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To: WaterRateBoard
Subject: Written testimony - Opposition to rate hikes

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To Whomever it may concern,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to the proposal to raise water rates in Philadelphia by 20% over the next two years. While I understand that the city is facing financial challenges, I believe that this proposed rate increase would disproportionately harm communities of color, as well as migrant communities, and therefore would be a bad idea.

The reality is that minority communities in Philadelphia are already struggling to make ends meet. They often live in areas that have been historically marginalized and disinvested, resulting in lower incomes, fewer job opportunities, and poorer access to resources. In fact, the median household income for Black and Hispanic families in Philadelphia is significantly lower than that of white families. Additionally, the infrastructure in these neighborhoods, and the city at large, is usually poorer than that in suburban areas, leading to increased water usage which would raise bills if not resolved.

If water rates are raised by 20%, many low-income minority and migrant families, as well as families from other marginalized communities, will be forced to choose between paying for basic necessities such as food, housing, and healthcare, and paying for their water bills. This will lead to more families falling behind on their water bills, which can result in water shutoffs, increased debt, and even potential eviction.

Moreover, disenfranchising communities in this way would only further deepen existing inequalities and injustices. The impact of the proposed rate increase would be felt most acutely by those who can least afford it, which would only reinforce the cycle of poverty and inequality.

In conclusion, I strongly urge decision-makers to reconsider this proposal to raise water rates by 20% in Philadelphia. Instead, I encourage them to explore alternative solutions that will not harm low-income minority communities and will help to build a more equitable and just city for all.

Regards,
L.J. Sample
Philadelphia Resident