

From: CathyS <CathyS@riley-scerbo.com>
Sent: Wednesday, February 23, 2022 10:49 PM
To: PUC: Clerks Office <ClerksOffice@PUC.NH.gov>
Subject: Docket #DW21-093

EXTERNAL: Do not open attachments or click on links unless you recognize and trust the sender.

To: Public Utilities Commission Members
Re: Docket # DW21-093

In September 2000, my young family of 5 moved to Stratham following the completion of the build of our home on Winterberry Lane. My house was one of the first to be completed, and my husband Daniel Scerbo was the first President of our HOA until he passed away in August of 2014. Steve Roy graciously assumed the position after that time.

Our home was the first completed, and so uniquely I have been here during the build of every home and arrival (and departure) of every family. I can attest that during that time there has never been a fire in any of the homes that required the fire department to arrive and use the cistern, the fire pond or North Hampton's fire hydrant. Simply put, there has been no house fire that required any assistance from any fire department since all the homes in the neighborhood were built.

As an original homeowner, and wife of the WWHA President, I can also share that it was well into our time here, probably 10+ years, that the water issues began. During those years, my family helped stuff and mail notices to our neighbors regarding water conservation needs, mandated water reporting, arsenic testing results, etc. We sent out notices of restrictions, based on the town or state guidance, that included odd/even outdoor watering or complete restrictions of any watering. Further, pools and sprinkler systems were never allowed to use water from our community well. Neighbors either drilled their own outdoor usage wells and/or had pool water delivered.

I don't recall when our HOA began working with the state for assistance, but I'm sure you have that information. I do believe it was well after we had failing equipment, many water shortages and several times when we paid to have water delivered to refill our wells. There was testing done on the viability of wells and we followed every trail we could to bring the quality and quantity necessary for the homes in our neighborhood.

To our disappointment, we got very little help from our town but did our best, without being water experts, to figure this all out. It has, however, cost us all quite a bit of time and money over the years. The towns of North Hampton and Hampton (and Rye early on) have surely added to the cost for us all, continuing to fight to reverse the hard work we have done. I cannot say what threat they see in us, but they have undeniably been committed to fighting this decision which, unfortunately, has cost us a good deal of money.

For most of my time in my home, our water bill was \$350-500/year. The last 5 years alone, my water bills have totaled \$6,500 ~ the bills ranging from \$1,000 (2017) to \$1,600 (2019, highest year), with 2021 at \$1,200. Anecdotally, I have heard from former neighbors that they lost value on the sale of their homes, due to the threat of the unresolved water situation and potential cost ahead of any new household owner in our neighborhood. That, of course, is not quantifiable, but was certainly a financial impact for some.

Since I now live alone, as a widow with three grown children, I have perhaps the least equitable situation of anyone. I expect that paying \$1,200 a year for water is perhaps 6x or more what I should expect to pay. \$6500 over 5 years is \$4000 more than today's average household. There is no doubt that putting in a meter and moving this forward will save me considerably in the coming years.

Regarding fire safety, I simply do not understand the logic. Since towns already help each other, and it is likely that in the event of a fire, someone outside of our town could already make the decision to tap into the North Hampton fire hydrant due to its proximity to our homes, it seems a mute argument that we should pay extra for the right to have that possibility. It would be paying for what we have already had (and not used, thank goodness) for the past 22 years.

So, I am writing to request that you enable us to move forward with the next phase of this process, installing our own water meters and ultimately finishing this journey. I am extraordinarily grateful for the work the state's departments' staffs and lawyers, the water company representatives, our neighborhood lawyer, and our HOA representatives have

put in to continue to represent our rights. But it would be a relief if we could bring this to a final resolution and permanently move on from this situation.

Please support our request to move forward, and for equitable treatment, as any other customer would enjoy.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Cathleen Scerbo
35 Winterberry Lane
Stratham, NH 03885