fleet of vehicles sporting customized blue paint containing a water splash. New vehicles with standard plain white paint will get the job done with less cost.

And finally the use of Overtime. In 2015 my water meter was read on March 15, and December 13-both of these days are Sundays. I understand overtime being paid for critical problems, such as main breaks, but there is no need to be paying it for routine readings that should have been scheduled around a weekend. I don't care if my meter is read every 28 days or every 35 days, weekend readings involving the paying of overtime should not happen.

In conclusion I am opposed to the proposed rate increase because the water department has not demonstrated good judgement with the money it is currently receiving from its customers. If costs are rising the department needs to implement cost cutting programs to get their spending under control. Households have to cut costs by reducing unnecessary expenditures, the water department should too.

Regards:

Mr. Perry E. Whyte Jr.

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