



Email: WaterRateBoard@phila.gov

May 14, 2025

Philadelphia Water, Sewer, and Storm Water Rate Board
c/o City of Philadelphia Law Department
1515 Arch Street, 17th Fl.
Philadelphia, PA 19102

Subject: Opposition to Proposed PWD Rate Hike

Dear Members of the Rate Board,

My name is John Chin, Executive Director of the Philadelphia Chinatown Development Corporation. I am writing as a concerned nonprofit service provider of Philadelphia to express my strong opposition to the Philadelphia Water Department's proposed rate increases scheduled for September 1, 2025, and September 1, 2026. The proposed hikes—an 11.7% increase in 2025 followed by a 5.9% increase in 2026—would raise the average monthly bill to nearly \$97.

While I understand the need for infrastructure investment and operational sustainability, I believe this rate hike is ill-timed and burdensome for many residents, especially those already struggling with inflation, housing costs, and stagnant wages. Our organization sees clients who can ill afford the proposed rate hike. Here are several reasons for my opposition:

1. **Economic Hardship:** Many Philadelphians are still recovering from the financial impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. An increase of nearly \$15 over two years is significant for low- and middle-income households.
2. **Lack of Transparency:** The justification for the rate hike cites rising costs and infrastructure needs, but there is limited publicly accessible data detailing how funds from previous increases have been used or how cost-saving measures are being implemented.
3. **Assistance Program Limitations:** While the Tiered Assistance Program (TAP) and Senior Citizen Discount are commendable, not all eligible residents are enrolled or aware of these programs. A rate hike should not be approved until outreach and enrollment are maximized.



4. **Alternative Funding:** The city should prioritize securing more state and federal funding, such as through PENNVEST or infrastructure grants, before shifting the financial burden to residents.
5. **Environmental Equity:** Rate increases disproportionately affect communities of color and historically underserved neighborhoods, exacerbating existing inequalities in access to essential services.

I urge the Rate Board to reject or significantly scale back the proposed increases and to explore more equitable and transparent alternatives for funding the city's water infrastructure needs.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized 'J' followed by a circle and a dot, representing the name John Chin.

John Chin
Executive Director