

ORIGINAL

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November 18, 2004

Blanca S. Bayo, Director
Division of the Commission Clerk
and Administrative Services
Florida Public Service Commission
2540 Shumard Oak Blvd.
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0850

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COMMISSION
CLERK

Re: Docket Nos. 020896-WS & 010503-WU

Dear Ms. Bayo:

Enclosed for filing, on behalf of the Petitioners, are the original and 15 copies of the Direct Testimony of Linwood Oberg.

Please indicate the time and date of receipt on the enclosed duplicate of this letter and return it to our office.

Sincerely,

Charles J. Beck
Deputy Public Counsel

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FPSC-BUREAU OF RECORDS

DOCUMENT NUMBER-DATE

12395 NOV 18 3

FPSC-COMMISSION CLERK

ORIGINAL

BEFORE THE FLORIDA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

In re: Petition by customers of Aloha)
Utilities, Inc. for deletion of portion)
of territory in Seven Springs area in)
Pasco County)

Docket No. 020896-WS

In re: Application for Increase in)
Water Rates for Seven Springs)
System in Pasco County by Aloha)
Utilities, Inc.)

Docket No. 010503-WU

Filed: November 18, 2004

DIRECT TESTIMONY

OF

LINWOOD OBERG

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DIRECT TESTIMONY

OF

LINWOOD OBERG

1 **BEFORE THE FLORIDA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION**

2 **Dockets Nos. 020896-WS & 010503-WU**

3 DIRECT TESTIMONY

4 OF

5 LINWOOD OBERG

6

7 **Q. Please state your name, and address and the name of the Utility from**
8 **which you get your drinking water.**

9 A. Linwood Oberg, 7851 Craighurst Loop, Trinity, Fl 34655, Aloha Utilities.

10

11 **Q. How long have you been a customer of Aloha Utilities?**

12 A. Since 1999, or about 5 years.

13

14 **Q. Are you satisfied with the quality of water in your domestic plumbing?**

15 A. No.

16

17 **Q. Do you drink Aloha water from your taps?**

18 A. No. We don't dare as we are on a high regimen of medications for various
19 illnesses. We are obliged to buy water to drink and to cook with.

20

21 **Q. What is it that distresses you about the quality of water?**

22 A. The water is sometimes smelly and often black in color. We have experienced
23 black water in washing machine. We have had to rinse & rewash after
24 running water for a few minutes. We never know when it will occur.

1 **Q. How frequently do you experience poor quality?**

2 A. It can occur frequently but lately has improved a little.

3

4 **Q. Do you experience poor quality in water from both the hot water and cold**
5 **water taps?**

6 A. Yes. It depends on our use. Both hot or cold can turn black if we happen to
7 use more frequently and running a larger quantity.

8

9 **Q. Under what circumstances of use have you experienced poor quality?**

10 A. It is there when we are home, but worse after being away for a week or two.

11

12 **Q. Have you experienced poor quality water even while you are using the**
13 **water on a daily basis?**

14 A. Yes. In the garage, laundry, kitchen and sometimes bedrooms.

15

16 **Q. What kind of pipes do you have?**

17 A. We only have copper pipes.

18

19 **Q. Do you have water-conditioning appliances? If so what kind?**

20 A. None.

21

22 **Q. Do you use any type of filters? If yes, where in domestic pipes do you use**
23 **them?**

1 A. We have only one large sediment filter outside before water enters our
2 domain.

3

4 **Q. What kind of filters do you use? What do you notice about the filters**
5 **when you change them?**

6 A. We change the filter about every two months. Old filter is not black but has a
7 yucky substance, yellowish and dirty looking. To obtain better looking water
8 we have to run it quite a while before the black and smelly odor is reduced so
9 we dare to wash clothes or shower with it.

10

11 **Q. How does the poor quality of water affect you and your family?**

12 A. Quite a bit, especially financially. We buy water to drink and cook with not
13 daring to use Aloha's product. On average we spend an extra 18.00 to 22.00
14 dollars each month for this bottled water.

15

16 Emotionally, we become angry when we can get useable and drinkable water
17 elsewhere. We have heard of others using Aloha water who have had
18 pinholes at great costs to fix. Toilet tanks need cleaning occasionally from
19 blackness. We only use the shower so discoloration of tubs is not an item of
20 concern. Laundry is of great concern.

21

22 **Q. Have you sought the help of Aloha Utility in understanding why the**
23 **water quality is intermittently poor in your home?**

1 A. Yes. I have called them on occasion. other than draining my hot water tank
2 that helps getting the water somewhat more useable. They have tested the
3 water out near the inlet at the sidewalk area and told me the water passes State
4 regulations. I think they miss the point. Their product contains sulfides (my
5 guess) or something similar that when their so called good water hits copper
6 pipes there is a reaction and they must do a better job of getting water to their
7 customers that has been treated for anything that affects it when contacting
8 copper metal.

9
10 **Q. Do you feel that the utility has given you a satisfactory explanation of why**
11 **the water quality in your home plumbing is intermittently unsatisfactory?**

12 A. No. They stick to their old refrain that they have no obligation to give us
13 water other than what seemingly passes somebody's standard. I think the PSC
14 should set standards that makes it imperative that any water utility must have
15 water that regardless of pipes or anything will produce a product that is
16 healthy, clean, drinkable and doesn't smell or turn black.

17
18 **Q. Have you made enquiries about the quality of water that customers of**
19 **other utilities in the neighboring areas receive? Describe your awareness**
20 **of water quality and costs in neighboring areas.**

21 A. Not really. Perhaps by word of mouth and talking to friends who live in a
22 close by community. They say they have no such problem and drink and use
23 their water. I have drunk their water and find it to be just fine. No word of
24 black or smelly water.

1 **Q. What has been your experience of the quality of water in domestic pipes,**
2 **if you have lived in other parts of our state or other states?**

3 A. We moved here from Spring Hill and they had the finest quality of water we
4 have ever used, here and in Maine and Connecticut.

5

6 **Q. Who do you think should take the primary initiative in improving water**
7 **quality? Explain why.**

8 A. The PSC. We have struggled for many years with Aloha and they really have
9 given us the deaf ear. We can no longer trust Aloha's words. They pay no
10 heed to our situation. They know we need their product for bathing and
11 washing so they just don't care if we have to buy water outside to cook and
12 drink.

13

14 **Q. Have you made any suggestions to Aloha to improve your water quality?**

15 A. We have exhausted trying to deal with Aloha. They simply stall and use an
16 attorney to fight their battles with customers. For any improvements they
17 want us, the customers to pay for it. With their attitude they shouldn't be in
18 this business. They don't mind making a lot of money on us, the users of their
19 terrible product, and but they are fighting every step of the way to spend any
20 money improving their water.

21

22 **Q. If a reasonable increase in cost is necessary to improve water quality, will**
23 **you be willing to accept an increase in water rates similar to what**

1 **neighboring utilities charge? Explain the conditions under which you**
2 **will agree to increased cost.**

3 A. I can't really answer that because I really don't trust them after 5 years. If
4 they guaranty good water for a period of at least six months at their own
5 expense and we see good results with good clean, drinkable water without
6 odor or black color then I could be approached about an increase in cost but
7 no higher than that of our neighboring utility, Pasco. I don't wish to wait
8 another few months for this to occur. We have waited long enough already.

9

10 **Q. What has been your experience of the customer service of Aloha Utility?**

11 A. Oh, they are polite enough and I don't blame the workers for doing their job.
12 The top decision makers should be taken to task for what they have done to
13 their customers.

14

15 **Q. Have you attended the recent customer workshops of Aloha utility?**

16 **Describe your impression.**

17 A. The one I was able attend, I found a predominance of those attending were an
18 unhappy group of customers. In fact they were all very upset with Aloha's
19 lack of true response.

20

21 **Q. Have you found the utility to be concerned about solving the problems its**
22 **customers face?**

1 A. It appears to me that anyone representing Aloha is well schooled in being so
2 very polite and seemingly helpful but the results are what we count and they
3 give us very little to be happy about.

4

5 **Q. If you had a choice in receiving water from another utility at reasonable**
6 **rates would you continue to buy water from Aloha Utility?**

7 A. Certainly not!

8

9 **Q. How would you rate the customer service of Aloha, taking into account**
10 **the quality of its product, the customer service you have received and**
11 **your assessment of its attitude towards its customers? Describe your**
12 **experience and the reason for your rating.**

13 A. Very poor. I am a retired Lt. Col. U.S. Army of WWII vintage. In other
14 words quite old! However, in my experiences, I had better drinking water in
15 Italy during the war than supplied by Aloha. In my experience with Aloha I
16 found any time I approached a worker, draining water from a hydrant or
17 coming to me on call about black water, I got answers that were obviously a
18 pattern that were taught to him/her of just how to answer complaints etc.

19

20 **Q. Have you brought your complaints to the attention of the utility and/or to**
21 **the attention of regulatory agencies? If so have you been satisfied with**
22 **the responses? Describe what you did and the results, if any.**

23 A. Yes. I started writing the regulatory agency years ago and their agency
24 answered my letters but with no results.

1 **Q. Have you attended any of the PSC hearings on Aloha? If so, did you have**
2 **the impression that your complaints were isolated instances of poor water**
3 **quality?**

4 A. Yes. I attended hearings a few times carrying a jug of black water to prove
5 what came out of out my taps. The meetings were loud and clear with many
6 angry customers. Same complaints from all in attendance.

7

8 **Q. Is there any other comment that you want to make about Aloha, your**
9 **monopoly drinking water Company?**

10 A. We still haven't received all the money back from an interim increase from
11 Aloha. If it were up to me, I would have all or some of their franchise taken
12 away. We have been approaching our regulatory authorities to have at least
13 the closest customers to Pasco County shifted over to them as we are in
14 proximity the nearest and could easily, at low cost, do just that. I feel sure I
15 speak for the majority of customers in the Trinity and some adjoining areas.
16 We can no longer put up with Aloha's water. Please help us get immediate
17 results and not have to listen anymore to Aloha's promises. They always have
18 been just words and no results.

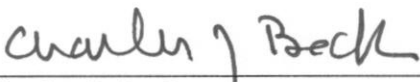
19

20 **Q. Is that the end of your testimony?**

21 A. Yes.

**DOCKET NOS. 001503-TP and 020896-WU
CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE**

I HEREBY CERTIFY that a copy of the foregoing has been furnished by U.S. Mail
or hand-delivery to the following parties on this 18th day of November, 2004.



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