

Public Service Commission

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DATE: May 28, 1996
TO: Division of Records and Reporting
FROM: Patricia Brady, Division of Water and Wastewater *pb DSW*
RE: Docket No. 960320-WS, Request for exemption from Florida Public Service Commission regulation for provision of water and wastewater service in Volusia County by Anatole Apartments.

Please add the attached packet of letters received May 28, 1996, to the docket file.
 The packet includes:

- An April 22, 1996, letter from Mr. Robert A. Cardone to Envirotech
- A May 22, 1996, letter from Mr. Robert A. Cardone to Mr. Chuck Hill and
- A May 23, 1996, supplemental letter from Mr. Robert A. Cardone to Mr. Hill.

Thank you.

Attachment

cc: Alice Crosby (with attachment)

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FPSC-RECORDS/REPORTING

RECEIVED
MAY 28 1996

Florida Public Service Commission
Division of Water and Wastewater

May 22, 1996

John W.
RECEIVED
FLORIDA PUBLIC
SERVICE COMMISSION

96 MAY 28 AM 9:41

MAIL ROOM

Florida Public Service Commission
Division of Water and Wastewater
Mr. Chuck Hill - Director
2540 Shumard Oak Blvd.
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0850

Re: Envirotech - Water Billing

Dear Sir:

My apartment complex in Daytona Beach, FL recently converted to a system of water metering and billing for each individual apartment. Water monitoring meters were installed in each unit by Envirotech, P. O. Box 50336, Jacksonville, FL 32240, (904) 246-7999. Monthly bills are also prepared and mailed by Envirotech and all payments directed to them at the above address.

My first bill covering the period of 2/1 - 3/4/96 showed water usage of 390 gals. with a charge of \$.80 for water and \$1.37 for sewage resulting in a total bill of \$2.17 which I paid 3/17/96.

My next bill for water usage from 3/4 - 4/2/96 listed water used as 170 gals. with a charge of \$2.10 for water and \$3.60 sewage for a total bill of \$5.70 which I paid 4/23/96.

After receiving the second bill and noticing it was over 2 ½ times my first while water consumption decreased by over ½ I contacted the Daytona Beach water works to determine if a rate increase had taken place. I was assured there had been no change in rates. Daytona Beach informed me their rates were \$6.16 for the first 1,000 gals. of water used and \$2.04 for each 1,000 gals. thereafter. Their sewage rates are \$5.35 for the first 1,000 gals. and \$3.50 for each subsequent 1,000 gals. I also attempted to contact Envirotech by phone but was unsuccessful so I included a letter with my payment (copy enclosed).

To date I have received no response from Envirotech but recently received my latest bill covering the period of 4/2 - 5/1/96. This bill shows water usage of 160 gals. with charges of \$2.08 for water and \$3.56 sewage for a total of \$5.64. This bill is due 5/30/96 and has not been paid. I might add that each bill contains a notation that an additional \$5.00 charge will be levied if payment is not made by the due date.

My reason for this letter is to determine if Envirotech is permitted to charge more for water used by myself and the

other residents than the utility, the City of Daytona Beach, charges its customers. With a bit of calculation you can see that Envirotech used the correct per gal. charge of \$.00204 for water and \$.00350 for sewage on the first bill. On each succeeding bill the per gal. charge jumped to double the most expensive rate used by Daytona Beach for the first 1,000 gals. of water and sewage.

I was under the impression that only utilities could levy the per gal. charge and no one is permitted to charge more than that amount just for monitoring usage and billing or for any reason. I hope I am correct in my assumption.

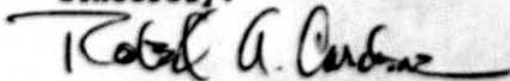
As you can see my water consumption is very low as I am at my apartment very seldom. When my usage decreases my bill rises, which seems very strange. I am also wondering what happens if I refuse to pay my bill. Is Envirotech permitted to turn off my water? Daytona Beach receives full payment for their monthly bill to my complex so it would appear they are content and would not be interested in disconnecting me, which is just what their employees stated.

I have also viewed the monthly printout provided by Envirotech to my complex office and all bills reflect the higher charges per gal. after the first month's bill. My complex office states they have nothing to do with either the billing or the payments as it is all handled by Envirotech. It appears Envirotech has a good thing going by inflating the cost of water used by each resident. They are also clever enough to have their bills prepared in such a manner that after payment is forwarded to them our receipt lists only the period covered and the dollar amount, not the gals. used. Pretty slick!

Thank you for listening to my complaint. I realize my bills are quite small but I still hate to be ripped off.

Thank you for any assistance or guidance your office can provide.

Sincerely,



Robert A. Cardone
Anatole Apartments
1690 Dunn Avenue, #318
Daytona Beach, FL 32114-1475
(904) 775-9668

May 23, 1996

Dear Mr. Hill:

I thought I would try Envirotech one more time, before mailing my letter, to resolve the problem. On 5/22/96 a female employee returned my call and gave me the following explanations for the difference in my bills.

After checking my records she first stated there had been a water rate increase after my bill for water between 2/1 - 3/4/96. When I told that was not true she then put me on hold to check further. She then stated my first bill was incorrect as it should have been approximately \$8.00. She then did her calculations, out loud, for the next two bills and multiplied the gals. used by \$.013 per gal. for water and some other figure for sewage. She then said my latest bills were correct.

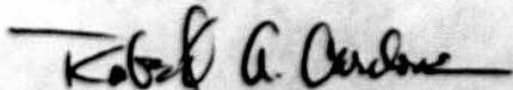
When I asked what per gal. charge she used she replied it was \$2.04 for the first 1,000 gals. of water and \$3.50 for the first 1,000 gals. sewage. I then asked why she had used a higher per gal. rate and she said that was the way they did their billing. She then explained that Envirotech has a minimum monthly charge of \$1.75 for water and \$3.00 for sewage if usage is less than 1,000 gals. I asked how they could charge a minimum when they were not a utility and she said they do and the PSC is aware of and has approved what they charge. I again stated it did not seem fair for them to charge more for water and sewage than the utility charged and she said it was indeed legal. I also asked if I was correct in understanding that my bill would be \$4.75 for a month in which I used no water and she assured me I was.

I then asked what happens if I do not pay my bill and she said they will report me to the credit bureau, and eventually shut off my water as well as use non-payment as cause for eviction. I told her I doubted they could shut off my water and was positive they could not evict me as I had no lease with them. She assured me they could do all those things if I refused to pay. What power!

I then told her I thought it strange that the first bill I received was calculated at exactly the water rate used by Daytona Beach but all subsequent bills used a rate exactly double the utility's highest rate. She stated that was how they charged and they were not Daytona Beach.

There you have it. I suppose I should just roll over and play dead but I will not. This seems like a great deal for Envirotech and a rotten one for us.

Sincerely,



April 22, 1996

Envirotech
P. O. Box 50336
Jacksonville, FL 32240

Sirs:

I am trying to understand the last bill for water usage at my apartment from 3/4/96 - 4/2/96. My address is 1690 Dunn Ave., #318, Daytona Beach, FL 32114 (Anatole Apartments).

My bill for service between 2/1/96 - 3/4/96 showed usage in the amount of 36 gals. with a total charge of \$2.17. My latest bill reflects usage of 170 gals. with a charge of \$5.70. By using less than half the water this month my bill has more than doubled. This does not seem to be correct.

I do not stay at the apartment and my only water consumption consists of flushing the toilet on some of my visits and watering plants.

I am forwarding payment to avoid a late charge this month but look forward to an adjustment on my next bill. I can be reached at (904) 775-9668 for an explanation.

Sincerely,

Robert A. Cardone
1690 Dunn Ave., #318
Daytona Beach, FL 32114