

Good evening – members of the Water Rate Board.

My name is Bob Jobin and I am a gardener at the Bouvier Community Garden in the Point Breeze section of South Philadelphia.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak and for holding this hearing tonight.

As a volunteer in our community garden, I see firsthand, what an asset the garden is to our neighborhood and the 1300 block of S. Bouvier.

While much of our equity in the garden is our time and labor, we do have a few fixed costs. Stormwater Fees are one of these costs and they impact the real investments we can make in our space. At the current rate, as much as 35% of our annual gardener dues would be put towards stormwater management fees on our garden property.

This property, currently two lots in South Philadelphia was once vacant infill of former rowhouses. Through tilling the soil, adding twenty –two raised vegetable beds, and laying out a community herb plot in the rear portion of the garden, we've created a garden receptive and appreciative of any rainwater we may receive!

As community managed and publicly enjoyed green space, we've taken land that by some estimates may have been fairly impermeable and turned into a useful garden capable of providing possible stormwater management services.

Lastly, I'd like to briefly comment on the garden as a social space where neighbors can meet fellow neighbors – and where we can build connections to strengthen our community. By growing fresh and healthy food and creating a green hub in the dense grid of South Philadelphia, we're providing a vision for the future of our block.

I support this action, the full exemption of stormwater fees, that leads towards the long-term viability of these spaces throughout the city and know that the opportunity to re-invest our member dues in the garden will have a lasting impact our project.

Thank you.

Bob Jobin

Bouvier Community Garden

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