

---

**OPPOSITION STATEMENT – DOCKET 20220035**

CORRESPONDENCE  
1/9/2023  
DOCUMENT NO. 00126-2023

Thank you for the opportunity to place a formal opposition to the action proposed by PSC Staff and enacted by the Public Service Commission relating to Docket 20220035 officially on record.

My name is Tom Bertz. I reside at 233 Alpine Dr, Winter Haven 33881 in Swiss Village. I also own a home at 293 Alpine Dr. (also in Swiss Village) I have been a resident and customer since 2012. I also serve as President of the HOA.

**OFFICIAL OPPOSITION**

I wish to officially oppose the approval of PAA Order PSC-2022-0431-PAA-WS (regarding Docket 20220035). I do not believe that this opposition rises to the level of a trial, but, rather, that such approval by the PSC, in any form, effectively removes any impact of the action suggested by staff regarding Issue 1.

In fact, I would maintain that the approval of any portion of the rate increase by the PSC without the culmination of a strategic plan for issue resolution removes ANY incentive for the Utility to meet or work with its Customers.

**DISCUSSION**

PSC Staff noted the following, in its summary of Issue 1, dealing with *quality of service* -

**Conclusion**

The Utility is in compliance with DEP standards; however, several customer comments regarding service interruptions have been received. As such, staff recommends that SV's quality of service be considered marginal and no penalty be imposed at this time. Staff further recommends that the Utility meet with its customers within three months of issuance of the Consummating Order to discuss the service interruption issues. The Office of Public Counsel and Commission staff should be

made aware of the meeting place, date, and time. Last, within one month after meeting with its customers, the Utility shall file a report with the Commission summarizing the results of the meeting. *[emphasis added]*

Staff then goes on to recommend approval of a rate increase that is only slightly reduced from the initial Staff recommendation.

The primary concern we wish to address is that, granting a rate increase, regardless of the outcome of any meeting with customers, effectively relegates any such meeting to a superficial level that accomplishes nothing.

By taking such action, the PSC has removed the incentive for meaningful communication between the Customer and the Utility. Why meet, if the outcome is already prescribed?

- What we, the customers, request is a PSC sponsored meeting with the vendor (SV-Utilities) at which a plan for addressing water systems issues (fresh-water & wastewater) in our community is agreed upon by all parties.
- Following a successful agreement, the PSC would grant 50% of the recommended rate hike to the Utility; followed by the remaining 50% increase AFTER the plan has been achieved.

A related issue concerns the on-line process supposedly available by consumers to report issues with water/wastewater.

It is important to remember that since most of these customers are new to Florida as well as the community, they are typically unaware of the importance of timely reporting of outages/interruptions to the appropriate agency. Add in the fact that most customers are elderly and many are unfamiliar with the use of technology, make the site cumbersome at best. We recommend that the PSC staff institute a public review and revision of the current on-line front-end.

**IN CONCLUSION:**

We urge you to remember that, as stated on it’s website, the Florida Public Services Commission ...

“... is committed to making sure that Florida's **consumers** receive some of their most essential services ... in a safe, reasonable, and reliable manner. In doing so, the PSC exercises ... monitoring of safety, reliability, and service.” *[emphasis added]*

To that end, we wish to remind you of the following facts:

- ✓ SV-Utilities does not reliably deliver service to its customers.
- ✓ SV-Utilities does not practice any form of water conservation.
- ✓ The rate increase proposed by the PSC would result in substantial financial harm to many retired and single income, elderly, customers in Swiss Village, for which they receive no benefit.
- ✓ SV-Utilities does not practice preventative maintenance which results in increased maintenance costs and less profit.
- ✓ The PSC complaint form & process needs to be redesigned with a focus on the customer rather than the staff. It is confusing to find on the web as well as difficult to use.

Thank you, again, for the opportunity to lodge an Opposition Complaint.

Thomas “Tom” Bertz  
233 Alpine Dr.  
Winter Haven, FL 33881  
[tom.bertz@gmail.com](mailto:tom.bertz@gmail.com)  
612-578-8238 (cell)  
863-594-2122 (home)