

Steven Liang

From: Sarah Janicki <sjanicki07@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, April 17, 2023 4:14 PM
To: WaterRateBoard
Subject: Rate Hike Opposition

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Good afternoon,

I am writing to express my intense opposition to the rate hikes proposed for Philadelphia this September. It is absurd to me that a 20% increase, on the backs of consumers, is the only way to address infrastructure issues in the City. The consumers already bear the brunt of actual infrastructure work when it takes place- as I know all too well, since last year I was left holding the bag for pipe issues (under the sidewalk at my house) when the PWD came out to address the main pipe. More than \$2500 later the "problem" was resolved and I noticed absolutely no difference in my water pressure, usage, etc. The City received millions of dollars in ARPA funding and is eligible for millions more in federal infrastructure funds, but somehow the only way to pay for these costs are by consumers. Consumers who live in 1 of the poorest cities in the nation. This is ridiculous.

20% at a time when other costs are rising, wages are stagnating, and there appears to be no relief in sight.

Also, when consumers received notices this past fall (2022) that "new meters" were being required in all homes and would be installed free of charge, I should have known nothing is ever free. Because then, an article came out saying that the new meters were part of the "infrastructure needs" being covered by the proposed increase.

I attended 1 of the zoom hearings on the rate increases and was appalled by how disrespectful Marcy Chestnut was to the citizens expressing their concerns. She cut off speakers, was rude and dismissive of concerns, and at one point referred to a consumer participant as a "thing". The "solution" offered by Marcy and the other PWD representatives at the meeting was "get on an individual payment plan". That solution was offered over and over as if there was NOT a clear pattern being shared...the pattern is systemic. The costs are unaffordable to nearly everyone, so individual payment plans do not solve the problem. It passes it off onto consumers again.

The fact that PGW is also seeking an increase does not go unnoticed. It feels an awful lot like the utility companies are balancing their budgets on the backs of citizens of Philadelphia, knowing that we cannot go without their services. It's an abuse of power.

I strongly oppose this outrageous increase in the rate of a basic need.

Sincerely,
Sarah Janicki
Mt Airy Resident, 19119