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IDAHO PUBLIC  
UTILITIES COMMISSION

Idaho Public Utilities Commission  
PO Box 83720  
Boise, ID 83720-0074

Stephen Raymond  
Boise, ID  
[raydog@exprnt.com](mailto:raydog@exprnt.com)

United Water Case # UWI-W-11-02 Rate Increase

To whom it may concern,

I find it outrageous that United Water has filed a request for rate increases due to lower consumption by users. United Water has repeatedly tried any number of tactics to find any way to increase its profit margin without any real upgrade in quality of service or product.

This New Jersey/Paris based company has continually stuffed our mailboxes with every variety of useless upsell promotion it can think of all printed in jazzy four color brochures in an effort to stretch profits. Last year it wanted to double our meter readings to justify additional operational overhead. This year it wants to raise rates based on lower usage and normal end of life replacement costs for existing equipment in spite of lower operating costs due to lower demands on the system.

A little investigation shows that United Water is unpopular in many other parts of the country for the same poor service and high costs – see the following excerpt from a report on United Water from [foodandwaterwatch.org](http://foodandwaterwatch.org) ([Read the full report here.](#)):

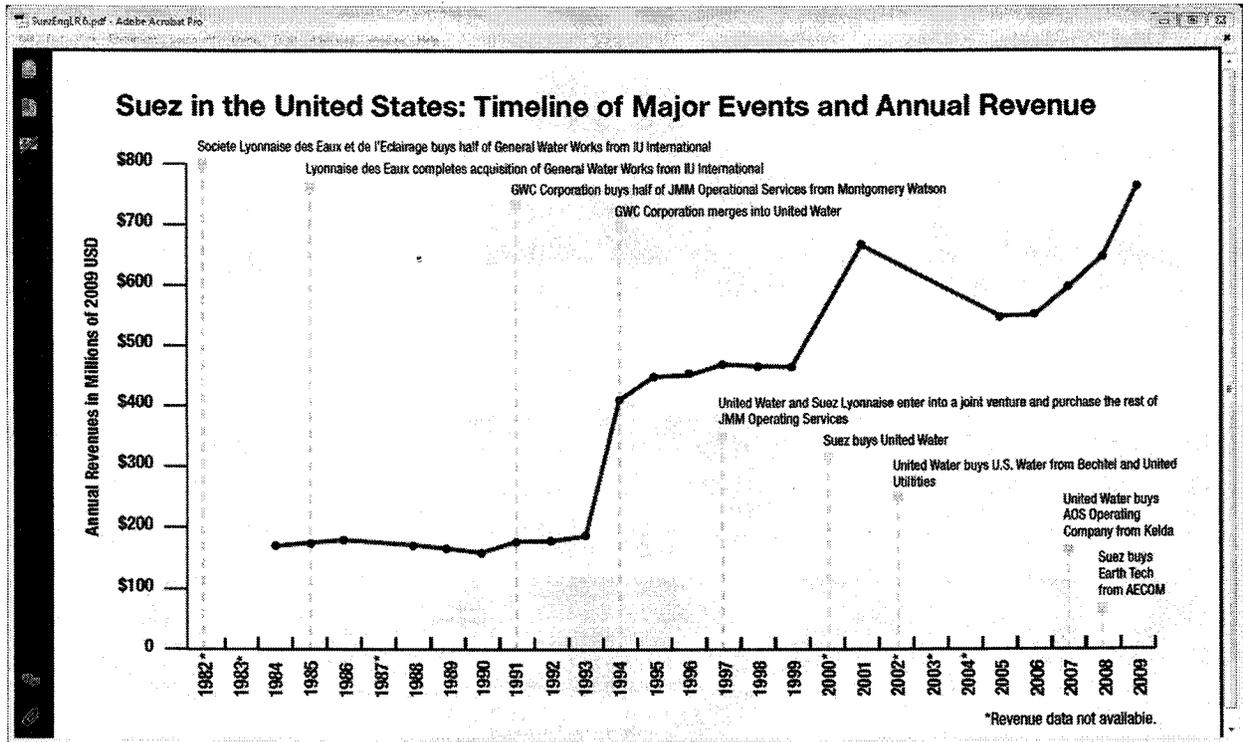
*Suez Environnement has a poor track record in the United States. From sewage overflows in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, to contaminated drinking water in Gloucester, Massachusetts, serious problems have afflicted municipalities across the country after they turned their water or sewer systems over to Suez-owned United Water.*

*Under the leadership of Suez, United Water has grown into the second-largest private operator of municipal water systems in the United States. However, because the company has had a large number of high-profile failures, in recent years, it has won few new contracts to operate city water systems. As a result, it has focused on taking over other water companies to eliminate its competition.*

*Poor performance has cost the company several of its largest contracts. Suez's flagship effort in the United States — a long-term contract with Atlanta, Georgia — ended 16 years early in 2003 after the city documented numerous problems from a large maintenance backlog to inadequate bill collection. After issuing 20 notices of noncompliance to United Water, the city of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, decided against keeping the company when its contract came up for renewal in 2007. Gloucester, Massachusetts, similarly ended its contract with the company after water quality violations in 2009.*

*Expensive service has cost United Water several other deals. From Gary, Indiana, to Fairfield-Suisun, California, cities across the country have ended contracts with the company, opting to run their water and sewer systems themselves. For these municipalities, public operation has saved money and improved services.*

A quick look at the chart below reveals what might be the real reason behind the continuous request for rate hikes requested by United Water.



Lastly, I thought it worth exhibiting what a real business transaction with United Water looks like. Below is a copy of my bill from the period of September and October of this year.

Here is how it breaks down:

2 CCF @ \$1.3521	\$02.70
Customer charge	\$18.10
Boise franchise fee	\$00.62
Safe drinking water fee	\$00.50
<b>Total Bill</b>	<b>\$21.92</b>

So, my total bill is already almost ten times the amount of the actual use of product. How is it possible that a customer charge can be nearly nine times the usage fee and still not be adequate?

My recommendation would be not to only vehemently deny this request, but also begin an active search to find another local company to administrate our water supply and waste facilities, or move the operation of the current one back into the public domain.

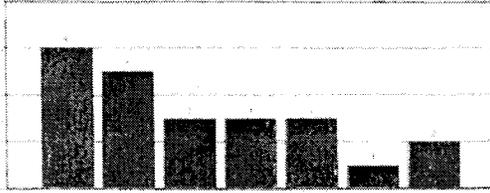


# UNITED WATER

United Water Idaho  
Customer Service Center  
8248 West Victory Road  
Boise, ID 83709  
Telephone: 208-362-7304  
www.unitedwater.com

### USAGE HISTORY

6-Monthly usage in Hundreds of Cubic Feet



Next meter reading date: on or about 12/30/2011

Billing Date: 10/31/11  
Account Number: [REDACTED]

Previous Balance	\$20
Payments Through 10/31/11	\$20
Balance Forward	\$0
Current Charges Due 11/21/2011	\$21
<b>TOTAL AMOUNT DUE</b>	<b>\$21</b>

SERVICE TO: [REDACTED] SERVICE ADDRESS: 1945 TEALLA BOISE ID

Meter Number	Service		Days of Service	Meter Reading		Usage	Unit of Measure	Reading Type	Rate
	From	To		Previous	Present				
[REDACTED]	08/25/11	10/28/11	64	283	285	2	CCF EQUIVALENT	ACTUAL	WT
				2,000 CCF @ \$1.3521	\$2.70	SAFE DRINKING WTR FEE			\$0.50
				CUSTOMER CHARGE	\$18.10	TOTAL CURRENT CHARGES			\$21.92
				BOISE FRANCHISE FEE	\$0.62				

SEE REVERSE SIDE FOR IMPORTANT ACCOUNT INFORMATION

### IMPORTANT MESSAGES

YOUR ACCOUNT NUMBER HAS CHANGED. THANK YOU FOR YOUR PATIENCE WHILE WE UPGRADE OUR COMPUTER SYSTEM TO SERVE YOU BETTER. PLEASE READ THE ENCLOSED INSERT FOR MORE INFORMATION.  
Save a stamp and go paperless today! Log on to [www.unitedwater.com](http://www.unitedwater.com) or call Customer Service to find out more information and to enroll eBilling.

PLEASE DETACH HERE AND RETURN THE BOTTOM PORTION WITH YOUR PAYMENT IN THE RETURN ENVELOPE PROVIDED



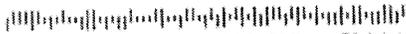
**UNITED WATER**  
Customer Service Center  
8248 West Victory Road  
Boise, ID 83709

Temp - Return Service Requested

SERVICE ADDRESS: [REDACTED]  
BOISE ID

Please check this box if you have made any changes to the information on the reverse side

000672

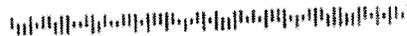


\*\*\*\*AUTO\*\*5-DIGIT 83706 672 T33 672 1 AV 0340



BOISE ID 83706-4049

Account Number:	[REDACTED]
Balance Forward	\$0.00
Current Charges Due 11/21/2011	\$21.92
<b>TOTAL AMOUNT DUE</b>	<b>\$21.92</b>
<i>Please make payable to: UNITED WATER IDAHO</i>	
Payment Amount Enclosed	\$ _____



UNITED WATER IDAHO  
PAYMENT CENTER  
PO BOX 371804  
PITTSBURGH PA 15250-7804