

February 2, 2021
Public Utilities Commission
21 Fruit Street, Suite 10
Concord, NH 03301

Dear Members of the PUC,

My name is Paul Wheeler. I am a resident in Hampstead and I am sending you this letter regarding the rate increases request by the Hampstead Area Water Company (HAWC) in DW 20-0117. I am concerned about the public impact of this rate increase and I ask that the PUC will ensure a full examination of the evidence to support their petition so that customers and taxpayers are fairly treated.

The normal rates of water are being increased from \$6.11 per 100 cubic feet to \$7.22 per 100 cubic feet. This rate change is going to affect all taxpayers and the rates of nonresidential buildings will be \$9.31 per 100 cubic feet. These pricing are decently responsible and slight increases in costs every now and then are vital to a company's survival. However, the rate changes to fire hydrants are beyond reasonable and frankly astronomical. The rates of fire hydrants will be changing from \$200 per hydrant to \$1,419 per hydrant which is over a 700% increase over the course of only a year. This rate increase should not be considered as a viable increase to costs. The rate increase would change our total yearly cost for all 47 hydrants in town from \$9,400 to \$66,693 this is quite the exponential increase especially considering how little the other increases are.

Furthermore, there has been much publicity about HAWC and the ability of HAWC and Lewis Builders operating under the same corporation to build developments, of which private citizens were unable to build due to water shortage issues. Lewis Builders has been able to use their monopoly on water resources to build and then supply water with their subsidiary HAWC. The rate changes for homeowners are difficult but may be at market rate. Even if the consumer wishes to pay a high rate for the supplied water, the past 4 years there have been water restrictions during much of the summer and fall due to drought. Some homes have had their wells run dry. I, being part of the HAWC pipeline, have been restricted from watering lawns or filling swimming pools.

I've limited my water consumption with knowledge of the entire aquaphor being affected. However, neighbors, businesses in Hampstead, Plaistow, and Atkinson have been observed running their irrigation systems in the middle of the day, during rain storms, and otherwise what seems to be a mismanagement of the precious resource, water. Judge Daniel St. Hilaire ordered, just last week, HAWC to lower its pumping rate of a commercial well near the affected area to 35 gallons per minute. Our community needs relief from the oversight committees to apply some pressure on HAWC to stand up to their monopoly on area water resources.

Sincerely,

Paul Wheeler
65 Ellyson Avenue
Hampstead, NH 03826