

## Steven Liang

---

**From:** PWD DepDog <pwddepdog@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, May 7, 2021 10:34 PM  
**To:** WaterRateBoard  
**Subject:** Public Comment on Philadelphia's 2021 Water Rates

External Email Notice. This email comes from outside of City government. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender.

---

TO: Philadelphia Water, Sewer & Storm Water Rate Board  
C/O: Steven Liang  
1515 Arch Street, 17th Floor  
Philadelphia, PA 19102

Dear Water, Sewer & Stormwater Rate Board,

I write to support the Water Department's 2021 revised request for a rate increase for the following reasons:

1. PWD filed for a rate increase in the spring of 2020 and in recognition of pandemic related hardships and uncertainties, withdrew that request. It has been my experience that PWD does not file for a rate increase unless additional funds are needed to support the utility's provision of high quality drinking water, sewer and stormwater services. These needs did not necessarily disappear during the pandemic.
2. PWD has a robust customer assistance program, has made additional accommodations during the pandemic and the proposed settlement addresses further improvements. There is thus assistance for customers in need. Additionally, the moratorium for shutting off services for delinquency has been extended until April 2022 by which time it would have been in place for 2 continuous years. Costs resulting from this extended moratorium and for customer assistance programs must be recovered from those of us who can better afford this utility bill.
3. Delays in infrastructure investments ultimately drive up replacement costs as well as the costs for repeated repairs due to delayed capital expenditures, thus driving up operating costs. It's the old "pay me now or pay me much more later" concept. I prefer to pay less now for continued system reliability and permit compliance than pay much more later and contend that this is the more responsible approach.
4. Proposed rates are still less than what some of my friends and family who live in surrounding communities pay for water & sewer services (their stormwater fees are hidden in taxes) and are within range of other large cities. This would support that the rate request is within reasonable bounds.
5. Despite what some opponents contend, it is cost effective to maintain coverage and have sufficient funds in the rate stabilization account for a good bond rating. Quite simply, higher bond ratings allow PWD to borrow at lower interest rates to fund their capital needs. When one borrows money at a lower interest rate, rate payer funds can be extended further and ultimately, I as a rate payer, will pay less.

In conclusion, no one likes to pay more for anything, including me. However, it is an unfortunate fact of life that over time, rates will need to increase in order to maintain the high level of water quality, wastewater treatment and stormwater management to which PWD's customers have grown accustomed and depend upon. Additionally, continued regulatory compliance is imperative. It is my belief that the revised rate increase is sound and reasonable and should be approved by the Water, Sewer & Stormwater Rate Board. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,  
Debra y