

1/21/21

Dear Public Utility Commissioner,

I have lived in my home on Tioga Drive in Belmont with my mother for 35 years, and am directly affected by DW 20-112. As such I respectfully submit this statement and request to be a party to the matter.

Recently my mother moved from the house to a memory care nursing home, the cost of which has caused substantial hardship to me. Eventually I may lose the house to keep up with her rent. The extraordinary rate increase being sought by Abenaki is only adding to this burden.

One would think that already paying the second-highest rate in the state for water would mean that I get to bathe in Evian. The reality is that the water provided to Tioga Drive is barely fit to drink, with occasional e-coli outbreaks and visible sediment a few times a year. This has been the norm from our first day here in 1985.

Abenaki's purchase of the system from Gilford Well appears to have been made without much research. For example, they don't know where the lines actually run, as I saw from the car-sized holes they dug in my yard searching for a break in the water main last summer.

Not that life was much better under Gilford Well as I noted above. But please let me remind you that we were already paying the second-highest rate in the state...what was Gilford Well doing with those profits? No one knows for sure, but we do know that they were not maintaining or upgrading the water system here.

And now Abenaki has decided that they need not invest in this purchase, that the residents who depend on it will do that.

Please reject the rate increase request and force Abenaki to actually invest in the system. Otherwise you are only encouraging them to seek other failed utilities, and collect easy profits by breaking the backs of those who depend on them.

Peter Spain
24 Tioga Drive