

*✓ Gen. Ack sent 1/7/08*

*✓ To AV*

*✓ To Commos ; H*



17 December 2007

RECEIVED

2008 JAN -7 AM 8:28

IDAHO PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

Idaho Public Utilities Commission  
P O Box 83720  
Boise, ID 83720-0074  
Street Address:  
472 W Washington 83702

**Community  
Action  
Partnership  
Association of  
Idaho**

5400 W. Franklin Rd., Suite G  
Boise, ID 83705

Phone: 208-375-7382  
Toll Free: 1-877-375-7382  
Fax: 208-342-2078  
Email: [mchant@capai.org](mailto:mchant@capai.org)

Community Action  
Partnership (CAP)  
208-746-3351

Western Idaho Community  
Action Partnership  
(WICAP)  
208-642-9086

El-Ada Community  
Action Agency  
208-377-0700

South Central Community  
Action Partnership  
(SCCAP)  
208-734-2307

Southeastern Idaho  
Community Action Agency  
(SEICAA)  
208-232-1114

Eastern Idaho Community  
Action Partnership  
(EICAP)  
208-522-5391

CCOA- Aging,  
Weatherization,  
and Human Services  
208-459-0063

Community Council of Idaho  
(CCOI)  
208-454-1652

**RE: Case Number: UWI-W-07-04 Date Filed: 09/17/2007**

**Description: United Water—Converting from bi-monthly to monthly billing**

Dear Members of the Commission,

Community Action Partnership Association of Idaho (CAPAAI) would like to express its support for United Water-Idaho's converting from a bi-monthly billing system to a monthly billing system. It is CAPAI's position that it is in the better interest of lower-income households to receive monthly billings.

Idaho's lower income households have many competitors for their limited funds, and even in the best of cases, many are struggling to maintain their housing, utilities, food and health care needs. Because of the limited income, many are forced to budget on a paycheck to paycheck basis, and it is difficult to set aside a portion of each check for the monthly heating, housing and other monthly bills when facing today's food and transportation needs. To push out a regular bill even further to a bi-monthly format makes budgeting that much more difficult.

The present bi-monthly system makes it more challenging for low-income households in two areas. The first, and one that really applies to all income levels although the impact is greater for lower income households, is that there is only feedback on consumption every two months. Monthly feedback on consumption through the billing system would allow households to potentially alter their habits to lessen consumption for the following month. Even a ten to twenty dollar reduction in usage would be

very meaningful to a family whose monthly household income may be \$900; this might mean fresh fruit or a quarter tank of gas for employment. The second area of difficulty is financial management. Most of the other utility and other billing systems bill on a monthly basis; this consistency provides an opportunity to look at the projected monthly income and weigh it against projected expenses. When not having a monthly bill, it is easy to forget about the water bill that will arrive in four to six weeks, and instead of setting aside \$20-40 towards the water bill, someone might fill the tank of gas, buy extra groceries, or pay extra on another debt. This, in turn, can contribute towards a manageable water bill becoming unmanageable.

Moving to a monthly system will address these two areas in a positive way for all community members, but will benefit our lower income neighbors the most, enabling better management of very limited funds.

I thank you for the opportunity to comment on this matter.

Sincerely,



Mary Chant, Executive Director

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sent 1/7/08

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JH

**Jean Jewell**

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**Sent:** Sunday, January 06, 2008 6:49 AM  
**To:** Tonya Clark; Jean Jewell; Gene Fadness; Ed Howell  
**Subject:** PUC Comment/Inquiry Form

A Comment from Pam Schmidt follows:

-----  
Case Number:  
Name: Pam Schmidt  
Address: 744 S Kirby St  
City: Boise  
State: ID  
Zip: 83705  
Home Telephone: 368-9731  
Contact E-Mail:  
Name of Utility Company: United Water Idaho  
Add to Mailing List: yes

Please describe your question or comment briefly:  
RE: Billing Monthly Rather Than Every Two Months.  
I see no benefit of this proposal except for the water company itself. (And then they'll have to perhaps hire more people, use more paper for invoices and envelopes, more stamps, etc., and produce more for the mail carrier to lug around.) It won't change my water useage, but will cost me \$3 a month more on my bill (\$6 over a two month period). As to the statement that it will make people more aware of how much water they use: I think most of us are aware how much water we use and try to keep it to a minimum for our needs. Those who don't care, will not change their attitude or habits just because they get billed more frequently! The current system has worked well for a long time and I see no need to change it.

Thank you.

The form submitted on <http://www.puc.idaho.gov/forms/ipuc1/ipuc.html>  
IP address is 207.69.139.139

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To Commms  
: H

**Jean Jewell**

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**From:** smithlink1@juno.com  
**Sent:** Monday, January 07, 2008 5:44 AM  
**To:** Tonya Clark; Jean Jewell; Gene Fadness; Ed Howell  
**Subject:** PUC Comment/Inquiry Form

A Comment from Robert Linkhart follows:

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Case Number: UWI-W-07-04  
Name: Robert Linkhart  
Address: 1854 Wilmington Drive  
City: Boise  
State: Idaho  
Zip: 83704  
Home Telephone: work number (208)334-8492  
Contact E-Mail: smithlink1@juno.com  
Name of Utility Company: United Water Idaho  
Add to Mailing List: no

Please describe your question or comment briefly:  
Dear Commissioners:

I offer for the Commissioners consideration my comments against granting United Water Idaho's request to increase service charges by almost 4% to convert from bi-monthly to monthly billings.

United Water Idaho states this rate increase will provide benefits of:

- easier budgeting for the consumer
- enhanced water conservation by consumer getting a monthly billing
- more frequent visits by United Water Idaho personnel will reduce water problems

The facts are United Water Idaho will not provide increased benefits by convert from bi-monthly to monthly billings. The increased costs to the consumer will result in only increased costs; which will be more of a burden for households on a limited income. Here are my comments on the "proposed" benefits stated by United Water Idaho:

- budgeting is the same, whether for one or two months; also monthly billings require additional bill paying costs (i.e. stamps) and time by the consumer.
- water conservation is not enhanced by a monthly bill; those individual who really want to know daily, weekly, or monthly water consumption can simply read their own water meter.
- a majority of water leaks are located within the interior of a building (i.e. toilet running, leaking faucet, leaking shut-off valve, etc.), which would not be observed by United Water Idaho personnel. This fact is supported by United Water Idaho selling "leak guard protection" to their consumers.

The form submitted on <http://www.puc.idaho.gov/forms/ipuc1/ipuc.html>  
IP address is 164.165.237.20

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**Jean Jewell**

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**From:** kittygoogly@msn.com  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 02, 2008 9:28 AM  
**To:** Tonya Clark; Jean Jewell; Gene Fadness; Ed Howell  
**Subject:** PUC Comment/Inquiry Form

A Comment from jan glandon follows:

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Case Number: UWI-W-07-04  
Name: jan glandon  
Address: 3440 w. hansen ave  
City: boise  
State: ID  
Zip:  
Home Telephone: 208-336-1698  
Contact E-Mail: kittygoogly@msn.com  
Name of Utility Company: United Water Idaho  
Add to Mailing List: yes

Please describe your question or comment briefly:  
Just wanted to add again I am so in favor of monthly billing at United Water Idaho!!!! I  
definitely think it's the right way to go.  
Thank you.

The form submitted on <http://www.puc.idaho.gov/forms/ipuc1/ipuc.html>  
IP address is 71.221.155.17

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*✓ Gen Ack  
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iH*

**Jean Jewell**

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**From:** brian.andrew@brianandjenny.com  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 02, 2008 8:44 AM  
**To:** Tonya Clark; Jean Jewell; Gene Fadness; Ed Howell  
**Subject:** PUC Comment/Inquiry Form

A Comment from Brian Hartvigsen follows:

-----  
Case Number: UWI-W-07-04  
Name: Brian Hartvigsen  
Address: 4756 Sioux Pl  
City: Boise  
State: ID  
Zip: 83709  
Home Telephone: 208-385-7885  
Contact E-Mail: brian.andrew@brianandjenny.com  
Name of Utility Company: United Water  
Add to Mailing List: yes

Please describe your question or comment briefly:  
I think the rate increase proposed by United Water is unfair to the consumer. While we do get monthly billing, United Water still gives us no way to access any account information online and this proposal doesn't include a commitment to adding that as well. I believe before they implement monthly billing they should start making life easier by giving us online account access like Qwest and Idaho Power do (either through their own service or through working with CheckFree and other online bill payment/account access companies.)

The form submitted on <http://www.puc.idaho.gov/forms/ipuc1/ipuc.html>  
IP address is 67.60.230.130

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**Jean Jewell**

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**From:** Jean Jewell  
**Sent:** Friday, January 04, 2008 3:02 PM  
**To:** Jean Jewell  
**Subject:** FW: Consumer Comment/Complaint Form

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

From: trhodes@provizio.com [mailto:trhodes@provizio.com]  
Sent: Thursday, January 03, 2008 3:27 PM  
To: Tonya Clark; Front; Beverly Barker  
Subject: Consumer Comment/Complaint Form

A Comment/Inquiry from Tim Rhodes follows:

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Name: Tim Rhodes  
Contact E-Mail: trhodes@provizio.com  
Home Telephone: 2082862060  
Work/Contact Telephone: 2084657900  
Home/Office or Both: Home  
Home Address: 66 N. Saratoga Court  
City: Nampa  
State: ID  
Zipcode: 83687  
Business Name:  
Business Address:  
Business Phone:  
Name of Utility Company: United Water  
If Telephone/Local Provider:  
Have you contacted the utility regarding your concern?: yes

Please describe your question or complaint briefly:

On December 20, 2007, I received a notice from United Water regarding the company's proposed rate increase of \$1.15 per month, or \$13.80 per year.

I materially do not have problems with companies, including public utilities, raising their rates for service. However, I do have difficulty with public utilities raising their rates when the service they provide is substandard. This is the case with United Water.

Since we moved into our new home May 10th, 2006, we have been attempting to discover the "real" status of the water condition within our subdivision, Belmont Estates. United Water notified residents that the well the company is using to supply residential water to our house, and those in our neighborhood, was contaminated with naturally occurring uranium. While the company assured residents via a form letter that the water was safe to drink, I took exception with their safety analysis as well as their own measurement of the actual uranium within our well water.

I authored several position papers supporting the World Health Organization's (WHO) recommendation of Uranium levels for safe drinking water as well as overall sale exposure levels. While the US EPA promotes that the recommended level of Uranium should not exceed 20 micrograms/L of Uranium, the WHO's position is that drinking water should not exceed 2 micrograms/L of Uranium. The WHO further promotes that Uranium concentration in drinking water should be based on a "Tolerable Daily Intake" (TDI) of 0.6 micrograms/kg of body weight. The TDI is an estimate of the amount that can be consumed daily over a lifetime without appreciable health risk. The WHO's recommendation is a TDI of 36 micrograms for an average adult weighing 60 kilograms.

Based upon my own private testing of the water with an outside lab, the current amount of Uranium in the Belmont Heights drinking system is at 26 micrograms/L and not 20

micrograms/L as United Water has reported. Even with the EPA's safe drinking water policy set at 20 micrograms, the current level of 26 micrograms/L far exceeds that threshold and exceeds the WHO's recommendation by 12 times.

Since this time, we have subscribed to an outside drinking water service, at our own expense, which provides us uranium-free water at \$30 per month.

In the fall of 2007, we also discovered that the company's solution to our problem was to sell the well to the city of Nampa, rather than develop an interim and long-term solution. While this may seem like the best solution on paper, it further prolongs the time that we are exposed to uranium levels and presents to interim solution for residents.

My point is that I have very difficult time paying additional for a service that I cannot use as well as for service where the company has little regard for the health of its customers. Rather than do the right thing, United Water chose to "sell off" their problem to the lowest bidder, creating an even longer period of time that residents have to deal with unsafe drinking water.

I urge the PUC to deny United Water's request for the proposed rate hike until the company can demonstrate a record of better performance and service to the customers they serve.

Thank you for your time. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me. I am available via phone or in person if you desire further information.

Sincerely,

Dr. Tim W. Rhodes, PhD

The form submitted on <http://www.puc.idaho.gov/forms/cons/cons.html>  
IP address is 72.24.121.199

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✓ Ken Ask sent 1/7/08

✓ To AV.

✓ To Commes 5/14

**Jean Jewell**

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**From:** Klkehne@cableone.net  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 02, 2008 5:12 AM  
**To:** Tonya Clark; Jean Jewell; Gene Fadness; Ed Howell  
**Subject:** PUC Comment/Inquiry Form

A Comment from Kate Kehne follows:

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Case Number: UWI-W-07-04  
Name: Kate Kehne  
Address: 3405 Mountain View Dr.  
City: BOISE  
State: ID  
Zip: 83704  
Home Telephone: 376-4006  
Contact E-Mail: Klkehne@cableone.net  
Name of Utility Company: United Water  
Add to Mailing List: yes

Please describe your question or comment briefly:  
I am opposed to United Water's application for monthly meter reading and billing. Regarding their reasons for the change: I have no difficulty paying the water bills bimonthly, in fact it's nice to have a bill that only arrives every 2 months, and I have no trouble figuring out that the more water I use during the summer, the higher the bills will be. Perhaps more frequent visits by personnel would be helpful, but as far as I know, water company personnel respond quickly to problems anyway. I believe that 8 additional employees, increased vehicle/fuel use, purchase of additional equipment, increased billing, postage, and payment processing costs, including collections, would be a wasteful use of time, money and valuable resources (particularly fuel and paper), and not a conservation measure.

The form submitted on <http://www.puc.idaho.gov/forms/ipuc1/ipuc.html>  
IP address is 24.116.147.110  
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