

Andy & Rachel Knieriem
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December 28, 2016

Florida Public Service Commission
Director, Office of Commission Clerk
2540 Shumard Oak BLVD
Tallahassee, FL 32399

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RE: Docket # 160101-WS, Utilities, Inc. of Florida

To whom it may concern,

I am a concerned Pinellas county residence struggling with the reality that the Utility company would like to increase our rates per 1,000 gallons by 41% (the current rate is 4.00 per 1,000 gallons and the proposed rate is 5.65 per 1,000 gallons). This is hardly a cost of living raise in the rates, nor is it acceptable to increase the rates so much in one year. Additionally, the company wishes to raise their base facility charge fee by 57% (the current base charge is 32.48 and the proposed is 50.95). These are extremely large increases that will have a negative impact on residents. It is highly unreasonable to think that the population can simply afford such large adjustments. Typically, rates are raised as needed in all types of goods and services at small increments so that consumers have an opportunity to absorb the difference via annual cost of living raises. Annual cost of living raises at most professional organizations are between 1-3%. How is it reasonable to then assume that increasing rates at 41% and 57% is something that residents can afford? Additionally, many local residents in the Pinellas county area are elderly retired folks on a fixed income, to impose such large increases on them would create a financial struggle. Water is a basic need, the prices should be fair, and in my opinion the utility company should be a non-profit. For these reasons we strongly oppose the recommended rate increases that Utilities, INC. is proposing.

Kind Regards,



Andy & Rachel Knieriem

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