



Mr. Art Graham  
Chairman  
Florida Public Service Commission  
2540 Shumard Oak Boulevard  
Tallahassee, FL 32399 – 0850

Dear Mr. Graham

April 7, 2014

On Tuesday April 3<sup>rd</sup>, Lake Placid Utilities Inc held a meeting in Lake Placid regarding a proposed rate increase on water usage (ref Docket No. 130243 – WS).

The purpose for this letter is to request a rate decrease and not a rate increase.

I presented information at this meeting showing why the residence of Lake Placid is against a rate increase. I provided detailed information and comparisons of over 170 cities and counties throughout the state of Florida, based on a study that was done by Raftelis Financial Consultants Inc. in 2012. The information on the detailed study shows information by name, the utilities management district jurisdiction, estimated population served, effective date of existing rates, unit of measurement in gallons, minimum charge expressed on a monthly basis, monthly residential bills at 4000 and 8000 gallons and water capacity (impact fees).

Using this information from the Raftelis study, I calculated the average for all 170 cities and counties and the results are as follows:

- The average for all 170 cities and counties for the minimum charge is \$12.91. The minimum charge for Lake Placid is \$13.80. **Lake Placid is higher than the average by \$1.79.** The range or difference in all 170 cities surveyed is \$31.24, which is a very wide range.
- The average monthly bill for all 170 cities and counties @ 4000 gallons is \$20.55. **Lake Placid is \$29.88 which is \$9.33 above the average for all 170 cities.** The range or difference for all 170 cities is \$49.20 which is also extreme.
- The average monthly bill for all 170 cities and counties @ 8000 gallons is \$32.23. **Lake Placid is \$46.32, which is \$14.09 above the average for all 170 cities.** The range or difference for all 170 cities is \$67.10, which is also extreme.

In addition, my monthly charge, when I am away for several months is \$27.79. If I turn the water off at my house (no water being used) the charge is \$27.79 a month. If I have Lake Placid Utilities shut the water off at the meter, it is still \$27.79. This is an unreasonable charge for a maintenance fee. I would like to see this reduced to a more reasonable rate that is not more than half of that amount.

Lake Placid is above the average cost for all 170 cities within Florida, which is why I am requesting any increases in rates be denied.

I would like to ask the question of Lake Placid Utilities Inc, what have they done in the last several years to reduce cost? What have they done to examine smaller utility companies the find out what they are doing to control or reduce cost. What measurable cost reduction and continuous improvement initiatives have they put in place to reduce cost instead of increase cost to people who cannot afford increases?

Some of the smaller utility company's surveyed (similar populations) have less cost for water usage and less cost for minimum and maintenance fees.

In closing, I would like to ask for your assistance in not granting any increases to Lake Placid Utilities. I would also like to request a decrease in the amount of the Minimum Charge of \$27.79 to a more reasonable rate.

I appreciate your assistance on this matter.

If you have any questions, feel free to call me at 734 847 7674. (Michigan)

Best regards,

Larry LaBeau  
1956 Briarwood Ln  
Temperance MI 48182

Cc: Mr Eduardo Balbis  
Ms. Lisa Polk Edgar  
Mr. Ronald Brise  
Ms. Julie Brown

Florida Public Service Commission  
Office of Commission Clerk  
Shumard Oak Blvd,  
Tallahassee, Florida 32399

Subject: Water Increase

My comments are as follows:

With regard to the proposed water increase, I presented a detailed study of water rates in Florida, which was done in 2014. This study compared Utilities Inc. to other counties and municipalities within the State of Florida. The results of the study at that time, showed water rates higher than most counties and municipalities in the State of Florida, Since that study, water rates have continued to increase, and are continuing to increase year after year. I have enclosed a copy of my letter dated 4/7/14, which summarizes the results of the study. During these trying times, I would hope that someone would realize that many people are trying to pay their rent and buy groceries instead of trying to pay their water bill.

My data, and letters seem to fall on deaf ears.

I would ask the question, what is Utilities Inc doing to reduce their cost and become more efficient at delivering services to their customers.



Regards,

Larry LaBeau

151 Fairway Dr

Lake Placid, Floeida 33852

NOTICE OF CUSTOMER SERVICE HEARING AND TECHNICAL HEARING

TO

UTILITIES, INC. OF FLORIDA

OFFICE OF PUBLIC COUNSEL

AND

ALL OTHER INTERESTED PERSONS

DOCKET NO. 20200139-WS

APPLICATION FOR INCREASE IN WATER AND WASTEWATER RATES IN CHARLOTTE, HIGHLANDS, LAKE, LEE, MARION, ORANGE, PASCO, PINELLAS, POLK AND SEMINOLE COUNTIES BY UTILITIES, INC. OF FLORIDA

ISSUED: November 19, 2020

NOTICE is hereby given that the Florida Public Service Commission ("Commission") will hold virtual customer service and technical hearings in the above docket on the application for increase in water and wastewater rates in Charlotte, Highlands, Lake, Lee, Marion, Orange, Pasco, Pinellas, Polk and Seminole Counties by Utilities, Inc. of Florida ("Utility"). The customer service hearings will commence at the times and dates shown below.

COMPANY OVERVIEW – UTILITIES, INC. OF FLORIDA

First, clean water service delivered to your home is critical to your family and we are happy to have been granted the license to serve your territory.

While we understand this is a challenging time, we are committed to delivering quality service to you, our customer. At this time, we are requesting an increase in rates to enable us to continue delivering safe, clean water to you.

We have filed a request (Docket No. 20200139-WS) with the Florida Public Service Commission (PSC) requesting a future increase in our water and wastewater rates that would likely take effect in mid-2021.

If approved as filed, the rate increase will vary by customer. We expect typical residential customers with monthly consumption of 5,000 gallons to see an increase of about \$3.49 on water and \$15.74 on wastewater on their monthly bills.

We consolidated our rates in 2016 statewide. Since then, the company has invested significantly in infrastructure, technology, customer service, and operations to ensure safety and reliability. However, since that time, the combination of necessary infrastructure investment, cost of construction, evolving customer expectations, advances in technology, changes in regulations, and increased operations requirements now causes us to seek rate relief.

CUSTOMER SERVICE HEARING - PURPOSE AND PROCEDURE

The purpose of the customer service hearings shall be to give customers and other interested persons an opportunity to offer comments regarding the quality of service the utility provides and the proposed rate increase. All witnesses shall be subject to cross examination at the conclusion of their testimony.

Due to the coronavirus pandemic, the PSC has scheduled the following virtual public hearings to provide customers an opportunity to express their views on quality of service and the impact of the requested rate increase:

December 3rd at 10:00 am  
December 10th at 2:00 pm and 6:00 pm  
January 6th at 10:00 am  
January 7th at 6:00 pm

If you would like to testify before the PSC by phone at one of the customer service hearings, you must sign up by contacting the PSC by emailing [speakersignup@psc.state.fl.us](mailto:speakersignup@psc.state.fl.us) or calling 1-850-413-7080.

You will need to provide your name, address, and the date and time of the hearing you want to attend.

Once you sign up, either by email or phone, you will be provided further instructions on how to participate, including the call-in number.

Please note: the order in which customers testify is based upon the order in which they sign up. Please sign up as soon as possible, preferably at least two business days prior to the service hearing in which you plan to participate. If you have questions about the sign-up process, please call 1-850-413-7080.

On February 2 - 4, 2021, the PSC will also conduct a technical hearing to allow UIF and other parties to the proceeding to present testimony and relevant evidence regarding the rate request. To watch either the customer service hearings or the technical hearing live, visit [floridapsc.com](http://floridapsc.com) and look for the "Watch Live Broadcast" icon on the left side of the webpage. If you do not have access to the internet, you may call 1-850-413-7999 to listen to the hearings. If you are hearing or speech impaired, you may contact the PSC by using the Florida Relay Service at 1-800-955-8771 (TDD).

#### TECHNICAL HEARING – PURPOSE AND PROCEDURE

The purpose of the technical hearing is to consider the petition of Utilities, Inc. of Florida for an increase in water and wastewater rates in Charlotte, Highlands, Lake, Lee, Marion, Orange, Pasco, Pinellas, Polk, and Seminole Counties and any motions or other matters that may be pending at the time of the hearing. The Commission may rule on any such motions from the bench or may take the matters under advisement. At the hearing, all parties shall be given the opportunity to present testimony and other evidence on the issues that are identified at the Prehearing Conference to be held on January 19, 2021. All witnesses shall be subject to cross-examination at the conclusion of their testimony.

#### JURISDICTION

Jurisdiction over this Utility is vested in the Commission by Chapter 367, Florida Statutes. Authority to approve increased rates is governed by Sections 367.081, 367.082, 367.0816, 367.101, and 367.171, Florida Statutes. The provisions of Chapters 25-9, 25-22, 25-30, and 28-106, Florida Administrative Code, are also applicable.

#### RESOURCES

Any person requiring some accommodation at this hearing because of a physical impairment should call the Office of Commission Clerk at (850) 413-6770, at least 48 hours prior to the hearing. Any person who is hearing or speech impaired should contact the Florida Public Service Commission by using the Florida Relay Service, which can be reached at 1-800-955-8771 (TDD).

An overview of the rate request is available at [floridapsc.com/Publications/RateCaseOverviews](http://floridapsc.com/Publications/RateCaseOverviews) and copies of the complete filing are available by calling the PSC at 1-840-413-7080 or by searching online at [www.floridapsc.com](http://www.floridapsc.com)

If you would like to share your comments with the PSC regarding the proposed changes in rates, please choose one of the following options:

- 1) Participate in any of the customer hearings, as described above;
- 2) Email the PSC at [clerk@psc.state.fl.us](mailto:clerk@psc.state.fl.us) (please include reference to Docket No. 20200139-WS);
- 3) Write to the PSC at the following address (please include reference to Docket No. 20200139-WS):  
Office of the Commission Clerk  
2540 Shumard Oak Boulevard  
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0850
- 4) Complete and mail a preaddressed comment card included with this notice.

To submit comments regarding your utility service, please contact the PSC's Office of Consumer Assistance and Outreach by calling 1-800-342-3552 or by mail:

Office of Consumer Assistance and Outreach  
2540 Shumard Oak Boulevard  
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0850

Amber Norris, is the PSC representative for this docket and can be reached by emailing [amnorris@psc.state.fl.us](mailto:amnorris@psc.state.fl.us) or calling 1-850-413-6984.

At any time during this process, you may contact the Office of Public Counsel (OPC). The OPC was established by the Florida Legislature to represent you and the other utility consumers before the PSC. The Public Counsel is independent from the PSC and can be reached at 1-800-342-0222 or [floridaopc.gov](http://floridaopc.gov).