

✓ Ben Arke
sent 12/5/07

✓ To AN.

✓ To Comm
: H

PATRICK M. CASEY, D.C.

RECEIVED

December 3, 2007

2007 DEC -5 AM 8:13

Idaho Public Utilities Commission

IDAHO PUBLIC
UTILITIES COMMISSION

To: Commission
Re: Policies on rate increase

I find it interesting that United Water has sent out an announcement about a rate increase proposal, ask for comments and the website does not open! I have called their offices and they said that the site info was incorrect. They gave me new site info and that new site doesn't respond either! It looks to me as if there is a big shell game going on about the new increases and they have blocked a good bit of response from getting to you.

I am very upset about the rate increase. It does not take a rocket scientist to figure out that there are no benefits to bi-monthly billing except employing more people. I do not as a consumer see any great advantage to me to make changes in my irrigation practices. I also do not see any advantage to more frequent visits to my premises. It looks to me like this may only be advantageous to a select type of customer (like a farmer, or business), and I do not want to pay for this demographics particular problems!

I am not in favor of this rate increase and with what little info has been presented think that United Water is robbing us all for their inefficiency.

Patrick Casey
1215 E. Washington St
Boise 83712



1215 East Washington Street
Boise, ID 83712
208-571-3502

*✓ Gen Ack
sent 12/6/07*

✓ To AN

*✓ To Commis.
; H*

Jean Jewell

From: jamesgoodman3@mac.com
Sent: Thursday, December 06, 2007 3:58 AM
To: Tonya Clark; Jean Jewell; Gene Fadness; Ed Howell
Subject: PUC Comment/Inquiry Form

A Comment from James L. Goodman follows:

Case Number:
Name: James L. Goodman
Address: 9425 W. Java Ct.
City: Boise
State: Idaho
Zip: 83704
Home Telephone: 208-658-0169
Contact E-Mail: jamesgoodman3@mac.com
Name of Utility Company: United Water
Add to Mailing List: yes

Please describe your question or comment briefly:
converting to monthly billing. This such a waist of time and money, it's all just a ploy to raise rates and not help the people. In reality were paying 1.15 monthly more than we are now. I think United Water would look at ways of cutting their own cost of operating and save us the people that use their water dollars per month. It would be interesting to see how many leaks the water meter readers really discover. I would say tyhat the larger percentage would be cutstomer found. Please don't allow this increase.

The form submitted on <http://www.puc.idaho.gov/forms/ipuc1/ipuc.html>
IP address is 71.33.23.167

*Men Beck
sent 12/6/07*

*To Comments
JH*

Jean Jewell

From: glorifygod78@hotmail.com
Sent: Thursday, December 06, 2007 1:44 AM
To: Tonya Clark; Jean Jewell; Gene Fadness; Ed Howell
Subject: PUC Comment/Inquiry Form

A Comment from Alan Church follows:

Case Number:
Name: Alan Church
Address: 2210 N. Camden
City: Boise
State: ID
Zip: 83704
Home Telephone: 208-447-7110
Contact E-Mail: glorifygod78@hotmail.com
Name of Utility Company: United Water
Add to Mailing List: no

Please describe your question or comment briefly:

Got a letter from United Water about an application to convert to monthly meter readings rather than bi-monthly. Their reasons for doing so seem pretty lame to me, and this whole thing seems like a way to extract more money out of customers. I for one am not for the change and don't think it's necessary. Please reject their application, there's nothing wrong with the current system.

The form submitted on <http://www.puc.idaho.gov/forms/ipuc1/ipuc.html>
IP address is 75.92.61.11

✓ Gen Ask
sent 12/5/07

✓ To Adv.

✓ To Commms.
: H

Jean Jewell

From: dgrega@msn.com
Sent: Tuesday, December 04, 2007 3:01 PM
To: Tonya Clark; Jean Jewell; Gene Fadness; Ed Howell
Subject: PUC Comment/Inquiry Form

A Comment from David G Anderson follows:

Case Number: UWI-W-07-04
Name: David G Anderson
Address: 11397 W Secretariat Ct
City: Boise
State: ID
Zip: 83713
Home Telephone: 208-327-0632
Contact E-Mail: dgrega@msn.com
Name of Utility Company: United Water
Add to Mailing List: yes

Please describe your question or comment briefly:

I don't believe it would be in the best interests of the consumer to change to a monthly billing. The added cost may seem small but it is just another administrative cost that hits the hardest on those who try to use less and can least afford the increase. Also, the bimonthly billing fits well with the bimonthly billing for sewer and trash from a budgeting standpoint. Somehow, this must be a benefit to United Water or they would not be pursuing it.

The form submitted on <http://www.puc.idaho.gov/forms/ipuc1/ipuc.html>
IP address is 70.58.161.115

John Acke sent 12/5/07
VT0 AV
VT0 Comments
9/14

Jean Jewell

From: nortocd@yahoo.com
Sent: Wednesday, December 05, 2007 4:31 AM
To: Tonya Clark; Jean Jewell; Gene Fadness; Ed Howell
Subject: PUC Comment/Inquiry Form

A Comment from C. Douglas Norton follows:

Case Number: UWI-W-07-04
Name: C. Douglas Norton
Address: 11937 Jody Dr.
City: Boise, Id
State: Id
Zip: 83713
Home Telephone: 208 939-8702
Contact E-Mail: nortocd@yahoo.com
Name of Utility Company: Suez/United Water/United Water Idaho Inc.
Add to Mailing List: yes

Please describe your question or comment briefly:

I find United Water Idaho Inc./Suez (hereinafter UNWATID) is disingenuous in several respects with regard to this application. That casts doubt on its motivation. Further, UNWATID has failed to meet basic billing needs of its customers and has engaged in predatory leak insurance practices. From my perspective, the added UNWATID cost is unnecessary and serves convert a one time investment cost into a long term enhancement to company profits. Has UNWATID clearly quantified their costs and distinguished short and long term components. Will improved and past due technological innovations offset the cost after it has become a permanent part of the basic rate?

UNWATID issues and considerations:

1. The reasons given in the application differ from reasons given in the letter sent to UNWATID customers. That is, customers were not told that the application noted that there would be a reduction in the number of high bill complaints. That item was conspicuously absent from the letter to customers.
2. Bean counters look to increasing payments to a monthly basis to increase company cash flow on a short term basis and to garner the theoretical added interest from the higher cash position. Of course, the flip side is that customers have a one time decrease in their cash position and some may be forced to pay high interest rates to cover that shortage.
3. There is little merit in the assertion that more visits will enable quicker detection and trouble shooting of customer leaks or meter problems. The increased workload will allow less time at each meter. However, the proof in the padding so to speak is to ask UNWATID how many leaks they find on each monthly visit. The benefit of this to customers could easily be quantified and certainly would be less than the \$13.80 per year added cost to each UNWATID customer.
4. UNWATID provided customers with an invalid URL for comments on the IPUC website.
5. On its website UNWATID claim, "We were founded in 1890" It was not founded then; its predecessor was founded then. UNWATED obscures the fact that it is now part United Water Resources, which serves 7 million customers and is a subsidiary of Suez, a French conglomerate. Suez boasts an increase of 18.7% growth in income and a 7.8% increase in cash flow from 2006 to 2007. In that same period, Net income increased from one billion Euros to 6.97 billion Euros and in increase in assets from 36.6 billion to 48.6 billion Euros. The only dim spot on the financials was not income within the United States, but in income from the United States. Devaluation of the dollar has reduced their profits. Is this rate increase an attempt by desperate managers to increase their bonuses and to secure their employment?
6. This increase appears to be a sham to increase long-term revenues and profits by creating revenue enhancements based on short term costs. Once the transition is complete and the rates are secured, look for UNWATID to cut their meter reading costs dramatically by instating efficient electronic meter reading and by reducing their, "additional personnel, billing, and collections" costs attributable to this conversion to levels well below the pre conversion costs.

7. UNWATI has failed to provide user-friendly billing options to its customers. With most customers able to pay on line, UNWATID has not yet provided procedures, which are economical to UNWATID or to its customers. A couple of years ago UNWATID changed its billing system, at that time account numbers were changed and many customers including myself were not credited properly for automated checks mailed to them. More recently, UNWATID has not been able to take electronic transfers from my bank nor most others. More egregious, the bills could easily be paid with automated statement by bill service providers as is done with other vendors by reading for bill payment purposes. That could work automatically on a monthly or bi-monthly basis (with this option there would be no need to change the billing period and costs for UNWATID would decrease - look for the decrease after the implementation of the long term rate increase based on short term costs.

8. UNWATID has failed to offer level pay options. There may be reasons such as keeping customers apprised of the need to conserve in the summer, but that option would certainly help with budgeting. This suggests that UNWATID has a long-term disingenuous agenda aimed at profit enhancement.

9. With foreign ownership, costs that in the past were clear and now foggy. Overhead costs are easily construed to be higher through French GAAP (Generally Accepted Accounting Principles). How much has overhead increased since the acquisition in the mid nineties? Does Idaho benefit from Suez profits generated in other parts of the world; does that benefit reach the customer?

10. Customers are bombarded with fear mongering on a near monthly basis with leak protection insurance offers from UNWATID. Is UNWATID willing to disclose the profits associated with this protection racket?

11. I could offer more but my wife told me to quit complaining and get productive; that same advise may be appropriate for UNWATID.

Thank you for your consideration of my comments.

The form submitted on <http://www.puc.idaho.gov/forms/ipucl/ipuc.html>
IP address is 75.63.17.94

✓ Gen Ack sent 12/5/07
✓ To Comms. JH
Jean Jewell

From: Jean Jewell
Sent: Wednesday, December 05, 2007 11:30 AM
To: Jean Jewell
Subject: FW: PUC Comment/Inquiry Form

-----Original Message-----

From: bhgreenwood@cableone.net [mailto:bhgreenwood@cableone.net]
Sent: Wednesday, December 05, 2007 2:36 AM
To: Tonya Clark; Jean Jewell; Gene Fadness; Ed Howell
Subject: PUC Comment/Inquiry Form

A Comment from BH GREENWOOD follows:

Case Number:
Name: BH GREENWOOD
Address: 2126 N. HAMPTON RD.
City: BOISE
State: ID
Zip: 83704
Home Telephone: 208-377-5538
Contact E-Mail: bhgreenwood@cableone.net
Name of Utility Company: United Water
Add to Mailing List:

Please describe your question or comment briefly:

RE: Sept. 17, 2007 application to convert to a monthly meter reading, along with an price INCREASE of 3.75% due to the costs of the additional 6 readings per calender year- This makes no sense. Should we be encouraging the use of expensive fuel and valuable time to double up on the meter reading? To ask that we pay an additional cost to facilitate better cash flow for the water company is absurd.

This will only facilitate the escalation of water rates in the future due to the price points made available by monthly billing.

Why complicate things and double up on the amount of work and resources spent on billing?

Billing every other month is more convenient, LESS expensive and less time consuming. I would strongly urge the IPUC to deny the company's request and help hold the actual cost of water down.

Respectfully, B.H. Greenwood

The form submitted on <http://www.puc.idaho.gov/forms/ipuc1/ipuc.html>
IP address is 24.117.90.15

✓ To Commms.
i H

Jean Jewell

From: Jean Jewell
Sent: Wednesday, December 05, 2007 1:43 PM
To: Jean Jewell
Subject: FW: Customer Comment - UWI-W-07-04

From: Aobattaglia@aol.com [mailto:Aobattaglia@aol.com]
Sent: Wednesday, December 05, 2007 10:00 AM
To: UWID
Subject: Re: billing proposal

Some feedback re: Recent letter sent to homeowners for a proposal to convert to monthly billing & the proposed increase in rates.

As far as I am concerned, the quarterly billings worked fine for me. (Especially, if it reduces costs). The current every 2 months billing is very confusing as it does not correlate to other bills that come either quarterly or monthly. (Very difficult to keep track of). For instance, it would be much easier to remember if it were every other month on even months.

I am absolutely opposed to any increase in costs in an effort to bill month. United Water is one of few, (if not the only one) that does ""not"" offer free on-line bill pay. Thus, you have left no option to do so other than thru one's local banks. I would much prefer that the on-line bill pay be through your office. Anything to make it as easy, & cost effective to the consumer would make good sense.

I want to believe that most other consumers would want & expect that you do everything in your power to keep costs down, and hopefully, to offer as many options (such as on-line bill pay) to make it as easy & cost effective to the consumer. That is what would make sense to me.

Anna Battaglia
(208) 939-7500

✓ Men. Ack
sent 12/5/07

✓ To Comments
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Jean Jewell

Sent: Tuesday, December 04, 2007 1:24 PM
To: Tonya Clark; Jean Jewell; Gene Fadness; Ed Howell
Subject: PUC Comment/Inquiry Form

A Comment from Debbie Browning follows:

Case Number:
Name: Debbie Browning
Address: 12490 W Stillwater Dr
City: Boise
State: ID
Zip: 83713
Home Telephone:
Contact E-Mail:
Name of Utility Company: United Water
Add to Mailing List: no

Please describe your question or comment briefly:
I received the letter stating that United Water will go to a monthly billing. The meager benefits to not appear to out weigh the downside, which is the increased cost to customers. If you think we WANT more frequent readings and billings, why not ask US? You are increasing rates to cover costs you can avoid. I know it is a small increase, but it seems unnecessary and pointless. It actually saves time to pay 6 times a year, rather than 12, which some of us would rather not change, especially if we have to pay for it.

The form submitted on <http://www.puc.idaho.gov/forms/ipucl/ipuc.html>
IP address is 65.101.79.78

✓ Men Acke
sent 12/7/04

✓ To A.V.

✓ To Commis.
; H

Jean Jewell

From: biker1@cableone.net
Sent: Wednesday, December 05, 2007 7:03 AM
To: Tonya Clark; Jean Jewell; Gene Fadness; Ed Howell
Subject: PUC Comment/Inquiry Form

A Comment from DON LONGSTRETH follows:

Case Number: UWI-W-07-04
Name: DON LONGSTRETH
Address: 2626 E GLOUCESTER ST
City: BOISE
State: ID
Zip: 83706
Home Telephone: 343-9638
Contact E-Mail: biker1@cableone.net
Name of Utility Company: United Water
Add to Mailing List: yes

Please describe your question or comment briefly:

I find the rationale for a rate increase is not compelling. In fact, all of the reasons stated by UW could be used to make a case for going to quarterly billing! Paying more money to get bills every month doesn't make budgeting or paying easier. It just makes it different. Ditto for their argument for conservation. And ditto for 'quicker detection and troubleshooting of customer leaks or meter problems.' That's an individual homeowner's responsibility--why charge everyone more for the few with leaks? I don't believe Boise residents have trouble with their trash/sewer bills, which are also billed bi-monthly. UW's customer letter fails to quantify any of their claims, except how much it would cost consumers. Please deny this request for a rate increase. Thank you.

The form submitted on <http://www.puc.idaho.gov/forms/ipuc1/ipuc.html>
IP address is 69.92.151.125
