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BEFORE THE
FLORIDA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

In the Matter of:

DOCKET NO. 20240068-WU

Application for increase in water and
wastewater rates in Charlotte, Highlands,
Lake, Lee, Marion, Orange, Pasco, Pinellas,
Polk, and Seminole Counties, by Sunshine
Water Services Company.

PROCEEDINGS: SERVICE HEARING

COMMISSIONERS
PARTICIPATING: CHAIRMAN MIKE LA ROSA
COMMISSIONER ART GRAHAM
COMMISSIONER GARY F. CLARK
COMMISSIONER ANDREW GILES FAY
COMMISSIONER GABRIELLA PASSIDOMO SMITH

DATE: Tuesday, December 17, 2024

TIME: Commenced: 6:00 p.m.
Concluded: 6:50 p.m.

PLACE: Commissioners Chambers
225 Newburyport Avenue
Altamonte Springs, Florida

REPORTED BY: DEBRA R. KRICK
Court Reporter and
Notary Public in and for
the State of Florida at Large

PREMIER REPORTING
TALLAHASSEE, FLORIDA
(850) 894-0828

1 APPEARANCES:

2 MARTIN S. FRIEDMAN, ESQUIRE, Dean Law Firm,
3 420 S. Orange Avenue, Suite 700, Orlando, Florida;
4 appearing on behalf of Sunshine Water Services.

5 WALT TRIERWEILER, PUBLIC COUNSEL; OCTAVIO
6 PONCE and AUSTIN WATROUS, ESQUIRES, OFFICE OF PUBLIC
7 COUNSEL, c/o The Florida Legislature, 111 West Madison
8 Street, Room 812, Tallahassee, Florida 32399-1400,
9 appearing on behalf of the Citizens of the State of
10 Florida.

11 RYAN SANDY and SAAD FAROOQI, ESQUIRES, FPSC
12 General Counsel's Office, 2540 Shumard Oak Boulevard,
13 Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0850, appearing on behalf of
14 the Florida Public Service Commission.

15 KEITH HETRICK, GENERAL COUNSEL; MARY ANNE
16 HELTON, DEPUTY GENERAL COUNSEL, Florida Public Service
17 Commission, 2540 Shumard Oak Boulevard, Tallahassee,
18 Florida 32399-0850, Advisor to the Florida Public
19 Service Commission.

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1 P R O C E E D I N G S

2 CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Well, good evening,
3 everybody. Today is December 17th, 2024. We are
4 here in beautiful Altamonte Springs, Florida, for
5 the Sunshine Water Service Hearing.

6 Welcome all, and thank you for attending this
7 Customer Service Hearing. This is a part of our
8 review of the Sunshine Water Service Company's
9 request for a rate adjustment. Today's service
10 hearing is an important part of the process and is,
11 of course, dedicated to hearing from you, the
12 customer, and your experience with Sunshine.

13 I am Mike La Rosa. I am the Chairman of the
14 Florida Public Service Commission. We are the
15 state agency that regulates companies such as
16 Sunshine. To my right is Commissioner Fay. To my
17 immediate right is Commissioner Graham. To my
18 immediate left is Commissioner Clark, and to his
19 left is Commissioner Passidomo Smith. The five of
20 us make up the Florida Public Service Commission.

21 We will go ahead and get things started.
22 Staff, do you mind please reading the notice?

23 MR. FAROOQI: All right. By notice issued on
24 November 18th, 2024, this time and place has been
25 set for a Customer Service Hearing in Docket No.

1 20240068-WS. The purpose of this Service Hearing
2 is set forth more fully in the notice.

3 CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Excellent. Thank you.

4 And let's go ahead and take appearances with
5 Sunshine, which is right here in front of me.

6 MR. FRIEDMAN: Marty Friedman man on behalf of
7 Sunshine Utilities.

8 CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Office of Public Counsel.

9 MR. PONCE: Octavio Ponce on behalf of the
10 Office of Public Counsel. With me, I have the
11 Public Counsel himself, Mr. Walt Trierweiler, and
12 Austin Watrous.

13 MR. FAROOQI: On behalf of PSC staff, I am
14 Saad Farooqi, and we have Ryan Sandy as well.

15 CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Excellent. Thank you,
16 counsel.

17 Thank you all again for participating today
18 and, again, sharing your experience and the quality
19 of service of Sunshine.

20 In addition to sharing your comments here, you
21 can also provide written comments with additional
22 material via paper or email. The rate case
23 overview, which you may have gotten as you walked
24 in, includes the instructions of how to provide
25 written comments to the Commission. Rest assured

1 that if you provide written comments, they will be
2 made available for us to review.

3 If you have any specific billing issues,
4 representatives from Sunshine Utilities are here,
5 and they will be able to assist you. Just maybe
6 pull aside one of the staff members and they will
7 be able to direct you to them.

8 Before we hear from the customers, I would
9 like to give a brief opening statement to each of
10 the parties. Let's go ahead and start with
11 Sunshine, and if you can do that in maybe a
12 three-minute more or less timeframe.

13 MR. TWOMEY: Testing. Okay.

14 Chair, Commissioners, first of all, welcome to
15 Altamonte Springs. Just a short three miles from
16 our operations office here in Florida. My name is
17 Sean Twomey. I am President of Sunshine Water
18 Services.

19 Sunshine Water Services strives to continue to
20 provide safe and reliable water and wastewater
21 services to its customers. The company's last rate
22 case was filed four years ago. However, due to a
23 variety of factors, the company is not able to meet
24 its ongoing operating and capital investment needs
25 at currently approved tariff rates. The company

1 has incurred economic pressures with certain costs,
2 such as chemicals, insurance and maintaining market
3 competitive wages and health benefits. Most
4 significantly, the company is faced with, like all
5 water and wastewater utilities, significant capital
6 investment needs for its aging water and wastewater
7 infrastructure, as well as ever-increasing
8 environmental and safety standards in operating its
9 utility systems.

10 Sunshine Water Services is in the process of
11 investing approximately \$56 million in its
12 infrastructure to support its provision of safe and
13 reliable service as part of its total investment of
14 over \$104 million since the end of 2021, the end of
15 the proforma period in our last rate case.

16 Without appropriate rate relief, Sunshine
17 Water's ability to continue to provide
18 environmentally safe, reliable and efficient water
19 and wastewater services to its customers and meet
20 its financial obligations would be adversely
21 affected.

22 Thank you.

23 CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Thank you.

24 Office of Public Counsel.

25 MR. PONCE: Good evening. Again, my name is

1 Octavio Ponce, and I am with the Office of Public
2 Counsel. For those of you who don't know who we
3 are, we are an office separate from the Public
4 Service Commission, created by the Legislature to
5 represent you, the customers, in matters such as
6 these.

7 We are here today specifically because
8 Sunshine Water Services Company has filed an
9 application to increase its rates. Sunshine
10 specifically wants an increase of about \$4.5
11 million, or 19.9 percent in revenues for its water
12 utility, and an increase of \$4.5 million, or 15.87
13 percent in base revenues for its wastewater
14 utility.

15 In response, our office has scrutinized
16 Sunshine's application to make sure their requests
17 are appropriate and to find cost savings for you,
18 our customers. This led to our office filing
19 testimony on November 21st contesting several areas
20 of Sunshine's application.

21 Some of these areas where we are fighting for
22 you on are, we are looking for a \$3.2 million
23 decrease for the company's water utility request,
24 and a \$1.5 million decrease for its wastewater
25 utility request. We are contesting Sunshine's

1 proposed \$20 million advanced meter infrastructure,
2 or AMI project, to replace its existing meters. We
3 are contesting their request for legal expenses
4 that we believe have nothing to do with providing
5 its customers with safe and reliable water and
6 wastewater services; payment processing fees to be
7 borne by all customers regardless of how they
8 choose to pay their bills. And we are contesting
9 the fallout from Sunshine's parent companies
10 merging together with each other.

11 These are just O&M some of the areas that we
12 are litigating on your behalf. With that being
13 said, it's Sunshine's burden to prove that what
14 they are requesting is reasonable and prudent, and
15 our office is going to challenge Sunshine on all of
16 those areas where we feel they have not met that
17 burden.

18 Thank you very much.

19 CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Excellent. Thank you.

20 We will now move into hearing from customers
21 in our customer testimony. If -- anything that you
22 say, of course, will become part of the official
23 record. Just kind of -- we have an operating
24 procedure, of course, you see the microphone up
25 here. Just please approach the microphone. My

1 friends here from the Office of Public Counsel will
2 call out your name, will call out two names at a
3 time, so just be ready and be on deck if you are up
4 next.

5 We have got a few folks that are signed up to
6 speak today. So that all of your neighbors have an
7 opportunity to talk, let's try to maybe keep
8 comments to five minutes. I won't abruptly cut you
9 off, of course, let you finish any thoughts and get
10 through your points.

11 I know some folks have marked that they do --
12 that they are sworn in, but some folks have not.
13 If you do plan on speaking today, do you mind
14 standing up and raising your right hand and we can
15 just take a quick oath? We will just do that all
16 at one time.

17 (Whereupon, Chairman La Rosa administered the
18 oath to the witnesses.)

19 CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Excellent. Thank you.

20 So I am going to go ahead -- let's actually
21 start with any elected officials. Are there any
22 elected officials in the room that plan to speak
23 this evening?

24 Ma'am, you can approach the microphone. Just,
25 as a courtesy, we normally allow elected officials

1 to speak first. Just please identify yourself.

2 You are recognized, ma'am. Thank you.

3 MS. MILCH: Thank you, sir.

4 My name is Gabrielle Milch. I am with the
5 Seminole Soil and Water Conservation District, and
6 I was elected in 2022 and continuing on that path.
7 And thank you, Commission, for coming here today,
8 and I appreciate this opportunity to let you know
9 how we in Central Florida have worked with Sunshine
10 Utilities over the years.

11 I am also a environmental scientist, and I
12 work for a nonprofit organization called the St.
13 Johns Riverkeeper, and I am all about water quality
14 and water protections, and an advocate for clean
15 water.

16 Sunshine Utilities is an investor-owned
17 company, as you all know, and it, I believe it's
18 good for the public to know that there is 41
19 systems -- or 40 systems, I have seen different
20 information -- and for wastewater and water supply
21 for 10 counties. So they have gone through a
22 consolidation, which is interesting when you go and
23 try to look through the information from that
24 consolidation.

25 And I believe there are about 124 companies in

1 Florida that you all work with at the PSC within 38
2 counties that are these private partner -- or the
3 publicly owned investor-owned, so they are allowed
4 to get a profit. And I understand that they want
5 to make a profit, and a fair level of profit is due
6 and just with good service. However, the rates for
7 customers like me should also include greater
8 safety and human health considerations.

9 Confidentiality and transparency is one of my
10 service complaints. We just recently, as
11 customers, received a 30 -- an email with saying
12 that utilities has spent \$36 million on repair in
13 the county. It was not specific in which counties
14 it spent that money, and I would like to know which
15 counties the investment in the infrastructure has
16 gone to if possible.

17 I know that there have been protective orders
18 filed and requested by the company due to
19 pollutants found in many of their systems. They
20 are asking for a -- I heard 13 percent, but now I
21 see you said a 19.9 percent increase. And
22 shouldn't we get a plan of action as customers for
23 the repairs of our system and understand better?

24 I looked through the proforma orders, and
25 that's rather confusing for customers to have to go

1 to that extent of looking to see, you know, what
2 are the problems with our system.

3 And during the last hurricane, I rode my
4 bicycle around my neighborhood, and I saw a lot of
5 wastewater discharges and things, and I understand
6 it was a wet water discharge, but we have also
7 dealt with them during the dry and sunny season as
8 well, overflows of lift stations, sewer caps and
9 different things where the water and the wastewater
10 commingle in the same distribution. And I
11 understand that, from the last hearing, that some
12 of the piping in our neighborhood is degraded over
13 time, and was made of asbestos concrete and needs
14 to be lined and replaced.

15 Also, some of the projects in our community,
16 for instance, the distribution pipes for the
17 drinking water, we received letters about lead in
18 our pipes, the possibility that there is some lead
19 in our pipes, and they add some chemical to the
20 pipes that are supposed to reduce it and create
21 some type of a film inside of the pipes to prevent
22 us from having lead if they are in our pipes.

23 Also, we have a leaky system. It's, you know,
24 50 years old. I went to our 50-year anniversary in
25 November, and I went around with a petition asking

1 for more information. I didn't get that many
2 signatures, but I got 49 signatures, including
3 myself, on people with different comments about
4 their concerns about the service and some of the
5 issues that they all have.

6 Also, the sanitary sewer overflows, I see that
7 they had several consent orders from the Florida
8 Department of Environmental Protection. And they
9 were ordered by the FDEP, which I am not sure how
10 that has to do with the rates, except for they are
11 supposed to come up with emergency response plans
12 and a notification system for the -- for our
13 customers.

14 I have never received a boil water order
15 notice or anything, but I am working with the
16 communications person here with Sunshine to try and
17 learn more about that.

18 They also have a lot of broken pipes in the
19 stormwater easements, and have discharged these
20 lift stations of water -- of wastewater that just
21 goes into our stormwater management system. And I
22 see dogs, and kids, and things, ducks playing in
23 those areas, and it concerns me about the human
24 health standards, mosquito borne diseases are a
25 concern.

1 How to make a complaint about our system is
2 not an easy process. We have the ability to
3 contact the utility, of course, and, you know, they
4 will take your complaint. And not many people
5 understand the Public Service Commission, how they
6 -- you all do the rate changes. So I was told
7 that, you know, you can complain to the -- to the
8 Public Service Commission on things, but I don't
9 think that's widely known by the customers of how
10 to make these complaints.

11 In a nutshell, water quality is one of my big
12 issues for drinking water and for also the
13 discharges. We have a reuse system that's very
14 old. Our system was built early on, and they have
15 added many things to it and have not necessarily,
16 from my understanding over the last 20 years that I
17 have been monitoring the system, have not done
18 sufficient repairs. They have done some repairs,
19 and I am very grateful for everything that you have
20 done. And I wanted to thank them for all the money
21 that they have spent. And I want -- you know, I
22 just want them to make a profit, but I would like
23 them to fix the systems.

24 Now, this is not just my utility. It's also
25 the other 40 systems out there. I have heard there

1 was PFAS issues in the past in some water supply.
2 Things had to be changed, some people.

3 And I would really like the process to be a
4 bit clearer and more transparent. That's one of
5 the goals of Sunshine, is to be transparent. And
6 it's not really that easy. I have contacted them,
7 and they have been very kind to me when I have
8 asked questions.

9 And also, you know, how do I get copies of
10 their sanitary sewer overflows? Their emergency
11 response plans? Things like that are all -- you
12 know, you got to work through the DEP. And I am
13 not even sure how the DEP reports are connected to
14 the Public Service Commission, and whether that's a
15 criteria for consideration of the rate increase.

16 And if you -- you know, if you have the
17 opportunity to invest in a system and get money out
18 of the system, then I would like to see a better
19 job and an accounting where the public, the
20 customers actually know what is being fixed and
21 what some of the problems are for property issues.

22 So I am grateful for you all being here
23 tonight. I am a bit nervous, so calm down. It's
24 almost over. And I wanted to thank you all so
25 much, and everybody who came out here tonight. And

1 thank you. And I really would like to see human
2 health considerations about the water quality be a
3 consideration as well, and have them fix our
4 systems.

5 Thank you.

6 CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Ms. Milch, there may be a
7 quick question if that's okay.

8 Office of Public Counsel?

9 MR. PONCE: Hi, Ms. Milch, first I wanted to
10 thank you for taking the time out of your schedule
11 to come here today. We really appreciate it.

12 You mentioned that you had a petition that you
13 brought along with you. If you would like, totally
14 at your discretion, I don't mean to put you on the
15 spot, but along with your sworn testimony, we can
16 add that as an exhibit to this hearing if that's
17 something that you would be interested in. Maybe
18 you could talk to the PSC staff over there, they
19 can help you with that.

20 MS. MILCH: I would be happy to.

21 MR. PONCE: Okay. Thank you. Thank you
22 again.

23 CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Any further questions?

24 MR. FRIEDMAN: I have --

25 CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Yes. Sorry.

1 MS. MILCH: How are you?

2 MR. FRIEDMAN: I'm short. You gave me a
3 seat --

4 MS. MILCH: You can stand up.

5 CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Gotcha.

6 MR. FRIEDMAN: Yeah, I have a couple of
7 questions.

8 Other than your call to Brian Garber last --
9 recently, I don't see that you have ever contacted
10 the utility with any of these complaints that you
11 mentioned.

12 MS. MILCH: I have. In the past, I have from
13 the last rate case, and I can get documentation for
14 that. I have spoken to the previous
15 Vice-President. I actually took his name or
16 whatever off the consent order from the Florida
17 Department of Environmental Protection and called
18 up, because I understand complaints are important
19 to be registered.

20 MR. FRIEDMAN: So most -- other than your one
21 call we talked about last week, most of this stuff
22 you said you complained about or mentioned were
23 complaints that occurred before 2018 in connection
24 with the other rate case?

25 MS. MILCH: No. I reviewed the rate case this

1 time as well, sir.

2 MR. FRIEDMAN: But you haven't -- but you
3 didn't file the types of complaints that you just
4 talked about, you didn't make any of those
5 complaints to the utility since 2018?

6 MS. MILCH: I have spoken with the staff from
7 the PSC staff, and it's very difficult to contact
8 these folks. Have you gotten messages? You were
9 supposed to have someone call me back and they
10 didn't.

11 MR. FRIEDMAN: All right. There is a toll
12 free number that you can call and make complaints,
13 a toll free number, and it's on their website.
14 They make it very easy for customers to complain,
15 but I am talking about complaints directly to the
16 utility. And I understand that somebody has
17 reached out to you about in response -- you said
18 nobody called back. I think somebody did call back
19 and tried to leave a message as I understand it,
20 you don't have answering on your voice -- on your
21 -- you don't have voice mail on your phone for some
22 reason, so --

23 MS. MILCH: So I am complaining now, sir.

24 MR. FRIEDMAN: Okay. And I appreciate that.

25 Thank you.

1 CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Thank you.

2 And what we will do for exhibits, we will just
3 do them at the end of the evening in case there
4 anything else that needs to be input.

5 So thank you, Ms. Milch, for your testimony.

6 So now let's open it up to other customers. I
7 will throw it over to Mr. Ponce, and you can go
8 ahead and call the next two names.

9 MR. PONCE: So the next two customers who
10 signed up to speak are Stewart Dropkin and Nabil
11 Gerges. I apologize if I mispronounce your name.

12 CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Mr. Dropkin, you are
13 recognized when you are ready.

14 MR. DROPKIN: Thank you. Thank you very much,
15 Commissioners.

16 I looked at all this paperwork that I got when
17 I arrived here, and tried to figure out what the
18 increases would be for my residential bill, and it
19 was a little confusing. On the water bill, you are
20 using a 4,000-gallon proposal, and on the
21 wastewater, you are using a 6,000-gallon proposal.

22 The wastewater seems to be going up between 15
23 and 16 percent for my charges, and the water
24 service is going up 22 percent. I haven't the
25 slightest idea if these percentage increases are

1 customary, are user friendly or what is normally
2 occurring. I understand the company hasn't had a
3 rate increase in four years.

4 I live in a community that has a homeowners'
5 association. We have to keep our lawns green, or
6 else we get in trouble. We stopped our sprinkler
7 system for much too long last year, and we didn't
8 have to replace the lawn, but the water bills
9 really didn't decrease that much at all for
10 stopping the water, the system, the sprinkler
11 system.

12 My wife and I go away for three months in the
13 summer and I am on automatic payment, which works
14 out great. My bills didn't decrease very much at
15 all in those three months that I had nobody in the
16 house, no water being used except the sprinkler
17 system.

18 This company in San -- has inherited the
19 Sanlando Utilities' infrastructure, the water
20 system in Sweetwater Oaks, and apparently there is
21 an awful lot of maintenance and upgrades that have
22 had to be done, and still need to be done.

23 I haven't the slightest idea how much money
24 has been invested locally. This email that we
25 received yesterday said it was \$36 million in local

1 infrastructure. But as the previous speaker said,
2 the local community was not ever identified, so it
3 could be all of the communities and not this one.

4 I have had -- encountered complaints from
5 neighbors that have said that lift stations have
6 just spued sewage out into the -- into the lots
7 that surround the lift stations. There has been an
8 awful lot of complaints. They need to really
9 increase and upgrade the quality of the equipment
10 in the Sweetwater Oaks neighborhood of Seminole
11 County.

12 And I am also concerned about the email that I
13 got, or the mail that I received today, which is a
14 notice to the public informing us of the PFAS
15 values in our water systems. Apparently there is a
16 whole bunch. They are all under the values that
17 have been documented needing remediation.

18 I don't know who makes those values up, and I
19 don't know why they aren't more stringent, but at
20 this time, Sunshine Water doesn't need to do
21 anything to our water supply. We get to keep all
22 these PFAS values in our water that we drink.

23 Now, Lake Mary oxygenated their water system
24 to get rid of this because of the PFAS problem that
25 they are having from the old Stromberg-Carlson

1 plant. I would like to get these PFASs out of my
2 water supply, but it's going to take a very
3 expensive new plant work that, if these increases
4 are given to them, I would hope that they would be
5 targeted to do this type of remediation to protect
6 us so that we don't get cancer as we get older.

7 I am finished making my presentation. Would
8 you all like any of this documentation that I
9 brought with me?

10 CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: I will direct that to the
11 Office of Public Counsel.

12 MR. PONCE: Yeah. If there anything that you
13 would like to attach as an exhibit to your
14 testimony, please I would encourage it.

15 MR. DROPKIN: This is the email.

16 MR. FAROOQI: You can bring it to me over
17 here.

18 MR. DROPKIN: Okay. Thank you.

19 CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Commissioners, any
20 questions for Mr. Dropkin as he sends the paperwork
21 over? Okay, to Marty -- Mr. Dropkin, when you get
22 a chance to come back, we got just a quick question
23 for you.

24 MR. DROPKIN: Of course.

25 MR. FRIEDMAN: Yes, Mr. Dropkin, I am Marty

1 Friedman. I am the attorney for Sunshine Water
2 Services. Just a couple questions.

3 One, you mentioned that your neighbors have
4 said that there was water sewage spewing out of the
5 lift stations?

6 MR. DROPKIN: It's not constant. It's
7 episodic, but it does happen. Yes, sir.

8 MR. FRIEDMAN: But your neighbors said that?
9 You haven't seen it yourself?

10 MR. DROPKIN: It's a large neighborhood, so we
11 have social gatherings. These individual neighbors
12 are not next door or down the block. They are on
13 another street completely.

14 MR. FRIEDMAN: Okay. So it's not something
15 you personally observed?

16 MR. DROPKIN: No, sir.

17 MR. FRIEDMAN: And I didn't see that you had
18 made any complaints to Sunshine about anything.

19 MR. DROPKIN: I haven't made any complaints at
20 all.

21 MR. FRIEDMAN: Okay. Thank you, sir.

22 MR. DROPKIN: You're welcome.

23 CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Mr. Dropkin, thank you for
24 your testimony.

25 MR. DROPKIN: You bet.

1 CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Mr. Gerges.

2 MR. GERGES: Yes.

3 CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Sir, you are recognized?

4 MR. GERGES: My name is Nibil Gerges. I have
5 been a very long resident of Longwood, Florida. I
6 witnessed since Sanlando take over my bill went 110
7 percent for the same quality of water. No change.
8 I do have one inch coming to my house. The raise
9 is 22-percent-and-a-half, 22.55 percent, and that's
10 insane. Who gets 22-and-a-half percent in this
11 kind of economy that we are in?

12 Not just that, most of the community that we
13 live in, they are fixed in income, Social Security,
14 and the Social Security increases are taken by
15 Medicare, which reflects negative increase in our
16 Social Security.

17 If we can manage our financial to live and
18 survive under these situations, how come we get
19 22-and-a-half percent increase? How can we afford
20 living under this?

21 The new meter that they have installed, it
22 should save the company money, not increase. It
23 should save labor, save lots of things for the
24 company. Why they pass these expenses to us?

25 One last thing I would like to know, to ask

1 that the company notify us if there is any unusual
2 water, like someone get busted pipe. The company
3 should notify that customer, hey, you got a
4 problem. Not wait until the next billing that it
5 will be \$1,000. Something need to be -- need to be
6 telling us. And thank you.

7 CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Thank you, sir, for your
8 testimony.

9 Are there any questions, Commissioners?
10 Office of Public Counsel?

11 Commissioner Clark has a question.

12 COMMISSIONER CLARK: Just a quick question.
13 You mentioned that you have a one-inch meter to
14 your house. Are you still being billed on the
15 residential rate? I understand the residential
16 rate is a flat based rate.

17 MR. GERGES: Yes.

18 COMMISSIONER CLARK: You are still billed
19 under the residential rate?

20 MR. GERGES: Yes.

21 COMMISSIONER CLARK: Okay. Thanks.

22 CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: One more question, Mr.
23 Gerges. Mr. Friedman has a question.

24 MR. GERGES: Sure.

25 MR. FRIEDMAN: Thank you, sir.

1 You mentioned that you would like a mechanism
2 for you to be able between billing cycles to be
3 able to know if you have a surge in your water --
4 amount of water you use, is that what you said?

5 MR. GERGES: No. What I am saying if, since
6 it's all electronically, and you can see it on a
7 daily basis, if something unusual, you know, like
8 we do have increase water level of the pool or
9 something, that's okay. But if you have a busted
10 pipe and the waters keep seeping, tell us you got a
11 problem.

12 MR. FRIEDMAN: So if the AMI meter is tied to
13 have the ability to set -- for you to set an alarm
14 to do just what you said, that would be beneficial
15 to you, would it not?

16 MR. GERGES: That would be beneficial, but
17 most of the people, website is not beneficial. A
18 phone call would be nice.

19 MR. FRIEDMAN: Both, okay.

20 THE WITNESS: Both.

21 MR. FRIEDMAN: Thank you.

22 CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Thank you, sir, for your
23 testimony.

24 Mr. Ponce, I will throw it back to you for the
25 next two names.

1 MR. PONCE: All right. The next two names are
2 Ray Sedaghat and Judy Pizzo.

3 MR. SEDAGHAT: My name is Ray Sedaghat. I
4 live in Longwood Mandarin subdivision. I am his
5 neighbor. And I was talking to the agent from
6 Sunshine Water trying to resolve this issue. It's
7 been going on for three months.

8 I took a trip three months ago with my family
9 and went to Dubai for six weeks and came back, and
10 normally my water is \$40, and I got a bill for
11 \$410. And I called the office, and they said that
12 they going to send somebody here to see if we got
13 any leak in the house, or what's going on with your
14 property.

15 They send a crew, and they check inside and
16 outside. Before we left the country, we shut the
17 water off, and we had one person come and check our
18 house. And then they came and they checked
19 everywhere inside and outside. And they said there
20 is no leak, and that our technician is going to
21 check your meter and see if you need to replace
22 your meter.

23 And the technician came and said, I need to
24 run a test. And then when he run the test, he
25 said, yeah, I am sorry, your meter failed, and here

1 is a copy. You can take a picture of the test I
2 did, and we going to give you a credit for \$400,
3 and -- so I am going to come back and check the
4 PVC.

5 So he came back and the PVC was broken
6 somewhere. He tried to fix it. He said, I have
7 only been with the company for one year. And he
8 tried to put the fittings on PVC. And then he had
9 some kind of problem with the fittings, and he
10 called the office, some -- another gentleman came
11 and helped him and put the PVC together.

12 And then the manager, the field manager showed
13 up, and he said it, looks like everything is okay
14 on echo, and you don't have any water leaking
15 inside in here, and we are going to take care of
16 this. And then nothing happened.

17 And a couple weeks later I got a bill, and we
18 on auto pay, for \$619. And then I tried to call
19 the office and ask for a manager, and said -- the
20 agent said, he said, don't worry about it. We are
21 going to take care of it next week. Nothing
22 happened. And then we got a warning that our water
23 is going to be shut off this week, and we got
24 family coming from overseas, and so that's where I
25 am.

1 I was talking to the gentleman here before I
2 walked in, and he tried to resolve the issue. The
3 only choice I had, I call into the Commission in
4 Tallahassee, file a complaint, and the employee is
5 working on it and that's how they noticed Sunshine.

6 That's where I am at this point, and that's
7 what I need to do.

8 CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Sir, I have got a quick
9 question. So you have got an open complaint
10 currently with the PSC in Tallahassee?

11 MR. SEDAGHAT: Yes. Uh-huh.

12 CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Okay. And the \$600 bill is
13 that currently as of this month, or it's recent, I
14 presume?

15 MR. SEDAGHAT: No idea. No bill is -- I have
16 to pay tonight or they going to cut the water
17 tomorrow or next day.

18 CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Okay.

19 MR. SEDAGHAT: They sai \$130 what's due now.

20 CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Okay. Commissioners, any
21 other questions?

22 Commissioner Fay, you are recognized.

23 COMMISSIONER FAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

24 And I am aware of the complexities that it
25 sounds like a complaint is pending with our

1 commission, so I want to be mindful of my comments.
2 With that said, it doesn't seem like there is a
3 reason here tonight that the utility staff that
4 have come here to address customers just like this
5 couldn't find some resolution before we leave here
6 tonight. So hopefully they will have a
7 conversation and see where that goes, and then
8 maybe they will be able to update us before we
9 leave.

10 MR. TWOMEY: Yes, sir.

11 CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: So I am getting a nod from
12 the company.

13 Have you already spoken to someone from
14 customer service of Sunshine Water this evening?

15 MR. SEDAGHAT: Yes. I talked to the gentleman
16 right before I came in outside. He is trying to
17 resolve this issue, and he recommended that I pay
18 my current bill right now before I get
19 disconnected.

20 CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Okay.

21 MR. TWOMEY: Commissioner --

22 CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Sure.

23 MR. TWOMEY: We will make sure that it is not
24 shut off tomorrow and make sure that we work
25 through the process and discover exactly what

1 happened, and then we will reach out to you, but we
2 will make sure there is no interruption of service.

3 CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Okay. Yeah, I think some
4 reassurance is what you are looking for at least in
5 the short-term to figure out to the overall
6 problem.

7 MR. SEDAGHAT: Thanks so much. I appreciate
8 it.

9 CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Sir, we have one more
10 question here from the Office of Public Counsel.

11 MR. PONCE: I'm sorry. Just to clarify. How
12 much did the company ask for so that they would not
13 shut off the water supply?

14 MR. SEDAGHAT: \$131 is my current bill --

15 MR. PONCE: Okay.

16 MR. SEDAGHAT: -- I have to pay tonight.

17 MR. PONCE: Thank you.

18 MR. SEDAGHAT: Thank you.

19 CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Thank you, sir, for your
20 testimony.

21 Let's see, is it Ms. Pizzo?

22 MS. PIZZO: Yes, sir.

23 CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Ma'am, you are recognized.

24 MS. PIZZO: Good evening, Commissioners.

25 Thank you for being here, and counsel, thank you as

1 well for being here for us. Utility, good luck.

2 I am a resident, a longtime resident of
3 Florida. I live in West Seminole County in a
4 40-year-old community, Wekiva Cove. We have our
5 roads collapsing. We have reached out, I
6 understand my HOA board has recently reached out to
7 the utility company to say, hey, when are you going
8 to fix the water and sewer lines because we cannot
9 repair, resurface our roads until those sewer lines
10 are fixed. Then we get this request for an
11 increase, 19 plus percent. I wish I had that kind
12 of increase in my monies coming in.

13 A lot of us are on limited income, as many of
14 my previous speakers here have spoken -- have
15 stated. It's very frustrating when you are on a
16 limited budget, even \$4 or \$5 could make a big
17 difference with some people. It makes a big
18 difference for several.

19 I have tried -- since I don't water, irrigate
20 very much in my yard, I wanted to do a separate
21 meter so I could actually see where just my husband
22 and I have over 130-, 140-dollar water bill,
23 utility bill every month, I was, like, where is
24 this going? Because we only water once a week for
25 maybe 15, 20 minutes. I wanted a separate meter

1 which many people have. Hey, this is cool. Let's
2 do this.

3 So instead of paying for sewer for something
4 that isn't sewer, I reached out to the utility
5 company and said, hey, can I have this added on to
6 my house? No. Don't do that anymore.

7 So it would make perfect sense if you could
8 have a separate meter, one for the water that you
9 are actually using, drinking, bathing, whatever,
10 and one for the irrigation, but they don't do that
11 anymore. So you are locked in on this unfair
12 billing system, as far as I am concerned it's
13 unfair.

14 I also wanted to add -- actually, no, I think
15 that covered everything I wanted to say, except,
16 again, thank you for giving me this time to speak.
17 I appreciate it.

18 CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Sure. Thank you.

19 Ms. Pizzo, we may have questions.

20 Commissioners, questions?

21 Office of Public Counsel, good?

22 Thank you very much for your testimony.

23 MS. PIZZO: Thank you.

24 CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Mr. Ponce, I think we have
25 -- I have one left.

1 MR. PONCE: The last name that I have on the
2 sign-up list is Maria Delose.

3 And before Ms. Delose speaks, if there is
4 anybody this who has not signed up, I am sure the
5 Commission will give you an opportunity to speak
6 afterwards.

7 CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Absolutely.

8 Ms. Delose, you are recognized.

9 MS. DELOSE: Yes. Good evening. My name is
10 Maria Delose, as he mentioned. I have been a
11 resident and active member of the Wekiva community,
12 which is now 50 years old, in Longwood. Gabby gave
13 a nice overview of some of the issues that we have
14 in our system in our community, not just our
15 community, but in Longwood in particular, Seminole
16 County.

17 I also want to mention, I spoke via Zoom in
18 2021, it was after, of course, the pandemic, and we
19 were talking regarding the poor water quality. We
20 have a carbon filter at our house, yet we get odor
21 in our showers, we have to put vinegar -- my
22 husband puts vinegar and baking soda. Let's it
23 sit. Hot water. And then two weeks later, same
24 deal, mostly around two weeks or so.

25 We also, in 2017, remodeled two of our

1 bathrooms, which now have stains in the commodes
2 and they -- believe me, you can ask my husband,
3 they are cleaned religiously, so it doesn't come
4 off as, you know, they tell you put vinegar in
5 there. I try to treat it. Some of the granite is
6 stained.

7 So as was mentioned, we do have things in our
8 water that we would like to know what is happening
9 for the amount of money that we are being charged
10 for this water.

11 When I walk or beautiful community, our sewers
12 have odor as well, especially around East Trail,
13 once in a while, not all the time, but once in a
14 while. Our beautiful York Park after Hurricane
15 Milton had discharge, sewage discharge. Gabby rode
16 her bike and made us all aware. She was the one
17 that made us aware. We did not hear from Sunshine
18 Utilities.

19 In fact, some people in Hunt Club lost water
20 pressure -- lost water altogether for some time,
21 and they were alarmed because they tried calling
22 and they couldn't get through. What they would get
23 is a hangup. So I called myself after I heard
24 this, because we lost water pressure. I contacted
25 Gabby, and I said, are we supposed to boil water?

1 Have we heard? I called Sanlando -- excuse me, I
2 have been here 38 years, so I am going back in
3 time. But I called Sunshine Utilities. Same
4 thing, I couldn't get through.

5 So I just want to mention, I am glad that we
6 do have water, and I am glad they are addressing
7 certain things, but I do think our water quality
8 needs to be upgraded, as well as our system,
9 different issues that were mentioned previously.

10 And the rate increase, I think, is too
11 substantial. As Gabby mentioned, yes, you deserve
12 a profit, it's a for-profit company, but that's a
13 huge increase. Most of us -- or many of us are
14 retired in the community. And so that's basically
15 what I wanted to say.

16 CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Excellent. Thank you for
17 your testimony.

18 Commissioners, are there any questions?

19 Seeing none, Office of Public Counsel -- Mr.
20 Friedman.

21 MR. FRIEDMAN: Yes. What neighborhood do you
22 live in?

23 MS. DELOSE: Wekiva. Wekiva Hunt Club
24 community, yes.

25 MR. FRIEDMAN: Wekiva Hunt Club?

1 MS. DELOSE: Yes.

2 MR. FRIEDMAN: And when was it that you said
3 you contacted -- you tried to contact the utility
4 and couldn't get an answer?

5 MS. DELOSE: This was after Hurricane Milton.
6 It was on the weekend, that Sunday after the
7 hurricane.

8 MR. FRIEDMAN: Okay.

9 MS. DELOSE: And others, as I mentioned, had
10 lost complete water. They didn't have any water in
11 Hunt Club, certain streets.

12 MR. FRIEDMAN: But you had water?

13 MS. DELOSE: We had water, but very low
14 pressure.

15 MR. FRIEDMAN: And this was after the
16 hurricane?

17 MS. DELOSE: Yes. On the weekend after the
18 hurricane. The hurricane was, what, on Thursday?

19 MR. FRIEDMAN: Have you complained to the
20 company about the odor in your shower?

21 MS. DELOSE: I did. I was on zoom in 2021.

22 MR. FRIEDMAN: Okay. So that was back in
23 2021?

24 MS. DELOSE: Yeah. Uh-huh.

25 MR. FRIEDMAN: Thank you.

1 CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Mr. Ponce.

2 MR. PONCE: So when you most recently called
3 to complain after Hurricane Milton, you weren't
4 able to get through to a company representative?

5 MS. DELOSE: No.

6 MR. PONCE: Did anyone from the company ever
7 call you back after that?

8 MS. DELOSE: No, because I couldn't get
9 through. What we got was a hangup. We would wait,
10 and then it would just disconnect.

11 MR. PONCE: Okay. Thank you.

12 MR. FRIEDMAN: Did you call on a weekday or a
13 weekend?

14 MS. DELOSE: It was on a Sunday. Yeah.

15 MR. FRIEDMAN: Thank you.

16 CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Thank you for your
17 testimony.

18 Okay. Is there anyone else here in the public
19 that would like to address the Commission?

20 Yes, sir. You can -- you can take the mic.
21 If you don't mind just taking a quick oath of
22 office. Raise your right hand.

23 (Whereupon, Chairman La Rosa administered the
24 oath to the witness.)

25 THE WITNESS: Yes.

1 CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Excellent. Thank you.

2 You are recognized, sir.

3 MR. HALE: And honestly, I just moved to the
4 Sweetwater Oaks area -- my name is Lee -- about
5 three months ago, and I moved there because of the
6 environmental area that it's surrounded by. And
7 one of the things -- I work in the wastewater
8 industry, and I have been trying to learn about my
9 local utility that services me.

10 With all these upgrades, and I have heard some
11 of these numbers, \$104 million since 2021, I was
12 wondering, I can't find anything on the effluent
13 quality from the wastewater transparent plant. And
14 I am just curious if they will be more transparent
15 if there is somewhere that someone can point me so
16 that I can see, are they working towards AWT, like
17 the BMAP ones, or are they just making permit
18 minimums, or just -- I am just curious as to what's
19 going on there, so I wanted to -- I haven't been
20 able to find that information, and I look at that
21 stuff day-in, day-out so I am a little, I don't
22 know if concerned, just curious, so I don't want to
23 raise any alarm. I just can't find the
24 information.

25 CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Sure. We got the company

1 here, I think they will probably address you on
2 that.

3 MR. TWOMEY: Yeah, we have got -- just for the
4 record, we have got permits that we meet that are
5 set by FDEP and would be happy to share those with
6 you as the --

7 MR. HALE: So you just meet the permit
8 compliance, not AWT?

9 MR. TWOMEY: Permit compliance.

10 MR. HALE: Okay. Thank you.

11 CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: And, Lee, do you mind if we
12 can get your full information --

13 MR. HALE: Yeah.

14 CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: -- you can see this lady in
15 the background with the clipboard to get your
16 information.

17 MR. HALE: Okay. Thank you.

18 CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Awesome, thank you.

19 Anybody else from the public would like to
20 address the Commission?

21 Seeing none, just kind of some housekeeping
22 stuff. Of course, we will have a more technical
23 hearing later on. This is, of course, a service
24 hearing, and I reiterated a little of that. Of
25 course, as we go back to Tallahassee come next

1 year, we will start going through some of the
2 technicalities that I know many of the customers
3 brought up this evening.

4 Do we have any exhibits to handle? Exhibits?

5 MR. PONCE: I believe a couple of exhibits
6 have been handed to your staff.

7 MR. SANDY: We have exhibits, Mr. Chair. The
8 first exhibit is a petition that I believe our
9 Clerk has. I would ask Mr. Friedman if he has any
10 objections one way or the other to the admission of
11 that exhibit?

12 CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Do the parties have
13 objections?

14 MR. FRIEDMAN: No.

15 MR. SANDY: No objection -- I see no objection
16 from Mr. Friedman, so, therefore, I would label
17 that as Exhibit 1 --

18 CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Okay.

19 MR. SANDY: -- for you to admit into the
20 record.

21 CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: All right. Show that as
22 marked.

23 (Whereupon, Exhibit No. 1 was marked for
24 identification and received into evidence.)

25 MR. SANDY: And then the second exhibit is a

1 composite exhibit regarding be a email from
2 December 16th of 2024 regarding Sunshine's
3 investment in infrastructure, along with a notice
4 of unregulated contaminant monitoring rule results
5 for Sanlando.

6 Any objection, Mr. Friedman?

7 MR. FRIEDMAN: What -- can you tell me what
8 witness that was just so I can tie it back to the
9 witness?

10 MR. SANDY: It was the second witness of the
11 record.

12 MR. FRIEDMAN: Okay. I have no objection.

13 MR. SANDY: Okay.

14 CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Showing no objection, then
15 we will call that --

16 MR. SANDY: Composite Exhibit No. 2.

17 CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: All right. Show that as
18 marked.

19 (Whereupon, Exhibit No. 2 was marked for
20 identification and received into evidence.)

21 MR. SANDY: And with that, I do not have any
22 other exhibits that need our attention, Mr. Chair.

23 CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: All right. I think we are
24 good. I think we are in the right posture.

25 Commissioners, are there any further questions

1 or concluding remarks? Seeing none.

2 Again, I want to -- Commissioner Fay, you are
3 recognized.

4 COMMISSIONER FAY: Yeah, Mr. Chairman, just
5 real quick. We had some comments about the
6 environmental components, and I know our staff can
7 answer any questions, but as part of that technical
8 rate process, we do look at both health and DEP
9 compliance in that ratemaking. So I just want to
10 make that clear, that is part of the ratemaking
11 process.

12 Thank you.

13 CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Excellent. Thank you.

14 And everyone that is here with us live in
15 person, we have got a case overview, our contact
16 information at the PSC, some specifics as far as
17 individuals from the Commission that are involved
18 in the case. Their direct contact information is
19 in here, so please feel free to reach out to them
20 if you have got any more technical questions or
21 thoughts on that. And, of course, information on
22 how to submit any further comments into the record
23 is also in here.

24 I just want to say thank you to Altamonte
25 Springs for hosting us. It's important for us to

1 coming out to the community, especially in a
2 territory such as this and be able to get in front
3 of the customers as most convenient, and being here
4 in Altamonte City in their chambers seems to be
5 certainly a win with a good turnout.

6 So, again, thank you to Altamonte Springs for
7 making way for us. It's certainly convenient. And
8 if there is no further business before us, see that
9 this meeting is adjourned.

10 Thank you all.

11 (Proceedings concluded.)

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CERTIFICATE OF REPORTER

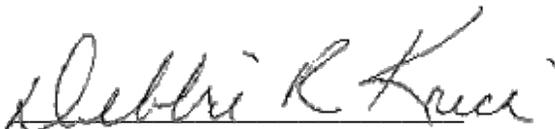
STATE OF FLORIDA)
COUNTY OF LEON)

I, DEBRA KRICK, Court Reporter, do hereby
certify that the foregoing proceeding was heard at the
time and place herein stated.

IT IS FURTHER CERTIFIED that I
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same has been transcribed under my direct supervision;
and that this transcript constitutes a true
transcription of my notes of said proceedings.

I FURTHER CERTIFY that I am not a relative,
employee, attorney or counsel of any of the parties, nor
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attorney or counsel connected with the action, nor am I
financially interested in the action.

DATED this 6th day of January, 2025.



DEBRA R. KRICK
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