

**From:** [Sharon Tumulty](#)  
**To:** [WaterRateBoard](#)  
**Subject:** Response to Proposed Rate Increase for Water, Sewer, and Stormwater 2021-2022  
**Date:** Wednesday, March 17, 2021 5:28:52 PM

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I think it is appalling, misleading, and premature for the Water Rate Board to even be considering raising rates for water, sewer, and stormwater, beginning in September, 2021 with a proposed 11.6% increase and continuing in September, 2022 with an additional 5.3% increase (total of 17.6% increase).

It is appalling because so many of the city's citizens are still struggling financially due to the pandemic. Instead of trying to impose additional expenses, the priority should be coming up with practical ways of working with the more than 1/3 of the Water Revenue Bureau's customers (154,000) who are currently past due in making their payments to the Water Revenue Bureau in order to assist them in gradually getting "back on track".

It is misleading, because consideration is only being given to itemizing the Water Revenue Bureau's potential future expenses. Just prior to the COVID crisis, there was \$180 million in the Water Revenue Bureau's Rate Stabilization Fund. Why is there no mention of tapping the Bureau's ample reserve funds in order to cope with the financial impact of an extraordinary pandemic, such as has not been seen in more than one hundred years?

It is premature, because it fails to factor in the substantial pandemic relief funding for cities incorporated in the American Rescue Plan (COVID relief package) which was just this month signed into law. That law not only provides benefits and financial assistance for Philadelphia's citizens, their families, and businesses, it also provides \$350 billion in funding for state and local governments whose revenue has declined due to COVID's impact on the economy (which would seem to be the reason for this proposed rate increase).

As is evident from what I have written above, I am OPPOSED to the proposed rate increase for Water Revenue Bureau customers being deliberated by the Water Rate Board.