

STATE OF FLORIDA

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ORIGINAL
DIVISION OF REGULATORY OVERSIGHT
DANIEL M. HOPPE, DIRECTOR
(850) 413-6480

Public Service Commission

September 25, 2000

VIA CERTIFIED MAIL NO.: 7000 0600 0020 9377 2713

Ms. Karen M. Grayson
534 Lazy Lake Drive East
Lakeland, FL 33801

Re: Docket No. 000973-SU, Application for transfer of Certificate No. 515-S in Polk County from ABCA, Inc. to West Lakeland Utilities, Inc.

Dear Ms. Grayson:

Thank you for returning my call concerning your letter dated August 28, 2000. Although your letter was sent in response to the above-referenced notice of transfer, it appears to be a customer complaint, instead. In our phone conversation on September 20, 2000, you confirmed that this is the case. For future reference, the Commission has a toll-free number (1-800-342-3552) located in its Division of Consumer Affairs. This number is a hot line dedicated to recording and responding to customer concerns such as yours. Please feel free to call the hot line number whenever you have an unresolved matter with a utility regulated by the Commission.

Meanwhile, since your letter has already been filed in the transfer docket, the Division of Regulatory Oversight will be happy to process it for you. In our conversation, your primary concern seems to be that, since the utility did not bill, you have no record of payment history. Now that the City of Lakeland will be billing for the utility, you would like a record of your account standing should there be any transitional problems. I spoke with the utility manager and his wife and they stated they would provide you with a letter indicating that your account was paid in full at the time it was transferred to the City of Lakeland. I asked to be copied on their letter to you as confirmation it was sent.

With regard to an accounting for services rendered, I am attaching a copy of Commission Order No. PSC-00-1163-PAA-SU, issued June 26, 2000, in Docket No. 990937-SU, which established new rates and charges for wastewater service. The order is the result of an extensive audit and analysis of the utility's books and records performed by Commission staff. As you will note on Pages 3 and 4 of the order, the major concerns expressed at staff's April 19, 2000, customer

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FPSC-RECORDS/REPORTING


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meeting were the utility's billing practices and the collection of past due amounts. The Commission's findings are on Pages 9, 10, and 15, including an explanation as to why the City of Lakeland is now billing for wastewater service. A full discussion of the adjustments made to the utility's operating and maintenance (O&M) expenses can be found on Pages 8 through 13.

Let me clarify that the County-approved \$880 connection fee is not for connection to Polk County's wastewater facilities. Instead, the fee was approved by Polk County for new residential connections to ABCA's wastewater system as of May 29, 1990. The Commission grandfathered the connection fee when Polk County transferred jurisdiction. You will find this discussion on Page 19 of the order. Pages 3 and 4 of the order indicate that the utility's wastewater facilities currently meet the Florida Department of Environmental Protection's (FDEP's) environmental requirements and, overall, the quality of service was found to be satisfactory. Also, at the customer meeting, there were no service-related complaints. However, should you have any environmental concerns, please contact the FDEP's Southwest Florida District Office directly at (813) 744-6100, as they are the appropriate regulatory agency.

I hope this information, along with a written confirmation of your account standing from the utility, resolves all your concerns. Unless, I hear otherwise, upon receipt of my copy of the utility's response to you, I will assume the matter is closed. However, if that is not the case or if I can be of any further assistance, please feel free to contact me at (850) 413-6686.

Sincerely,



Patricia Brady
Regulatory Analyst IV

Attachments: (2)

cc: Mr. Douglas A. Carson, ABCA, Inc.
Mr. R. Dennis Corbett, West Lakeland Utilities, Inc.
Mr. Matthew W. Cheney, Piper Marbury Rudnick & Wolfe LLP
Division of Regulatory Oversight (Rieger)
Division of Economic Regulation (Rendell)
Division of Legal Services (Crosby)
Division of Consumer Affairs
Division of Records and Reporting