

Phila Water Hearing Board  
3/22/2023 3:00 p.m.

PHILADELPHIA WATER, SEWER, AND STORM WATER  
RATE BOARD  
PUBLIC HEARING

Wednesday, March 22, 2023  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

TIME: 3:00 p.m.

LOCATION: Zoom Teleconference

HELD BEFORE: HONORABLE MARLANE R. CHESTNUT,  
Hearing Officer

- - -

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1 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: This is the first of the  
2 public hearings that have been scheduled by the Philadelphia  
3 Water, Sewer, and Stormwater Rate Board, or the Rate Board, to  
4 give the Board a chance to hear directly from you concerning the  
5 Philadelphia Water Department's proposed rates and charges for  
6 fiscal year 2024 and fiscal year 2025.

7 The Rate Board is an independent body to set rates  
8 and charges -- everybody's got to mute themselves, if Steven  
9 hasn't done it. Okay? Okay. Am I not muted at this point I  
10 assume? Let me -- let me continue.

11 I was explaining the Rate Board, which is an  
12 independent body established to set rates and charges for water  
13 and sewer service. As part of its mandate to conduct an open,  
14 thorough, and transparent examination of the proposed rates, the  
15 Rate Board hired Community Legal Services to act as the Public  
16 Advocate in this case and hired me -- and selected me as the  
17 hearing officer to ensure that the hearing process is conducted  
18 in a fair, impartial, and expeditious manner.

19 I am Marcy Chestnut and my role here is to oversee  
20 this process.

21 As you know, there is a court reporter who will  
22 produce a stenographic record of this hearing, so please be sure  
23 to identify yourself and to speak slowly and clearly. All  
24 transcripts and documents produced in this process are posted on

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1 the Rate Board's website under the rate proceeding tab. Look for  
2 the section that says 2023 General Rate Proceeding. I think it's  
3 the second one down. And you'll see that all the documents  
4 produced in this proceeding will be there.

5 Before we get to hearing from you, I'll introduce the  
6 representatives from the Water Department and from the Public  
7 Advocate and let them give you an overview of their view of the  
8 filing and what they've done to date.

9 Mr. Dasent?

10 MR. DASENT: Good afternoon, Your Honor. Andre  
11 Dasent for the Philadelphia Water Department. Speaking for us  
12 today is our Deputy Commissioner for communications and outreach,  
13 Glen Abrams, and he will give an opening statement.

14 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Okay. Mr. Abrams?

15 MR. ABRAMS: All right. Thank you, Your Honor. Good  
16 afternoon, everyone. My name is Glen Abrams, and I'm Deputy  
17 Commissioner of communications and engagement at the Philadelphia  
18 Water Department. And today I am speaking on behalf of the  
19 Department in this proceeding.

20 We first want to thank you all for joining the  
21 hearing to share your views about the rate increase request that  
22 the Water Department has filed with the Philadelphia Water,  
23 Sewer, and Stormwater Rate Board. The Water Department provides  
24 water, sanitary, sewer, and stormwater services to residential,

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1 commercial, and institutional customers within the city.

2           These services are essential and the foundation of  
3 public health in Philadelphia. We have recently requested an  
4 adjustment in rates and charges so that we will have sufficient  
5 resources to continue current and planned programs, and to pay  
6 significantly increasing operating costs in fiscal years 2024 and  
7 2025. Additional revenues are needed to ensure that clean water  
8 is delivered as safely and reliably as possible and that  
9 wastewater treatment and stormwater management services meet your  
10 needs.

11           If the Rate Board approves the Water Department's  
12 full request, a typical residential customer using 450 cubic  
13 feet, or 3,366 gallons of water per month would see their bill  
14 increase by about 11.8 percent in fiscal year 2024, and 8.3  
15 percent in fiscal year 2025, or approximately \$8.16 per month  
16 beginning on September 1, 2023, and an additional \$6.45 beginning  
17 on September 1, 2024.

18           The Water Department recognizes that any increase in  
19 rates can be a hardship, especially right now, but this increase  
20 is necessary to maintain essential services and address the  
21 department's current and planned projects. The Philadelphia  
22 Water Department is not a corporation designed to make a profit,  
23 and your water bill funds the work that we do, not the City  
24 budget. We are engineers, laborers, scientists, customer service

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1 reps, and most importantly, neighbors and fellow consumers of the  
2 water every Philadelphian depends on.

3           When we request higher rates, we only request what we  
4 project will be needed in the coming years, and we show our  
5 customers why we are requesting these amounts through this public  
6 rate setting process. As explained to the Department's  
7 testimony, rate relief is necessary now to sustain our  
8 operations.

9           The department needs additional revenues to pay  
10 significant increases in operating expenses. Costs for labor,  
11 chemicals, materials, and supplies are rising, along with  
12 increased costs for regulatory compliance combined with capital  
13 program needs. PWD also continues to invest in much needed  
14 upgrades to critical water and wastewater infrastructure,  
15 including replacing aging water mains to reduce the occurrence of  
16 water main breaks and increase the reliability of water service.

17           Extending the life and reliability of wastewater  
18 system through repairs and improvements to treatment facilities.  
19 Improving drinking water treatment. Improving our water  
20 conveyance system by rehabilitating critical water infrastructure  
21 such as pumping stations.

22           All projects planned for fiscal year 2024 and 2025  
23 are critical investments to ensure the utility can support its  
24 operations and continue to provide safe and reliable service to

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1 current and future customers with a well-maintained water and  
2 wastewater system you can count on.

3 One of the ways PWD is working to save customers  
4 money and reduce costs is applying for low interest loans from  
5 state and federal sources to lessen the burden of capital program  
6 costs. We are also pursuing grant opportunities where feasible.  
7 PWD has been successful in its application for federal support  
8 for water system upgrades as announced by President Biden on  
9 February 3rd, 2023. This announcement related to \$340 million in  
10 federal loans from the WIFIA program, as well as \$160 million in  
11 state administered loans from PennVEST, which were recently  
12 approved after an extensive application process.

13 Both funding sources come in the form of low interest  
14 loans to support water treatment and conveyance capital  
15 improvements projects to be completed during fiscal years 2024  
16 through 2032. These loans will have to be repaid using revenue  
17 from water bills, but the rate filing reflects lower borrowing  
18 costs associated with these programs.

19 PWD also worked with the Department of Revenue and  
20 other city partners to help our customers achieve nearly  
21 \$14,000,000 in debt relief from water bills since January 2022 by  
22 working to connect people with a temporary low-income household  
23 water assistance program created by the federal government in  
24 response to the COVID-19 pandemic. We are currently campaigning

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1 in Harrisburg and Washington, DC to make a program like this  
2 available in the future.

3           Finally, we want you to know that Philadelphia has  
4 robust and comprehensive customer assistance programs which help  
5 low-income customers pay their bills, including the Tiered  
6 Assistance Program, or TAP, the senior citizen discount, and  
7 other programs that are more flexible than ever. If you are  
8 experiencing hardship, we want to help. You can use one  
9 application for TAP, the senior citizen discount, or other  
10 programs available to assist households.

11           These programs are accessible through our website at  
12 [www.phila.gov/waterbillhelp](http://www.phila.gov/waterbillhelp) or by calling (215)685-6300 Monday  
13 through Friday between 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m.

14           I would also note that if you have specific billing  
15 questions or other service issues that you would like assistance  
16 with, please let us know, and we'll have a customer service  
17 representative contact you as soon as possible.

18           Please use the chat function to identify yourself or  
19 let us know that you would like to speak in a breakout room to  
20 exchange contact information. We have representatives from the  
21 Water Department's Public Affairs Division, as well as the Water  
22 Revenue Bureau here today to provide assistance. But please do  
23 not share any personal account information in the public chat.

24           Now, the purpose of today's session is to hear from

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1 you, our customers. We appreciate you taking the time to share  
2 your views with us today, and we look forward to hearing from  
3 you. Thank you.

4 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Thank you.

5 Public Advocate? I'm not sure who is speaking on its  
6 behalf.

7 MR. BALLENGER: Good afternoon. My name is Robert  
8 Ballenger, here on behalf of the Public Advocate. I'm an  
9 attorney at Community Legal Services, and we serve under a  
10 contract with the Water Rate Board in this case. I'm going to  
11 explain what it means to be the Public Advocate, and I'm going to  
12 encourage you to reach out if you have questions.

13 By way of background. In rate cases before the  
14 Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission, agencies such as the  
15 Office of Consumer Advocate and the Office of Small Business  
16 Advocate participate to represent the interests of residential or  
17 small business customers. These agencies are funded by annual  
18 assessments that all of the utilities pay for those agencies to  
19 basically represent their customers. This allows the agencies to  
20 do things like hire witnesses to help thoroughly investigate the  
21 utility's request for higher rates.

22 Philadelphia Water Department is not regulated by the  
23 Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission, so those agencies don't  
24 participate in our rate cases. Instead, the City has created its



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1 own analogous position, the Public Advocate. And again, that is  
2 a position that the Rate Board is required to fill by contract  
3 with a qualified individual or organization.

4           The Public Advocate's job is to represent the  
5 interests of all residential and small business customers as a  
6 group by investigating the Water Department's proposed rate  
7 increase, and challenging, if appropriate, the assumptions that  
8 underlie it. CLS serves in that function, and it requires us to  
9 independently and forcefully represent the interests of  
10 approximately a half million customers. That is what we have  
11 done, and that is what we will do.

12           The CLS attorneys will work with our expert  
13 witnesses, and we will submit written testimony and participate  
14 in technical hearings and briefings to inform the Board of what  
15 we think it should do. We welcome your input today because the  
16 information you provide to us can help us do our jobs, and can  
17 help us inform our experts.

18           What have your experiences with your water bill been  
19 like? How would a higher bill impact your family? Do you have  
20 concerns about customer service or other issues with the Water  
21 Department? Those are all things that you can tell us about here  
22 today.

23           HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Rob just became muted.  
24 Steven, did you do that? Or, Rob, did you do that?

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1 MR. LIANG: I may have accidently done that. I was  
2 trying to merge them.

3 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Okay.

4 MR. LIANG: Sorry about that. I'm asking them to  
5 unmute now.

6 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Well, I'm very sorry for  
7 these technical interruptions. Is there some kind of issue with  
8 the audio?

9 MR. LIANG: I still need him to unmute. Oh, okay.  
10 They may have to call in again. That's fine. I thought we could  
11 combine the phone number with their recording in the record --  
12 well, their video, but that didn't work out.

13 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Okay.

14 Mr. Ballenger, you can proceed. Mr. Ballenger? Rob,  
15 you're not muted. I'm not real sure what's happening here.

16 MR. LIANG: Yeah. I'm not sure either,  
17 unfortunately.

18 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: It doesn't look like  
19 you're muted, Rob, but I certainly can't hear you.

20 Steven, are you -- you're doing?

21 MR. LIANG: Let's see.

22 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: I really apologize for  
23 this. Usually this goes very smoothly.

24 MR. BALLENGER: Can you hear me now?

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1 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Yes.

2 MR. LIANG: Yes.

3 MR. BALLENGER: Okay. Yeah. We don't have -- we  
4 only have video on one interface and phone in separately, so we  
5 can't combine audio and video in this room. I'm sorry. I don't  
6 know exactly where I lost audio.

7 I think I'll just reiterate that we're required to  
8 independently and forcefully represent the interests of the small  
9 user customers. We will work with our expert witnesses. We want  
10 to hear from you today to help inform us and inform our  
11 witnesses. What have been your experiences with your water bill?  
12 How would a higher bill impact your family? Do you have concerns  
13 about customer service or other operations of the Water  
14 Department that you'd like to share. Those are all fair game.

15 If you have any questions or would like any  
16 assistance following up, the record will remain open for a period  
17 of time following these hearings. So if something occurs to you  
18 that you wanted to share, you can reach out to us, the Public  
19 Advocate, at (215) 227-9988 or at [publicadvocate@clsphila.org](mailto:publicadvocate@clsphila.org).

20 So this is not your only opportunity to be heard.  
21 You can still submit information on the record for consideration  
22 by the Board, and we'd be happy to help you do that. Thank you.  
23 Please know that your voices today will be heard and considered.  
24 Thank you.

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1 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Thank you, Mr. Ballenger.

2 I'd also like to note that also participating in the  
3 proceeding are the Philadelphia Water Revenue Board, which  
4 actually does the billing and collection for the Water  
5 Department, a group of large users known collectively as the  
6 Philadelphia Large Users Group, PECO, and two individuals, Lance  
7 Haver and Michael Skiendzielewski.

8 And, Mr. Haver, you wanted to make an opening  
9 statement? Okay. We need to unmute you.

10 MR. HAVER: I believe that I've been unmuted?

11 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Yes.

12 MR. HAVER: So for the court reporter, my name is  
13 Lance Haver. I am not a lawyer, but like many other ratepayers,  
14 I am angry and fed up with the constant water rate increases that  
15 the Water Department has been putting on us. The Water  
16 Department, instead of doing what 14 members of City Council  
17 urged them to do, withdraw the requested rate hike and seek  
18 available federal, state, and city funding, has decided to go  
19 ahead and try and reach into our pockets and take more of our  
20 money.

21 I have been a participant in this and in previous  
22 rate cases. I urge everyone to tell your stories and demand the  
23 Water Department do everything it can to innovate, cut costs, and  
24 find other sources of funding. Raising rates should always be

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1 the last resort, not the first one. But I want to warn people  
2 who are here today, don't be confused by what you hear and what  
3 is happening. The Philadelphia Water Department doesn't expect  
4 to get everything it asks for. It's a game it plays that allows  
5 the Public Advocate, the Hearing Examiner, and the Rate Board to  
6 claim they have done something to help us by cutting some of the  
7 rate increase.

8           While the Water Department may not be looking out for  
9 us, it's not run by stupid people. They know the political  
10 landscape wouldn't allow them to get everything they ask for, so  
11 they ask for more than what they need, and they've done that  
12 consistently over the last 20 years.

13           And don't be confused by the role of the Public  
14 Advocate. As the Rate Board itself wrote, the public is not the  
15 client of the Public Advocate. The Public Advocate, as you heard  
16 earlier, has been hired by the Rate Board and answers only to the  
17 Rate Board. The ratepayers are not the clients. There is no  
18 client committee. There is no way that we who pay the bills can  
19 tell the so-called Public Advocate to stop settling cases as it  
20 did in the last two previous rate increases.

21           The last rate case, the Public Advocate agreed to not  
22 one but two rate increases. And after it agreed to that had its  
23 contract with the Rate Board renewed not once but twice. And  
24 don't believe that the Hearing Examiner is considering all the

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1 issues. She sent around a spreadsheet with a directive that all  
2 of us participants who are opposed to the rate increase have to  
3 use. In that spreadsheet, there's no place for innovation.  
4 There's no place for cost savings, and there's no place to put in  
5 there how hard it is for people to pay the bills.

6           For example, the municipal utility, Philadelphia Gas  
7 Works and the municipal utility, Philadelphia Water Department,  
8 could easily share billing and collections and meter reading.  
9 There's no place to project that savings in the Hearing  
10 Examiner's directive spreadsheet. And of course, that makes it  
11 almost impossible for people to tell the truth about the rate  
12 increase.

13           The only way for us to force the Water Department to  
14 cut costs and seek funding from the COVID dollars available is to  
15 demand it. We cannot stop the Public Advocate from settling this  
16 case as he has done in the past. We cannot stop the Hearing  
17 Examiner from ruling our concerns out of water. What we can do  
18 is focus on the demand. The Water Department should look first,  
19 to cut costs. Second, to combined services. Third, to  
20 innovation. Fourth, for federal, state, and local funding. And  
21 fifth, and only then, to seek a rate increase.

22           If we are successful at doing that, we will win. And  
23 the way to do that is not to be fooled into thinking the Hearing  
24 Examiner or the Rate Board or the Public Advocate are going to do

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1 it. We have to do it on our own by contacting our elected  
2 officials.

3 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Are you done?

4 MR. HAVER: I'm done.

5 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Well, I do want to thank  
6 you for your comments, but I do have to correct a misstatement  
7 you made, which I'm kind of surprised because you were informed  
8 of this earlier. I did -- the spreadsheet that Mr. Haver has  
9 been referring to is a model that calculates the impact on the  
10 revenue of any adjustments that are made. It doesn't prevent any  
11 party from proposing any adjustment whatsoever, and that's not  
12 the purpose, and that's not how it's used.

13 MR. HAVER: Is there a place on that spreadsheet --

14 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Okay. No. No. We're not  
15 going to get engaged in a discussion about this. Let's go on,  
16 then. Now, Mr. Skiendzielewski has indicated he wants to  
17 testify, so I'll take him when we go through that portion of the  
18 hearing.

19 Let me give you an overview of the process. The Rate  
20 Board's regulations provide that the review of the department's  
21 filing needs to be completed within 120 days from the date of the  
22 formal news. That's the notice that contains the proposed rates  
23 and charges. This filing contains a substantial amount of  
24 supporting statements, exhibits, and documents. The other

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1 participants have -- the noncompany participants have an  
2 opportunity for them and their experts to review this filing  
3 detail, and they asked for further information from the  
4 department, for further detail and supporting documentation for  
5 the claims.

6           This is all posted on the Rate Board's website.  
7 Every document produced in this proceeding, whether it's the  
8 filing or the information requests or the responses, motions,  
9 orders, it's all there. And I urge you to, to look there for  
10 information. The Public Advocate or any other non-water  
11 department participant has an opportunity to file its own  
12 testimony with its own proposals and adjustments.

13           I'm not sure what happened here. Have we been, like,  
14 hijacked or something here?

15           MR. LIANG: I'm not sure.

16           HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: What's going on here,  
17 Steven? Why am I viewing somebody's screen?

18           MR. LIANG: Okay. It's --

19           HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Okay. This, I have to  
20 say, has not ever happened either. I guess we need to up our  
21 security a little bit. Okay. I indicated that the --

22           MR. LIANG: I'm not sure.

23           HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Okay, Steven.

24           MR. LIANG: I'm not even sure this is generally --



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1 just sharing.

2 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Okay. I'm not sure here.  
3 Stephen, is there some kind of security thing you can do here?

4 MR. LIANG: I'm not entirely sure.

5 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Okay. Well, let's go on.  
6 I apologize for that.

7 As I indicated, the non-water company party  
8 participants can file their own proposals and testimony and  
9 exhibits, and then we'll have what are called technical hearings  
10 on everybody's statements and exhibits. Each side will present  
11 its witness for cross-examination, and these hearings, which will  
12 be held sometime between May 2nd and 5th, will be done via Zoom,  
13 and the actual dates will be posted on the Rate Board's website,  
14 and you're welcome to observe.

15 After that, each participant has the opportunity to  
16 file written briefs containing their proposals regarding the  
17 proposed rates. And I expect that my report will be issued  
18 sometime around the end of May, and the Rate Board will consider  
19 the case and make its decision by mid to late June. As I stated  
20 earlier, every order, every document produced in this case has  
21 been or will be posted to the Rate Board's website under the 2023  
22 General Rate Proceeding tab. So really, that is the best source  
23 of information about this case.

24 Now, talking about -- talking about this hearing.

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1 First, thank you very much for taking the time to attend. It's  
2 very important for the Rate Board to hear directly from you, the  
3 people who actually are affected by these rates. Sometimes in  
4 the rate making process, we talk about customers as a class.  
5 We'll say the impact on the residential class or the customers  
6 will see a decrease or an increase in their rates, or something  
7 like that. But we have to remember that the class is made up of  
8 actual people. That's why it's so important to put a face to  
9 this class. And that's why it's so important that you did take  
10 the time to -- for us to hear your voices.

11           The reason why the Rate Board's regulations require  
12 that these hearings be held early in the process is so that the  
13 participants can consider what you have to say and reflect it in  
14 the positions that we take. Now, I have to say this happened in  
15 the last rate case. And I like to think it was because of your  
16 testimony that the Water Department and the Public Advocate  
17 arrived at a much lower revenue increase than the company had  
18 filed for.

19           And the settlement didn't only greatly reduce the  
20 rates from, I think, 114 million to 57 million, but it also  
21 contained a lot of non-rate issues, like expanding the TAP  
22 program. And in fact, another aspect of that settlement was that  
23 there was a further proceeding. We looked at some particular  
24 issues, and there was a rate reduction of \$3,000,000 that

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1 occurred.

2           So it's really important that you came and talked.  
3 And I can tell you that it's not a game where the company --  
4 well, I hope it's not a game where the rate department -- the  
5 Water Department files expecting it to be reduced, because I can  
6 tell you that's not really how the Rate Board and I approach  
7 things. We look at every aspect of this and to determine what is  
8 a fair and reasonable amount of rates for the company -- for the  
9 rate department, excuse me.

10           Now, in terms of this particular hearing, I will call  
11 on people who have registered. If you have not registered and  
12 want to comment, that's fine. We'll get to you if there's time,  
13 or you can register for one of the other hearings at 6:00 today  
14 or 3:00 or 6:00 tomorrow. Everybody will have a chance to make a  
15 statement if they wish, or you can send a letter or an email to  
16 the Rate Board.

17           We've received over 30 some emails so far, and I can  
18 assure you that these emails are posted and letters are posted.  
19 It's all been emails. I haven't gotten any letters, but if there  
20 were, that would be posted too. And I can assure you that I've  
21 read, or will read, every single one of them.

22           Now, when it's your turn, I will call your name, and  
23 Steven will unmute your microphone or your telephone. I will ask  
24 your name, ask you to give and spell your name. I'll ask your

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1 address, and if you are appearing on behalf of a group. Please  
2 confine your remarks to the issue in this proceeding, which is  
3 actually the proposed rates. If you have an individual billing  
4 or other problem, as Mr. Abrams indicated, we can direct you to  
5 the company that can talk to you directly and resolve your  
6 problem.

7           But that's not really the purpose of this. The  
8 purpose is to address the proposed rates. So if you have an  
9 individual issue, say that, and you can talk directly to the  
10 Water Department so that you don't have to put your personal  
11 information in the public record. If you have a question about  
12 the rate, the proposed rates, and if we can answer it briefly  
13 now, we will. Otherwise, Mr. Dasent or Mr. Ballenger will get  
14 back to you with a further answer to your question.

15           Now, if you -- now, as I indicated, if after we go  
16 through the registered people and you want to make a statement,  
17 raise your hand. Or I'm not sure how this works if you're  
18 participating telephonically. It seems that you can hit the star  
19 button and then the number nine to raise your hand, and then  
20 we'll talk about that. I'm not going to impose a time limit  
21 unless it looks like we are running short on time. But please be  
22 respectful of the other people here.

23           After your statement, I will ask the participants if  
24 they have any questions for you. This is not cross-examination,

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1 but clarification. And let me back up when I say it's not cross-  
2 examination. Let me make it clear that in some ways this is not  
3 like proceedings before the Public Utility Commission. The  
4 Public Utility Commission is a different type of agency. It has  
5 complete oversight over the utility subject to its jurisdiction,  
6 and that oversight is rates and service.

7           The Rate Board is not like that. It doesn't have any  
8 jurisdiction over the Water Department. What it has is  
9 jurisdiction to examine and approve proposed rates. So these  
10 proceedings are not quasi-legal proceedings the way that  
11 proceedings before the Public Utility Commission are. We try to  
12 make it as open and user friendly as possible. There is no sworn  
13 testimony. There are no parties. They are participants.

14           So this is not a legal proceeding as such, but there  
15 is cross-examination mainly of the experts to go through their  
16 testimony. So please don't be intimidated by this process. If  
17 you give a statement here and one of the participants wants to  
18 ask you questions about it, I will allow it for the purpose of  
19 clarification, but not to embarrass you or to cross-examine you.

20           Now after you're done, you're welcome to stay, but  
21 you certainly don't have to. You're free to leave at any time.  
22 And before we hear from you, since there was a question about  
23 this, let me talk about myself and why I was selected. Because,  
24 you know, the primary reason for these hearings is to hear from

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1 you. But the secondary reason that I see is that it's to convey  
2 to you how this proceeding is conducted so that you have  
3 confidence in it. And I want you to feel confident that the  
4 proposal is being examined thoroughly and professionally.

5           Now, I was selected because of my background. I have  
6 more than 25 years' experience as an Administrative Law Judge  
7 with the Public Utility Commission. I've heard thousands and  
8 thousands of consumer cases, ability-to-pay cases, cases  
9 involving all kinds of issues. I've done hundreds, if not  
10 thousands, of rate cases. I've done all kinds of rate cases, all  
11 kinds of utility cases, mostly in Philadelphia, because that's  
12 where I was located. So I'm very familiar with customers,  
13 utility customers in Philadelphia, and I know how hard it is.

14           After I retired, the Commission asked me to stay on  
15 for a year and work on ability-to-pay cases because there was a  
16 backlog. I did that. So there is nobody who knows better than  
17 me, really, how hard it is for people in Philadelphia when it  
18 comes to their utility bills. And I should add that prior to my  
19 becoming an Administrative Law Judge, I spent 10 years as an  
20 Assistant Counsel with the Law Bureau. I spent a couple of years  
21 with the Office of Consumer Advocate representing residential  
22 customers.

23           After I retired, I spent a little time doing a little  
24 work for some utilities, mostly customer service areas and

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1 regulatory compliance. So I have a pretty extensive background.  
2 So I can assure you that I really am in a good position to  
3 evaluate everybody's position in this case and to consider the  
4 ramifications of my recommendation. Okay. The other thing I  
5 wanted to say was -- and this kind of flows out of my background  
6 and my experience -- is that don't think of this as an  
7 adversarial proceeding.

8           You may see yourself on a on a river where you're on  
9 one side and the Water Department is on the other. And you want  
10 one thing, which is low rates, and the Water Department wants  
11 another thing, which is high rates, so they have lots of money.  
12 But that's not the way it is. There's a bridge between you, and  
13 I'd like you to think about that. We all want the same thing.  
14 But believe me, the Water Department does not want to have rates  
15 so high that you can't pay them. Nobody wants to cut off  
16 anybody's service. Nobody wants to have to deal with people who  
17 really are trying to pay their bills but can't. That's  
18 heartbreaking.

19           So really, the Water Department wants you to be able  
20 to afford your bills. And on the other side, you want the Water  
21 Department to have enough money to give you the decent service.  
22 You're entitled to safe service. And I think we've all seen what  
23 happens when water departments or water companies don't have  
24 sufficient resources and the impact on its customers.

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1                   So I gave this little speech for the last case, and I  
2 like to think that maybe it did have some impact in terms of  
3 getting to settlement. But please think of this really as a  
4 process where we're working together to find that spot that  
5 really balances both interests of the customers and the Water  
6 Department. Okay?

7                   All right. Let's get on then with the purpose of  
8 this public hearing, and that's to go to the people who are  
9 affected by this. I -- let me just say a general statement.  
10 Don't raise your hand while I'm talking. Okay? That's kind of  
11 rude, so -- and I'm not going to probably, you know, interrupt  
12 what I'm saying. I'll look for you, for customers, if you want  
13 to give a statement when we're at that point. But at this point,  
14 please don't do that. Okay? Now, the first person on the list  
15 is Roxane Crowley, who is, I understand, at CLS's office.

16                   Is that the case, Mr. Ballenger?

17                   MS. CROWLEY: Can you hear me? I am at CLS  
18 currently.

19                   HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Okay. Are you Roxane  
20 Crowley?

21                   MS. CROWLEY: Hi. This is she. This is Roxane  
22 Crowley.

23                   HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Okay. Could you --wait,  
24 wait, wait. Could you please give and spell your name for the



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1 record?

2 MS. CROWLEY: It's Roxane R-O-X-A-N-E. Last name  
3 Crowley, C-R-O-W-L-E-Y.

4 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: And your address, please?

5 MS. CROWLEY: 718 -- 718 Arch Street, Philadelphia,  
6 PA 191302 (sic).

7 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: And are you appearing on  
8 behalf of a group?

9 MS. CROWLEY: Yes. I'm an attorney at Philadelphia  
10 Legal Assistance. Philadelphia Legal Assistance.

11 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Okay. And are you  
12 authorized to speak for them?

13 MS. CROWLEY: Yes.

14 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Okay. Go ahead then.

15 MS. CROWLEY: Thank you. Again, my name's Roxane  
16 Crowley. I am an attorney in the Consumer Housing Unit at  
17 Philadelphia Legal Assistance. We're a sister organization of  
18 Community Legal Services. And in the Consumer Housing Unit, we  
19 represent low-income Philadelphia homeowners. A large part of my  
20 work throughout my career has been representing homeowners. And  
21 here today I want to comment on the TAP program, the Tiered  
22 Assistance Program, and the Water Department's collection efforts  
23 and its relationship to TAP.

24 I will say the Tiered Assistance Program is a drastic

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1 improvement over prior assistance programs. It's been  
2 tremendously helpful to low-income homeowners. But of late, with  
3 some of the collection practices, we've seen some issues our  
4 clients are running into, even though they are enrolled in the  
5 Tiered Assistance Program. I should note that Philadelphia Legal  
6 Assistance runs the Save Your Home Philadelphia hotline. Anyone  
7 who has any issue with homeownership calls our hotline. We  
8 answer thousands and thousands of calls every year. So my  
9 commentary is related to some recent calls we're receiving.

10           So by way of background, the TAP program permits  
11 through regulations for any pre-TAP arrears linked to the  
12 property address to be transferred to a customer or an occupant's  
13 TAP account. What we're seeing happening is water sequestration  
14 cases being filed against these properties and homeowners who are  
15 in properties that are not generating, they're not being rented,  
16 they're not businesses. They're simple homeowners.

17           I have a client who is a dad of an eight-year-old,  
18 and these water sequestration cases are being filed against them.  
19 Once filed, the clients are unable to get out of sequestration,  
20 even if they attend an informal hearing. They're told that the  
21 property is going to stay in sequestration until they reach some  
22 kind of payment arrangement.

23           We have another client who went through sequestration  
24 before she came and contacted Philadelphia Legal Assistance, low-

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1 income homeowner, she was required to put 6,000 down to prevent  
2 the house -- from sequestration from proceeding and then entered  
3 a monthly payment agreement of several hundred dollars a month.  
4 Because of those payments, we are now having to represent her in  
5 a mortgage foreclosure action because she did not have the money  
6 to pay her mortgage.

7           The problem is, is that when these sequestration  
8 cases are filed, the TAP regulations aren't applied. Clients  
9 have -- we've advised clients to call the Water Department and  
10 ask to have their pre-TAP arrears transferred to their -- what is  
11 usually an occupant account, and the Water Department says they  
12 cannot do that. I've attended informal hearings and have been  
13 advised by counsel for the law department to try to work it out  
14 with the Water Revenue Bureau, and I still have not had success  
15 doing that.

16           So I am here today just to share what we're seeing as  
17 advocates and the trouble our low-income clients are continuing  
18 to have, despite the regulatory protections they should be  
19 afforded under the TAP program. And that is all I have. Thank  
20 you.

21           HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Thank you.

22           Mr. Dasent, did you have any questions or response or  
23 -- I don't want to get into a big response about her, but it  
24 seems like she's raised some concerns that maybe should be

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1 addressed by the Water Department.

2 MR. DASENT: Yes. I'd be happy to reach out to Ms.  
3 Crowley and to talk about it in more particularity, and get  
4 someone from WRB on the phone with us, so that we can make sure  
5 we're on the same page in terms of understanding the problem and  
6 looking for a resolution. So thank you for raising that.

7 MS. CROWLEY: Thank you. I'd appreciate that. Thank  
8 you.

9 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Okay. Mr. Haver, do you  
10 have a clarifying question for Ms. Crowley?

11 MR. HAVER: No, I do not.

12 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Thank you. Okay. Then,  
13 thank you very much, Ms. Crowley. We appreciate your remarks.

14 MR. BALLENGER: Could I just ask one clarifying  
15 question, Judge?

16 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Sure. Oh, absolutely.

17 MR. BALLENGER: Just to -- I think for the benefit of  
18 folks here, could you just explain what sequestration is and why  
19 it didn't apply to your clients?

20 MS. CROWLEY: Sure. In my understanding -- this is  
21 not my area -- is that a sequestration case is filed by the law  
22 department when they believe that a property is generating some  
23 form of income. In my mind, that's mostly maybe there's a first-  
24 floor business, and they rent that first floor to the business

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1 and get income that way through rental income. Maybe there's  
2 tenants. And then what the law department does is through the  
3 sequestration action, they are able to filter some of those funds  
4 to then help pay the backwater balance. And if someone is in the  
5 TAP program, that balance -- my understanding, again, is that it  
6 should be suspended. The arrears should be suspended, and TAP  
7 customers are not required to pay per regulation.

8 MR. BALLENGER: Thank you. That's all I had, Judge.

9 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Okay. Thank you very  
10 much, Ms. Crowley. We appreciate your remarks. Okay. The next  
11 person I have on the list is Adam Nagel.

12 MR. LIANG: Hello, Marcy?

13 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Yes?

14 MR. LIANG: Lakisha Gaymon-Foreman has a question.

15 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Well, we're kind of in the  
16 middle here. I mean, what's the question?

17 MR. LIANG: I was just speaking to Roxane.

18 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Well, no, the audience  
19 doesn't get to -- get to ask questions of, of someone testifying.  
20 Okay?

21 MR. LIANG: All right.

22 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: That's -- that's not  
23 really appropriate, and that's not really good. If someone wants  
24 to contact someone who's testified, then, then they're free to.

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1 But, no, but not in the context of this. We don't do questions  
2 from the audience. Sorry.

3 Okay. The next person is Adam Nagel. I'm not sure I  
4 see you here.

5 Beg your pardon. Steven, could you unmute Mr. Nagel?

6 MR. NAGEL: Can you hear me?

7 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Yes.

8 MR. NAGEL: Okay.

9 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Are you ready?

10 MR. NAGEL: I am ready.

11 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Great. Could you please  
12 give and spell your name for the record?

13 MR. NAGEL: Absolutely. My name is  
14 Adam, A-D-A-M. Nagel, N-A-G-E-L.

15 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: And your address, please?

16 MR. NAGEL: I'll give my -- my work address. 1429  
17 Walnut Street, Philadelphia, 19102.

18 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: And are you appearing on  
19 behalf of a group or organization?

20 MR. NAGEL: I am. I'm appearing on behalf of  
21 Citizens for Pennsylvania's Future, also known as PennFuture.

22 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Okay. And are you  
23 authorized to speak for that group?

24 MR. NAGEL: I am.

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1 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Go ahead, please.

2 MR. NAGEL: All right. Good afternoon. And thank  
3 you for providing me with the opportunity to provide verbal  
4 comments regarding the 2023 general rate proceeding and the  
5 proposed rate increase from the Philadelphia Water Department.

6 My name is Adam Nagel, and I'm a resident of  
7 Philadelphia and serve as campaign manager for PennFuture, which  
8 is a statewide environmental advocacy non-profit leading the  
9 transition to a clean energy economy in Pennsylvania and beyond.  
10 We are protecting our air, water, and land, and empowering  
11 citizens to build sustainable communities for future generations.

12 PWD formally filed notice on January 24th, 2023, of  
13 its desire to increase rates for residential and commercial  
14 ratepayers. The department requested a total increase of about  
15 20 percent over two years for residential ratepayers. This  
16 represents a substantial increase for Philadelphia residents who  
17 are already dealing with rising energy costs and may only be  
18 starting to feel some relief from the impact of rising inflation.

19 In its filing, PWD argues that additional revenues  
20 are needed to meet significantly increasing costs. The  
21 department says that this increase will generate nearly  
22 \$144,000,000 in revenue. The filing goes on to state that  
23 inflation is widespread throughout the economy and additional  
24 resources are required to pay increasing costs for operations,

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1 upgrades, repairs, improvements, and maintenance activities. To  
2 be clear, PennFuture strongly supports additional funding for  
3 water utilities across Pennsylvania, including PWD.

4 Water systems across the Commonwealth have fallen  
5 into disrepair due to generations of underinvestment. Our  
6 organization has advocated at every level of government to secure  
7 funding for water infrastructure, to improve water quality,  
8 reduce flooding, and help Pennsylvanians access clean natural  
9 resources to provide relief from increasing heat due to climate  
10 change. We applaud legislation passed at the state and federal  
11 level that has funneled generational investments into our water -  
12 -

13 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Excuse me. Could you slow  
14 down a little? I think the court reporter might have a little  
15 bit of difficulty.

16 MR. NAGEL: Of course. We applaud legislation passed  
17 at the state and federal level that has funneled generational  
18 investments into our water system, and we eagerly anticipate City  
19 government's recognition that opportunities are available to it  
20 to invest in Philadelphia's neighborhoods, help repair our aging  
21 water infrastructure, and mitigate rising costs for ratepayers  
22 through federal funding made available to the City through the  
23 American Rescue Plan Act passed by Congress in 2021.

24 Philadelphia received \$1.4 billion from the federal



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1 government, via ARPA, to assist with relief efforts related to  
2 the COVID-19 pandemic and recession. It also authorized  
3 Philadelphia to invest in its water infrastructure. To date,  
4 Mayor Kenney's administration has spent roughly \$600,000,000 of  
5 these funds, leaving approximately \$800,000,000 that must be  
6 allocated by the end of 2024. That money could provide City  
7 government with an easy alternative to raising rates and would  
8 serve as a lifeline to the Water Department.

9           In 2021, PennFuture requested that the Rate Board  
10 suspend, or stay the proceedings surrounding PWD's last request  
11 to increase rates because of the possibility of federal funds  
12 being made available to municipalities via federal stimulus  
13 efforts, including ARPA. Although the Rate Board did not  
14 ultimately heed this request, the 2021 rate proceeding did open  
15 the door to further consideration of the City's ability to pursue  
16 funding opportunities that could mitigate costs for ratepayers.

17           With PWD's latest request to increase rates, we ask  
18 that the Rate Board consider the current fiscal state of the City  
19 of Philadelphia, and balance that with the effort to further  
20 burden residents with higher water bills. The City had a  
21 \$779,000,000 fund balance at the end of the last fiscal year.  
22 When you combine this with the unspent ARPA funding, there could  
23 be more than \$1.5 billion available to address the City's current  
24 and future water infrastructure needs.

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1                   However, rather than wisely invest these funds to  
2 improve the quality of the City's waters, Mayor Kenney's  
3 administration would rather the money sit in an account for a  
4 rainy day. This overly cautious approach means higher bills for  
5 residents for a basic service. On February 14th, 2023, 14  
6 members of Philadelphia City Council submitted a letter to PWD  
7 highlighting the burden already faced by residents struggling to  
8 deal with rising costs, and the need to act swiftly and invest  
9 ARPA funding in our water infrastructure.

10                   To date, there has been no public response from PWD  
11 or the administration on this issue. With rumors swirling about  
12 the possibility that Congress may claw back unspent ARPA funding,  
13 we request -- we request that the Rate Board use this proceeding  
14 to seek answers from the administration on its apparent reticence  
15 to invest these dollars as envisioned by Congress and the White  
16 House.

17                   The public deserves to know why Mayor Kenney feels it  
18 is appropriate to ask residents to bear higher costs when the  
19 City is sitting on billions of dollars that could wipe out the  
20 need for a 20 percent increase for water bills. The public  
21 deserves to know what obstacles may exist in allocating money  
22 from the City's General Fund to PWD, and why no effort has been  
23 made to remove these obstacles to spare residents from higher  
24 costs.

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1 PWD needs more funding to ensure Philadelphians have  
2 clean water, and there is funding available to accomplish that.  
3 They are monies designed to be invested in our infrastructure,  
4 create jobs, and deliver the quality water Philadelphians  
5 deserve.

6 We request that the Rate Board seek clear answers  
7 from the Kenney administration on its cautious approach to  
8 investment in our residents. PennFuture strongly supports  
9 significant and sustainable funding for the Philadelphia Water  
10 Department, but we believe that the current request to increase  
11 rates is the wrong approach. Thank you.

12 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Thank you. Does anyone  
13 have any questions for Mr. Nagel?

14 Mr. Dasent?

15 MR. DASENT: No. But only to say that we -- PWD has  
16 requested federal funding and has received loans, and to lower  
17 our borrowing costs, and those have been very helpful. Our  
18 funding has been committed to obligations at this point. That  
19 request (inaudible) -- we can certainly (inaudible) to make sure  
20 we keep really close the circle on this discussion. I suggest  
21 you look at the Rate Board website to see what grants and loans  
22 we've received to date, and it'll give you an idea at least that  
23 we are trying to respond to the issue. But we're sort of in the  
24 middle of the discussion. Thank you.

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1 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Mr. Ballenger?

2 MR. BALLENGER: No. Good to see you again, Mr.  
3 Nagel. Thank you for your testimony.

4 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Mr. Haver?

5 MR. HAVER: Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Nagel. I  
6 didn't realize that Mr. Dasent was going to get to testify today.

7 Mr. Nagel, I have only one question. Do you believe  
8 that you have any control over what the Public Advocate decides  
9 to do, whether he decides to settle the case or not?

10 MR. NAGEL: I don't know that I have any thought  
11 about that one way or the other. My role here is to simply  
12 provide testimony on behalf of Citizens for Pennsylvania's Future  
13 related to our perspective on this proceeding. So I can't say  
14 that we have a -- I can't say I am able to comment on that  
15 particular question, but I understand and appreciate it.

16 MR. HAVER: So let me ask, in the last rate case,  
17 where PennFuture --

18 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: No.

19 MR. HAVER -- proposed to --

20 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: No, no.

21 MR. HAVER: -- excuse me. I haven't finished my --

22 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: No. Mr. Haver, no, you're  
23 not --

24 MR. HAVER: -- I haven't finished my -- this is an

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1 example of how unfair you are. I haven't finished my question.

2 You can rule my question out of order after I finish it --

3 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: I know what you're asking.

4 MR. HAVER: -- before I stop talking, you have no  
5 right to interrupt me.

6 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Mr. Haver, we're here to  
7 hear from people. Okay?

8 MR. HAVER: And I have a right to ask questions. And  
9 I'm asking a question. You are interfering with that right. You  
10 are trying to stop the record from being established.

11 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: I'm trying not to waste  
12 time talking about the last rate case when the only issue here is  
13 this proposed rate filing. Now, if you don't understand that,  
14 I'm sorry.

15 MR. HAVER: I understand what you are doing.

16 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: -- I'm not -- I'm not  
17 going to get into an argument --

18 MR. HAVER: I understand what you are doing.

19 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Mr. Haver, I'm not going  
20 to get into an argument with you.

21 MR. HAVER: -- trying to stop me and people who are  
22 opposed to the rate increase from putting on our case. You are -  
23 -

24 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: That's not the purpose of

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1

--

2

MR. HAVER: -- water Department rate --

3

HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Mr. Haver?

4

MR. HAVER: -- that's what you are doing --

5

HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Steven?

6

MR. HAVER: -- and that's why you continue to get

7

hired.

8

HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Steven? Steven?

9

Okay. Anybody's free to put -- you know, any

10

participant can put on testimony. They're not supposed to be

11

putting their case on for cross-examining people here. And I

12

don't want to hear, you know -- I'm sorry. I apologize to

13

everybody, but Mr. Haver does not seem to understand how to

14

present his case. I mean, it's really a shame, but okay.

15

Mr. Nagel?

16

MR. NAGEL: If I may just respond briefly to the

17

point from PWD. May I please do that?

18

HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: If it's brief, sure.

19

MR. NAGEL: Sure. Just very quickly. We understand

20

that the Water Department is in the middle, especially when it

21

comes to the ARPA conversation, which is why I think we need

22

clearer, clearer answers from the administration. You know,

23

ultimately, they will control the purse strings when it comes to

24

certain factors here. And I would say that we support PWD's

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1 efforts that they've made to secure additional funding. We're  
2 looking for clearer answers from the administration.

3 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Thank you. And I can tell  
4 you the Rate Board is aware and certainly has been asking the  
5 Water Department to justify and explain what efforts it's made  
6 for additional sources of funding. Because if there are  
7 additional sources of funding other than the customers, obviously  
8 that's a win-win for everybody. Okay. Thank you.

9 MR. NAGEL: Thank you.

10 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Next person is someone  
11 named Dawn. Not sure -- do we have anybody on the list named  
12 Dawn? I don't see anybody with that identification. Is there --  
13 if that's you, could you raise your hand, please? No. Okay.  
14 Well, that's the end of -- actually, the sign-up list for this  
15 particular session. Is there someone who would...

16 MR. LIANG: Lola has been asking.

17 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Who?

18 MR. LIANG: Lola.

19 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Okay. Let me find that  
20 tile. Lola, are you connected by video or by phone?

21 MR. LIANG: We also have Tyrone Webb, who's currently  
22 at the Public Advocate's office.

23 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Okay. Well, that's fine.  
24 You say there's someone named Lola? Oh, here we go. I beg your

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1 pardon.

2 MS. MUHAMMAD: Yes. Can you hear me?

3 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Yes.

4 MS. MUHAMMAD: Yes. Hi. I am a --

5 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Wait a second. Can you  
6 hold on just a second? I'm sorry. I got to take care of  
7 something very quickly here. Hold on just a second. I'm sorry.

8 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Steven?

9 MR. LIANG: Yes.

10 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: You need to get rid of  
11 some of these people quicker, okay, that are obviously not here  
12 for legitimate purposes. I see two of them, and there's another  
13 one there, so let's get rid of them right away. Great. Thank  
14 you.

15 Lola, I'm sorry for interrupting, but we do have to  
16 get rid of these things -- these things. Okay. Are you ready to  
17 proceed?

18 MS. MUHAMMAD: Yes, I am. Can I continue now?

19 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Yeah. Let me -- let me  
20 get your preliminary information first. I'm sorry. Could you  
21 please state and spell your name for the record?

22 MS. MUHAMMAD: Yes. Lola, L-O-L-A. You got that?

23 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Yes.

24 MS. MUHAMMAD: Oh, okay. Lola Muhammad, M-U-H-A-M-M-



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1 A-D.

2 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: And your address, please?

3 MS. MUHAMMAD: Well, I live on -- in Mermaid Lane.

4 Do I have to say the numbers because it's so dangerous out here?

5 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: No, of course not.

6 MS. MUHAMMAD: Okay.

7 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Are you --

8 MS. MUHAMMAD: Mermaid Lane --

9 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: -- wait. Let me just ask  
10 -- wait. Are you a resident of Philadelphia?

11 MS. MUHAMMAD: Yes. I'm a resident of Philadelphia.  
12 Mermaid Lane and Mount Airy.

13 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: That's fine. And are you  
14 appearing on behalf of a group or organization?

15 MS. MUHAMMAD: No. Just as myself.

16 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Great. So go ahead.

17 MS. MUHAMMAD: Okay. Yes. I wanted to know what the  
18 Water Department can do. The previous, who was for the advocate  
19 group, he went into about the billions of dollars and stuff like  
20 that. But what about people who rent? And a lot of these high-  
21 rise buildings are passing on these water bills to the residents,  
22 and we have no -- people have no breakdown of what the actual  
23 water bill is. So one month your bill is \$100, the next month  
24 its \$300. So I'm wondering, what can the water company do about

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1 that?

2           And also with this rate hike that there are more  
3 renters -- I think as many renters -- maybe not more, but as many  
4 renters in the City of Philadelphia as there are homeowners. And  
5 they're paying taxes. We're paying taxes. Everybody's doing  
6 that. And so I wanted to know, how are the renters also going to  
7 know about these rate hikes? Because it's different than  
8 actually owning a home, because you see what it is. But when  
9 it's with these high-rise buildings, they are -- they just give  
10 it to you in a bill and not what the actual breakdown is. So I  
11 wanted to know about that.

12           And then, also, how is the -- how is the water  
13 company going to protect the residents of Philadelphia with these  
14 continuous rate hikes when we're getting federal dollars?  
15 Because if it keeps going on, where does it end? People's  
16 salaries and wages are not going up, and it's not matching what  
17 the rate hike is asking and with all the other utilities that are  
18 also going up at the same time. Thank you so much.

19           HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: I certainly appreciate  
20 your concerns. And obviously, I don't know how many renters  
21 there are, but it must be a large group. I'm not sure how that  
22 works in terms of water billing, but I'm sure that -- does  
23 anybody have any clarifying questions for Ms. Muhammad?

24           Mr. Dasent or Mr. Ballenger?

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1 MR. DASENT: I'd like to know more from Ms. Muhammad  
2 if I could reach out to her, or she to me, at the Philadelphia  
3 Water Department. And I can give you my email address, which  
4 might be the quickest way to exchange information. And it's my  
5 name, andre.c.dasent@gmail.com. If you want to reach out to  
6 someone right now in a breakout room and talk about your issue,  
7 we have people available to do that also, Ms. Muhammad.

8 MS. MUHAMMAD: Okay. Thank you so much. Actually, I  
9 was coming from work, but it was very important for me to be on  
10 the call. Is it a way that you can put your email in the chat  
11 because I don't have anything to write it down with?

12 MR. DASENT: Let me try to figure that out. Yes.

13 MS. MUHAMMAD: I really appreciate it. Thank you.

14 And Ms. Chestnut, there are a lot of renters in  
15 Philadelphia. I don't have the number, but I could get it back  
16 to you. But more people are renting now than ever.

17 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Thank you. I appreciate  
18 -- appreciate you bringing that up.

19 MR. BALLENGER: If I may, Judge?

20 Yes, Ms. Muhammad, these are things that we, we are  
21 very concerned with as well. It is true that these costs are  
22 often passed on to tenants. We're working on some -- there are  
23 some programmatic offerings that can help in some circumstances.  
24 There's the Low-Income Household Water Assistance Program, but

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1 I'm not sure in a high-rise situation that you would be eligible.  
2 So unfortunately, this is a problem that I think we're going to  
3 have to deal with, you know, over time and try to figure out ways  
4 to protect tenants in your circumstance. But I certainly  
5 appreciate your testimony. I've represented tenants with these  
6 problems before, and I know how challenging it can be. Thank  
7 you.

8 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Thank you. Thank you, Ms.  
9 Muhammad.

10 Did anybody else indicate they wanted to give a  
11 statement?

12 MR. LIANG: We also -- I'm sorry, Marcy.

13 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Oh, go ahead, Steven.

14 MR. LIANG: We also have Tyrone Webb.

15 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Tyrone Webb?

16 MR. LIANG: Yeah. He's with the -- at the Public  
17 Advocate's office.

18 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Oh, he's there. Okay. I  
19 guess --

20 MR. WEBB: Good day.

21 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Mr. Webb?

22 MR. WEBB: Good day. Yes.

23 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Hi. Could you please give  
24 and spell your name for the record?

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1 MR. WEBB: Yes. My name is Tyrone Webb. That's T-Y-  
2 R-O-N-E. Last name is Webb, W-E-B-B.

3 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: And your address, please?

4 MR. WEBB: Address is 648 South 59th Street,  
5 Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, zip code 19143.

6 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: And are you appearing on  
7 behalf of a group or organization?

8 MR. WEBB: Say that again. I didn't hear you.

9 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Are you appearing on  
10 behalf of a group or an organization or for yourself?

11 MR. WEBB: Myself.

12 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Okay.

13 MR. WEBB: Yeah. Mm-hmm.

14 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Go ahead, sir.

15 MR. WEBB: Okay. So basically I just want to say  
16 real quick that, you know, with the high inflation and price of  
17 gasoline going up and everything going up with COVID-19, you  
18 know, I'm just asking the water company that they don't rise  
19 anything right now. Because I think people in Philadelphia need  
20 time to heal.

21 I had an uncle that died just last year from COVID-  
22 19. No lie. It was either omicron or COVID-19. And I think  
23 people need time to heal, and people really just don't have money  
24 like that. The groceries going up. It's hard. It's really

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1 hard.

2 Me, I've been going through back payments with the  
3 water company since 1993. What happened was with me personally  
4 was from 1993 to I say 2005, the water company in Philadelphia  
5 has been charging me -- they was charging me estimate prices, you  
6 know, costs for usage and stuff. Eleven cubic feet. So that's  
7 why my water bill was so high and that's why it took so long to  
8 get it, you know, paid off and stuff like that.

9 But, you know, I'm just asking, you know, you know,  
10 can you just lay off it for a while so we can at least, you know,  
11 have some kind of -- get ourselves together? That's all. That's  
12 basically all I'm asking.

13 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: I appreciate your  
14 comments.

15 Does anyone have any questions? Mr. Dasent?

16 MR. DASENT: No questions. And we understand  
17 ability-to-pay issues are prevalent here.

18 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Can you perhaps reach out  
19 to Mr. Webb and see if there's any programs he could be eligible  
20 for?

21 MR. DASENT: Sure. We'd be delighted to do that.

22 Mr. Webb, my name is -- and the email address is in  
23 the chat, and if you could check there and reach out to us, we  
24 can put you in contact with WRB, which is the agency that does

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1 all our billing and collections, and it'll help you to find a  
2 program. If there's one available for you, we will find it.

3 MR. WEBB: Okay. That'll be fine with me. Thank  
4 you.

5 MR. DASENT: Check in the chat.

6 MR. WEBB: Good day.

7 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Mr. Ballenger, do you have  
8 questions for, for Mr. Webb?

9 MR. BALLENGER: No. Mr. Webb, thank you for coming  
10 and thank you for your testimony today. (Inaudible.)

11 MR. WEBB: Okay. All right.

12 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Okay. Steven, is there  
13 somebody else on the list?

14 MR. LIANG: Joi Neal just raised her hand, and Mr.  
15 Haver had his hand raised.

16 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Okay. Mr. Haver, did you  
17 have something?

18 MR. HAVER: I have a right to ask questions, again,  
19 just like every other participant.

20 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: You have clarifying  
21 questions for Mr. Webb?

22 MR. HAVER: And I expect that right to be honored.

23 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Don't abuse it. Don't  
24 abuse it, and that's fine.

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1 MR. HAVER: In this case, I have no questions. I  
2 would like to acknowledge that a councilman has been watching and  
3 thank Councilman Harrity for joining us. He is one of the  
4 council members who signed the letter saying the Water Department  
5 should withdraw the request. And I'm somewhat embarrassed to  
6 you, Hearing Examiner, that you have not recognized him and asked  
7 him if he'd like to testify.

8 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: I'm sorry, Congressman --  
9 Councilman. Excuse me if I've offended you. I thought you would  
10 have indicated if you wished to make a statement, of course. I'm  
11 looking for you.

12 MR. LIANG: Marcy, he has a video, but I don't see  
13 him sitting.

14 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Yeah, I don't -- well, he  
15 can certainly indicate if he wants to make a statement. Okay.

16 Let's go to Ms. Neal. Did you want to make a  
17 statement?

18 MS. NEAL: Yes. Hi.

19 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Hi. Good afternoon.

20 MS. NEAL: Good afternoon.

21 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Could you please give and  
22 spell your name for the record?

23 MS. NEAL: Joi, J-O-I. Neal, N-E-A-L.

24 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: And your address, please?



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1 MS. NEAL: I don't know if I'm going to give the  
2 exact -- Victoria Wilson --

3 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: I'm just asking -- you  
4 know what --

5 MS. NEAL: I got it.

6 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Are you a resident of  
7 Philadelphia?

8 MS. NEAL: I am. I'm from Northeast Philadelphia.

9 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Okay. That's fine. And  
10 are you appearing on behalf of a group or organization or for  
11 yourself?

12 MS. NEAL: Myself.

13 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Okay. Go ahead then,  
14 please.

15 MS. NEAL: Yes. So I just wanted to say that I'm  
16 just concerned because I care for my parents, or have cared for,  
17 and currently am, for my mom. And just seeing, you know, the  
18 bills and things for, you know, older persons, it's just that  
19 they're on a fixed income and they can't stand any more increases  
20 in anything. They barely can pay, you know, bills that they have  
21 now.

22 And I know for my mom, they're in different programs  
23 and things like that, but I don't know about anything for water.  
24 So I'm just concerned about the continued increases when they

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1 have to look for food and, you know, still have to survive on  
2 mortgage and any other gas, electric, all those kinds of things.  
3 So that was what I wanted to say.

4 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Thank you.

5 Anybody have any questions for Ms. Neal?

6 Mr. Dasent?

7 MR. DASENT: Yes. Just one, Ms. Neal. If you check  
8 for my name in the chat and you can reach out to my email  
9 address. And if we can find, like, a senior discount program or  
10 other program that your relative qualifies for, we're happy to  
11 explore that and have someone from WRB reach out to them  
12 directly.

13 MS. NEAL: Okay. Well, I guess they would need to  
14 reach out to me because I handle everything.

15 MR. DASENT: Okay. Okay. But just check my name and  
16 email address in the chat, and if we can, we'll find a way to, to  
17 address your problem.

18 MS. NEAL: How long does the chat last? I'm driving,  
19 so I need to pull over. But once you guys go, then I won't be  
20 able to get that information, right? So let me see if I can pull  
21 over to write that down now.

22 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: When you get home, you  
23 could send an email to the Rate Board, and we will provide Mr.  
24 Dasent's information to you.

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1 MR. DASENT: Thank you.

2 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Will that make it easier?

3 MS. NEAL: I might still be able to get it, but yes,  
4 that will help, too.

5 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Okay. We can do that.

6 MS. NEAL: So who am I looking for? Mr. Dasent?

7 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Yes.

8 MR. DASENT: Yeah. Andre Dasent.

9 MS. NEAL: Okay. I see it.

10 MR. DASENT: Okay.

11 MS. NEAL: Thank you so much.

12 MR. DASENT: You're welcome.

13 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Mr. Ballenger, do you have  
14 any questions for Ms. Neal?

15 MR. BALLENGER: No. But I appreciate your testimony.  
16 Thank you for speaking out today.

17 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Mr. Haver? Steven?

18 MR. HAVER: No. Thank you very much, Ms. Neal.

19 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Thank you, Ms. Neal. We  
20 appreciate you taking the time.

21 MS. NEAL: All right. Thank you.

22 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Okay. I see somebody.  
23 QT, do you wish to testify?

24 MR. TERRY: Yes. How are you doing? Yes.

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1 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Okay.

2 MR. TERRY: How are you doing? My name is Quintain  
3 Terry. Resident of Philadelphia, West Philadelphia.

4 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Okay. You got to hold on  
5 for a second. Okay? Can you please spell your name, Quintain,  
6 right?

7 MR. TERRY: Yes. Q-U-I-N-T-A-I-N.

8 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: And your last name,  
9 please?

10 MR. TERRY: T-E-R-R-Y.

11 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Okay. And are you a  
12 resident of Philadelphia?

13 MR. TERRY: Yes. West Philadelphia.

14 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: And are you appearing on  
15 behalf of a group, or an organization, or for yourself?

16 MR. TERRY: I'm appearing for myself.

17 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Okay, fine. Go ahead.

18 MR. TERRY: Well, as far as this water bill thing  
19 goes, my water bill is already high. I'm barely affording the  
20 water bill now, and y'all talking about 20 percent rate increase.  
21 That's a big increase to put on the residents of Philadelphia. I  
22 don't think that y'all should raise the water bill. You know,  
23 I'm just washing clothes, and I'm taking a shower just with me  
24 and my kids and my significant other, and the water bill is

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1 outrageous already. I'm not washing clothes, drinking --  
2 drinking the water or anything like that. Just that little bit  
3 of stuff right there makes my water bill really unreasonable.

4           You know, I mean, I also think y'all should look at,  
5 like, as far as, like, with the crime that goes on with the city.  
6 When people can't afford services, then the crime -- that go --  
7 that go hand in hand with the crime rate in the city. And I  
8 think y'all need to give a big consideration to that, too. Like  
9 if people -- like these utility bills got to be paid. If people  
10 can't pay them, they're going to do what they got to do to pay  
11 these bills. I think y'all should look at that.

12           We can't afford this already. I talked to the gas  
13 person yesterday. The gas bill is unaffordable. Like, I'm happy  
14 it wasn't a cold winter, because if it was, I couldn't afford  
15 that bill. Like, my bill doubled \$220. Like, this -- this stuff  
16 is unreasonable. Like, I don't know what y'all -- I don't know  
17 what they're doing over there, but they need to fix this and get  
18 it right. Like, this -- this stuff is crazy. That's all I got  
19 to say.

20           HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: I appreciate you taking  
21 the time to make your comment. I certainly can appreciate it.  
22 Does anyone have any questions for Mr. Terry?

23           Mr. Dasent?

24           MR. DASENT: No questions. But I do thank him for

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1 coming and contributing to the hearing. Thank you.

2 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Mr. Ballenger?

3 MR. BALLENGER: Likewise. I don't have any  
4 questions, but I appreciate you being here, speaking to the Board  
5 and to everyone here today.

6 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Mr. Haver?

7 MR. HAVER: Yes. Sir, have you contacted your  
8 councilperson regarding the rate increase?

9 MR. TERRY: Yeah. I have not contacted my  
10 councilperson yet.

11 MR. HAVER: Could I ask you to do that?

12 MR. TERRY: Yes, I'll do that. Yes.

13 MR. HAVER: Thank you, sir.

14 MR. TERRY: Okay.

15 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Thank you, Mr. Terry. I  
16 appreciate you taking the time to come out.

17 Steven, are you keeping track, or should I just be...

18 MR. LIANG: Yeah. Next is Ikea, I-K-I-E-A.

19 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Okay.

20 MS. PRICE: Good afternoon.

21 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Hi. Could you please give  
22 us -- give and spell your name?

23 MS. PRICE: Yes. It's Ikea Price. The first name  
24 is I-K-I-E-A. Last name is P-R-I-C-E.

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1 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: And are you a resident of  
2 Philadelphia?

3 MS. PRICE: Yes, I am.

4 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Are you appearing on  
5 behalf of a group or organization or --

6 MS. PRICE: Myself.

7 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Okay, fine. Go ahead,  
8 please.

9 MS. PRICE: I wanted to appear today because I  
10 received the email stating about the increase. I'm concerned  
11 about my bill currently. I use six cubic feet of water per  
12 month, and I'm already paying over \$80 a month, and I haven't  
13 worked in a year. So I'm already struggling, trying to figure  
14 out how to manage everything, praying that I'll hopefully get on  
15 disability at some point. And even with that, that's not going  
16 to be enough money to cover all of the bills that needs to be  
17 paid on top of increasing this, too.

18 Everything is already over \$100 per utility bill.  
19 It's like no one's check is going up. Where is this money  
20 supposed to keep coming from? We just had an increase not that  
21 long ago, it seems like. And then here we go again. Between  
22 food costs and all of the other costs and expenses that are going  
23 up, how are we supposed to keep everything on? So that's, that's  
24 where my worry and concern is. I'm already paying almost \$100 a

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1 month, and I can't afford it. I'm doing everything by myself.

2 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Well, maybe the company  
3 can reach out to you and see if there's some programs or  
4 assistance that you could receive.

5 MS. PRICE: Okay.

6 MR. DASENT: If I might, Your Honor?

7 Ms. Price, look in the chat for Andre Dasent. And my  
8 email address will get you to me, and I can try to get you to the  
9 resources you need at WRB, the Water Revenue Bureau. Thank you.

10 MS. PRICE: Thank you.

11 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Mr. Ballenger?

12 MR. BALLENGER: No questions. I do appreciate your  
13 testimony today. If you need any assistance determining whether  
14 there are programs available to help you, I would encourage you  
15 to reach out to us as well. You can get me at  
16 publicadvocate@clsphila.org. We can also take a look if you're  
17 not able to get the assistance you need from Water Revenue. We  
18 can probably give you some advice about it. Okay?

19 MS. PRICE: What's that email again? CLS?

20 MR. BALLENGER: Yeah. publicadvocate@clsphila.org.  
21 Community Legal Services. Or you can just call Community Legal  
22 Services. Okay?

23 MS. PRICE: Okay. Thank you.

24 MR. BALLENGER: Thank you.



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1 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Mr. Haver?

2 MR. HAVER: Thank you very much for coming this  
3 afternoon. Have you been notified by the Water Department  
4 previous to today about all the programs it offers for people who  
5 are struggling economically?

6 MS. PRICE: I've applied for those before, but  
7 unfortunately, it's never worked out. Whereas, though, anything  
8 -- I'm not approved for anything, so...

9 MR. HAVER: Thank you. I just want to say I  
10 recognize how brave you are for coming forward today. And I  
11 believe that your testimony will help other people in your  
12 situation. And I really encourage you to contact your  
13 councilperson and tell them that you're not getting the support  
14 you need from the Water Department or from anyone else.

15 MS. PRICE: Thank you. I'll do that.

16 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Okay. Steven, next  
17 person?

18 MR. LIANG: That'd be Ms. Walker.

19 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Ms. Walker, did you wish  
20 to make a statement? I'm sorry, where did she go?

21 MR. LIANG: I'm not sure.

22 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: I think she might have  
23 left the -- the group here. Oh, there you are. Okay. Ms.  
24 Walker? Ms. Walker? You're not muted. Could you speak up?

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1                   Okay. We'll leave that -- leave Ms. Walker and go to  
2 the next person then, Stephen?

3                   MR. LIANG: No one else has their hand raised.

4                   HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: I don't see anybody  
5 actually. Now, is there anybody who's connected telephonically  
6 who wants to make a statement? I see some phone numbers here.  
7 How about the number that ends in...

8                   MR. LIANG: Oh, Ms. Walker was having difficulty.

9                   HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Oh, okay.

10                  MR. LIANG: She's going to try again via telephone.

11                  HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Okay. Ms. Walker?  
12 Because it looks like she's muted on the screen here. Ms.  
13 Walker, can you hear me? Let's see, if you're doing it  
14 telephonically, can you try -- can you try hitting star -- star  
15 six, and that should unmute you telephonically.

16                  Steven, can you -- do you know where we are with her?

17                  MR. LIANG: I contacted her. She didn't respond to  
18 me.

19                  HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Okay. Well, we could go  
20 back to her. But in the meantime, like I say, there are some  
21 telephones here -- numbers. Nobody's indicated -- if you want --  
22 if you're on telephonic, and you want to indicate to us, could  
23 you hit star nine? That'll raise a hand for you.

24                  Okay. I do see some telephone numbers listed. I'll

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1 just go through them. How about a number that ends in 1609? Are  
2 you interested in participating? If you are, hit star six and  
3 that will unmute you. How about the phone number that ends in  
4 6420?

5 MS. WALKER: Hello?

6 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Hello. Oh, okay. Great.

7 MS. WALKER: Okay. My name is Ms. Walker.

8 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Okay. What's your first -  
9 - oh, wait -- stop you. Okay. Ms. Walker, what's your first  
10 name?

11 MS. WALKER: Krisshorna. It's spelled Kilo-Romeo-  
12 India-Sierra-Sierra-Hotel-Oscar-Romeo-November-Alfa. Last name  
13 Walker. That's Whiskey-Alfa-Lima-Kilo-Echo-Romeo.

14 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: And are you a resident of  
15 Philadelphia?

16 MS. WALKER: I -- I have a home in Philadelphia. But  
17 since I cannot have a dual residency like you can have a dual  
18 citizenship, no, I'm a resident of Virginia --

19 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: If you own property in  
20 Philadelphia, that's fine.

21 MS. WALKER: -- but my home is in Philadelphia.

22 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: If you have a property  
23 that's a customer of Philadelphia Water.

24 MS. WALKER: Yeah. So my property is on the South

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1 Vogdes Street in Southwest Philadelphia, 51st Ward, 10th Division  
2 in the Kingsessing area.

3 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Okay. And are you  
4 appearing on behalf of a group or organization or for yourself?

5 MS. WALKER: I am appearing for myself.

6 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Okay. Then go ahead,  
7 please, Ms. Walker.

8 MS. WALKER: So I would like to thank Mr. Lance for  
9 always first asking people to contact their representatives. It  
10 is very important that we put pen to paper for anyone that is on  
11 this call. My question is, I use zero cubic feet of water.  
12 However, I always have a water bill between \$30 and \$60. How is  
13 that so? And I don't have a problem with paying my water bill.  
14 I'm one of those one-percenters, so it's not a problem with  
15 paying it.

16 But the point of the matter is that if I don't pay my  
17 water bill, then my house is in jeopardy, which is --  
18 Philadelphia Water Department is the only utility that I know  
19 that is attached to my home. And this is my childhood home, my  
20 family home. And like some other people, my mother just recently  
21 passed from COVID, and I took over the home with no intentions of  
22 ever renting it out, because, again, this is my childhood home.  
23 But to incur these expenses for a utility that is not in use is  
24 unacceptable in so many words.

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1                   And Mr. Lance, I will take your advice and put pen to  
2 paper and send a letter not only to a councilperson, but I do see  
3 NBC is on this as well. But I will write various letters and  
4 send out various emails.

5                   HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: And, Mr. Dasent, perhaps  
6 you could get together with Ms. Walker to see if there is some  
7 billing situation --

8                   MR. DASENT: Yes. We certainly could explain the  
9 billing situation, Ms. Walker, to you in terms of stormwater  
10 management charges that are assessed whether you're using  
11 (Inaudible.) whether there's a quantity charge or not. And that  
12 does happen every month. But I'd like to look at your bill and  
13 give you or have someone from WRB give you an analysis of what's  
14 happened and, you know, what's correct and correctly billed and  
15 have your feedback on that. So if you would check in the chat  
16 for Andre Dasent, it's -- my email address is there, and you're  
17 welcome to reach out to me. And thank you for calling.

18                  MR. LIANG: Andre, Saterria Kersey has offered to go  
19 into a breakout room with Ms. Walker.

20                  MR. DASENT: Oh, okay. Great.

21                  HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Ms. Walker, is that okay  
22 with you?

23                  MS. WALKER: Yes. It is fine that I go into the  
24 breakout room, but I am on audio and not video because for some

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1 reason on Zoom, I'm not able to be heard via the audio, and I  
2 cannot change my configurations. So I would have to ask for an  
3 alternative way besides the breakout room to discuss this.

4 MR. LIANG: I think it should be fine.

5 MR. DASENT: Well, then the alternative --

6 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Well, could the company  
7 reach -- has your -- I don't know. Do you have Mr. Dasent's  
8 contact information? Maybe reach out to him and he can set  
9 something up for you with the Water Department?

10 MS. WALKER: Yes. I definitely will utilize that  
11 email address. And I would like to make another statement --

12 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Sure.

13 MS. WALKER: -- that though we have the Advocacy  
14 Board and the Board, I had a question of how many of those people  
15 actually reside in the state of Philadelphia -- I mean, the City  
16 of Philadelphia and are representing us as also a resident of  
17 Philadelphia? It's better to be represented by your own than  
18 someone that lives on the outside of the county.

19 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Every member of the Rate  
20 Board lives in Philadelphia.

21 MS. WALKER: Thank you for that information.

22 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Sure. Is there anything  
23 further then, Ms. Walker?

24 Okay. I saw what I assume is the councilman for a

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1 minute there. But has anybody indicated they wish to make a  
2 statement?

3 MR. LIANG: I haven't heard anything from the  
4 councilman.

5 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Yeah. He's gone. Okay.  
6 Is there anybody else, then, Steven, who has indicated they wish  
7 to participate?

8 MR. LIANG: I do not believe so. There's a hand.

9 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: There's a hand.

10 MR. LIANG: Oh, okay. It's Mr. Haver again.

11 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Mr. Haver?

12 MR. HAVER: I'd like to thank the last participant  
13 for the kind words and her taking her time out of her day. And  
14 just suggest that when she asks the question where the people on  
15 the Board live, that's only part of the issue. The other part is  
16 who do they represent? And the Board primarily represents the  
17 business community. An example of that is the former Water  
18 Commissioner who hired many of the people who are seeking this  
19 rate increase is on the Water Rate Board, deciding whether her  
20 former staff does a good job.

21 So it's not just where they reside, it's who they  
22 represent. And in my opinion, they do not represent us. They do  
23 hire Ms. Chestnut, though, and the Public Advocate.

24 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Okay. Anything further

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1 then, from anybody? Steven, do you see any kind of indication of  
2 interest?

3 MR. LIANG: I received no messages.

4 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Okay. Well, then, I think  
5 we'll -- I'll terminate this, and we'll continue this evening at  
6 6:00 with a further session. Thank you all for appearing and  
7 participating. I'm sure we had quite a bit of relevant and  
8 important information to consider, so thank you all. And I'll  
9 see some of you, I guess, at 6:00. Thank you.

10 (Hearing concluded at 4:37 p.m.)



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C E R T I F I C A T I O N

I, Stacy L. Raub, hereby  
certify that the proceedings and evidence noted are  
contained fully and accurately notes taken by me in the  
foregoing matter, and that this is a correct transcript of  
the same.

*STACY L. RAUB*

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