

BEFORE THE  
FLORIDA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

In the Matter of:

DOCKET NO. 20240068-WU

Application for increase in water and  
wastewater rates in Charlotte, Highlands,  
Lake, Lee, Marion, Orange, Pasco, Pinellas,  
Polk, and Seminole Counties, by Sunshine  
Water Services Company.

\_\_\_\_\_ /

PROCEEDINGS: SERVICE HEARING

COMMISSIONERS  
PARTICIPATING:

CHAIRMAN MIKE LA ROSA  
COMMISSIONER ART GRAHAM  
COMMISSIONER GARY F. CLARK  
COMMISSIONER ANDREW GILES FAY  
COMMISSIONER GABRIELLA PASSIDOMO SMITH

DATE: Tuesday, December 3, 2024

TIME: Commenced: 3:00 p.m.  
Concluded: 3:27 p.m.

PLACE: Betty Easley Conference Center  
Room 148  
4075 Esplanade Way  
Tallahassee, Florida

REPORTED BY: DEBRA R. KRICK  
Court Reporter and  
Notary Public in and for  
the State of Florida at Large

PREMIER REPORTING  
TALLAHASSEE, FLORIDA  
(850) 894-0828

1 APPEARANCES:

2 MARTIN S. FRIEDMAN, ESQUIRE, Dean Law Firm,  
3 420 S. Orange Avenue, Suite 700, Orlando, Florida;  
4 appearing on behalf of Sunshine Water Services.

5 WALT TRIERWEILER, PUBLIC COUNSEL; OCTAVIO  
6 PONCE and AUSTIN WATROUS, ESQUIRES, OFFICE OF PUBLIC  
7 COUNSEL, c/o The Florida Legislature, 111 West Madison  
8 Street, Room 812, Tallahassee, Florida 32399-1400,  
9 appearing on behalf of the Citizens of the State of  
10 Florida.

11 RYAN SANDY and SAAD FAROOQI, ESQUIRES, FPSC  
12 General Counsel's Office, 2540 Shumard Oak Boulevard,  
13 Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0850, appearing on behalf of  
14 the Florida Public Service Commission.

15 KEITH HETRICK, GENERAL COUNSEL; MARY ANNE  
16 HELTON, DEPUTY GENERAL COUNSEL, Florida Public Service  
17 Commission, 2540 Shumard Oak Boulevard, Tallahassee,  
18 Florida 32399-0850, Advisor to the Florida Public  
19 Service Commission.

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1 P R O C E E D I N G S

2 CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Hello, and good afternoon.

3 Today is December 3rd. It is about 3:00 p.m. And  
4 this is our Sunshine Water virtual service hearing.

5 Thank you all for attending this customer  
6 service hearing. This is a part of our review of  
7 the Sunshine Water Service Company's request for a  
8 rate adjustment. Today's service hearing is an  
9 important part of the process dedicated to hearing  
10 from you, the customer.

11 Staff, will you go ahead and please read the  
12 notice?

13 MR. SANDY: Mr. Chairman, this is Ryan Sandy  
14 on behalf of the Office of General Counsel and  
15 Commission staff.

16 By notice issued in the Florida Administrative  
17 Register, this time and place has been set for a  
18 Customer Service Hearing in Docket No. 20240068.  
19 The purpose of this service hearing set out more  
20 fully in the notice.

21 CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Excellent. Thank you.

22 At this time, let's take appearances from the  
23 counsel. Let's start with Sunshine.

24 MR. FRIEDMAN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My  
25 name is Marty Friedman on behalf of Sunshine Water

1 Services. With me is also Sean Twomey, who is the  
2 President of the business unit.

3 CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Thank you.

4 OPC.

5 MR. PONCE: Good afternoon. My name is  
6 Octavio Ponce with the Office of Public Counsel,  
7 and with me, I also have Austin Watrous and the  
8 Public Counsel, Walt Trierweiler.

9 CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Welcome, thank you guys.  
10 And staff.

11 MR. FAROOQI: And behalf of staff, we have  
12 Ryan Sandy, Saad Farooqi. And I also would like to  
13 make appearances on behalf of Deputy General  
14 Counsel Mary Anne Helton and General Counsel Keith  
15 Hetrick.

16 CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Excellent. Well, thank  
17 you, counsel.

18 Thank you all for participating today and  
19 sharing your experiences with the quality and the  
20 service of Sunshine. In addition to sharing your  
21 comments here, you can also provide written  
22 comments or additional material by paper mail or  
23 email. The rate case overview includes  
24 instructions on how to provide written comments to  
25 the Commission. Rest assured that your written

1           comments will be made available for us to review.

2           If you have specific service billing issues,  
3           Sunshine is here to assist you. You can just  
4           either let them know, or maybe contact our office.  
5           I don't have any official contact information, but  
6           I am sure we will get that before we are out of  
7           here today.

8           Commission staff will also present -- answer  
9           -- be here to answer any general questions that you  
10          might have before us today.

11          Before we hear from the customers, I would  
12          like to allow each party to have an opening  
13          statement. Let's please limit that to three  
14          minutes if we can, and let's go ahead and start  
15          with Sunshine.

16          Mr. Friedman. Excellent, thank you.

17          MR. TWOMEY: Good afternoon, Chair,  
18          Commissioners. Thanks very much for hearing me  
19          here today.

20          Sunshine Water Services tries to continue to  
21          provide safe and reliable water and wastewater  
22          services to its customers. The company's last rate  
23          case was filed four years ago. However, due to a  
24          variety of factors, the company is not able to meet  
25          its ongoing operating and capital investment needs

1 at currently approved tariff rates. The company  
2 has incurred economic pressures with certain costs,  
3 such as chemicals, insurance and maintaining market  
4 competitive wages and health benefits.

5 Most significantly, the company is faced with,  
6 like all water and wastewater utilities,  
7 significant capital investment needs for its aging  
8 water and wastewater infrastructure, as well as  
9 ever-increasing environmental and safety standards  
10 in operating its utility systems.

11 Sunshine Water Services is in the process of  
12 investing approximately 56 million in its  
13 infrastructure to support its provision of safe and  
14 reliable service as part of its total investment of  
15 over \$104 million since the end of 2021, the end of  
16 our last proforma period.

17 Without appropriate rate relief, Sunshine  
18 Water's ability to continue to provide  
19 environmentally safe, reliable and efficient water  
20 and wastewater services to its customers and meet  
21 its financial obligations will be adversely  
22 affected.

23 Thank you.

24 CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Excellent. Thank you.

25 Do you have a, either phone number or a

1 website that we can address customers to if they  
2 have any billing issues or concerns? I wasn't  
3 given any, but I have got somebody here, but I am  
4 not sure if that's the right person.

5 MR. TWOMEY: Yes. Do you want it right now,  
6 or can I -- I have got a couple of guys with me  
7 here to look at the exact details. I mean, it's  
8 sunshinewaterservices.com is the website, and the  
9 customer call center -- customer service rep number  
10 I don't know off the top of my head, but I will get  
11 it.

12 CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Okay, yeah. We will get  
13 that before we are out today. Obviously, customers  
14 are virtual, so they wouldn't be able to see  
15 somebody here in person, but perfect, that works.  
16 We will get that before we conclude.

17 Let's move to OPC, opening statement.

18 MR. PONCE: Good afternoon. Again, my name is  
19 Octavio Ponce. It is my privilege to represent the  
20 customers of Sunshine Water Services through my  
21 employment with the Office of Public Counsel. For  
22 anyone on the line who is not aware, our office was  
23 created by the Legislature to provide  
24 representation to the customers of Sunshine in  
25 proceedings such as this one.

1           We are here today because Sunshine has filed  
2           an application to increase their water and  
3           wastewater rates. Specifically, Sunshine is asking  
4           for an increase of about \$4.5 million, or 19.9  
5           percent in its base revenues for its water utility,  
6           and an increase of about \$4.7 million, or 15.87  
7           percent in base revenues for its wastewater  
8           utility.

9           In response, our office has done its best to  
10          scrutinize Sunshine's application to make sure  
11          their requests are appropriate, and to find cost  
12          savings for you, the customers. This led our  
13          office to filing testimony on November 21st,  
14          contesting several aspects of Sunshine's case.  
15          Some of the major issues that we are fighting for  
16          on the customers' behalf include an approximately  
17          \$3.2 million decrease for the company's water  
18          utility's request, and about a 1.5 million decrease  
19          for its wastewater utility request.

20          We are also contesting Sunshine's proposed \$20  
21          million advanced meter infrastructure project, also  
22          known as AMI, to replace its existing meters; legal  
23          expenses that have nothing to do with providing  
24          customers safe and reliable service; the prospect  
25          of the company charging payment processing fees to



1           be borne by all customers. And we also are arguing  
2           the fallout from Sunshine's parent company merger.

3           With all of that having been said, these are  
4           just some of the areas that we are litigating to  
5           reach the best result possible for our customers.  
6           It's Sunshine's burden to prove that what they are  
7           requesting is reasonable and prudent. And we are  
8           going to challenge all of those areas where we feel  
9           Sunshine has not met that burden.

10          Having said that, today is the customers'  
11          hearing. It's not the Public Service Commission's  
12          hearing, not my hearing, and it's not Sunshine's  
13          hearing. This is your chance to speak up and offer  
14          your sworn testimony directly to your Commissioners  
15          about how you feel about Sunshine, the good, the  
16          bad, the ugly. Whatever you want to share about  
17          Sunshine's services, this is your chance to do so.

18          For example, if you want to make your  
19          testimony more persuasive, we encourage you to  
20          support them with facts and descriptive words. How  
21          do you feel about the AMI project? Do you want it?  
22          Is it helpful? Do you feel it's worth the \$20  
23          million price tag? How will it affect -- all of  
24          these proposed increases affect you and your  
25          family? Or perhaps you want to give a comment

1       about Sunshine's water quality, like its taste,  
2       smell, visible appearance, texture, et cetera.  
3       Does the iron content stain fixtures? Does the  
4       hardness harm your home fixtures? If you have any  
5       photos of your bills or other evidence, you are  
6       also able to submit those as well.

7               We look forward to hearing from you. Thank  
8       you very much for taking your time today.

9               CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Thank you. Excellent.  
10       Thank you.

11              So concluding opening statements, I just want  
12       to come back to Sunshine. The phone number I have  
13       got is (866)842-8432 for customer service. Just  
14       kind of give me a nod, or good --

15              MR. TWOMEY: Yes.

16              CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: -- if that's a good number.  
17       I will repeat that. That's (866)842-8432 if any  
18       customers have any billing issues or other customer  
19       service concerns that they want to dial in to them  
20       directly.

21              All right. So let's move on to the testimony  
22       portion. We are -- we will now hear from you, the  
23       customer. Your comments will become part of the  
24       official record. You may be asked questions,  
25       either by the parties or by one of us as

1           Commissioners. Don't let that, of course,  
2           intimidate you. Just, of course, looking for  
3           clarifications or whatever the case may ultimately  
4           be.

5           If you signed up on-line, you may have already  
6           accepted the oath that is required, but for others  
7           that have not, I will swear you in before if you  
8           start your comments, and I have got here a short  
9           list of folks.

10          Please make sure your comments are somewhere  
11          around the five-minute mark. We want to make sure  
12          we give each and every one of your neighbors an  
13          equal opportunity and time to provide their input.

14          Representatives from OPC will be helping us  
15          out today. When it is your turn to speak, they  
16          will call your name in the order in which you  
17          signed up. They will call two names at a time so  
18          that the next person that will be up will be  
19          prepared. Please make sure that you are listening  
20          to the person called before you, and be ready when  
21          your name is ultimately called. When it's your  
22          turn to speak, please make sure to state your name  
23          and whether you are a Sunshine customer or not.

24          Typically in this process, we allow elected  
25          officials to have an opportunity to make comments

1 initially. Are there any elected officials on the  
2 line? Not hearing that there are any elected  
3 officials on the line, I will go ahead and throw it  
4 over to OPC.

5 I know, obviously, this is a virtual hearing,  
6 so many of you guys are just hearing us, but here  
7 in the room besides the folks that you have already  
8 heard today, both Sunshine and the Office of Public  
9 Counsel, you have the Commissioners, which I am  
10 Mike La Rosa, the Chairman of the Florida Public  
11 Service Commission. With me is Commissioner Gary  
12 Clark, Commissioner Andrew Fay, Commissioner  
13 Passidomo Smith and Commissioner Art Graham who is  
14 on the line with us. So again, we are the Florida  
15 Public Service Commission and, of course, listening  
16 to you today, our customers.

17 Go ahead and throw it over to OPC, if you want  
18 to go ahead and start with the first few names.

19 MR. PONCE: The first two names on my list are  
20 Charles Bassin and Nygeria Massenburg, and it  
21 indicates that both of these have been sworn in  
22 already.

23 CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Thank you.

24 Mr. Bassin, are you there on the line?

25 MR. BASSIN: Yes. Yes, I am. Thank you very

1 much.

2 CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Sir, you may begin when you  
3 are ready.

4 MR. BASSIN: Go ahead.

5 CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Yep, we are ready when you  
6 are.

7 MR. BASSIN: Okay. I would like to offer  
8 comments -- can you hear me okay?

9 CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Loud and clear. Yes, sir.

10 MR. BASSIN: All right. Good. I would like  
11 to offer comments regarding the quality of service  
12 the utility provides, and the proposed rate  
13 increase.

14 Regarding the quality of service, at times the  
15 water pressure is similar to third world countries,  
16 even at the high prices that are charged by  
17 Sunshine Water. When experiencing low water  
18 pressure, I have lodged numerous complaints.  
19 Finally, after several, they sent technicians out  
20 to talk to me. They left just with dumb looks  
21 really. Later they came back. They ran a pressure  
22 test and installed a device to determine the time  
23 of day when the pressure was low, and they verified  
24 exactly what I had been telling them. They said  
25 this was because they were doing maintenance on the

1 lines.

2 Why perform maintenance between 6:00 a.m. and  
3 8:00 a.m. when customer demand is obviously going  
4 to be high? It seemed to me to be a poor decision.  
5 Nothing was ever done. The problem continues to  
6 this day. Just one example of poor service.

7 I come home to find cloudy brown water flowing  
8 through my faucets. I was ready to call a plumber.  
9 I thought either the water heater or a breached  
10 line. I called the office, customer service, they  
11 knew nothing about anything. I just coincidentally  
12 spoke with a neighbor who had stopped a Sunshine  
13 Water truck in the neighborhood a few hours  
14 earlier. It turns out they were flushing the lines  
15 out a half-a-mile away. No notification to  
16 customers. No direction on how long before the  
17 water was potable again. Nothing. The customer  
18 service people weren't even aware of the matter in  
19 order to field inquiries from the customers.  
20 Another example of poor service.

21 Price is already highest in the area. Our  
22 church is two-and-a-half miles away. They provide  
23 -- water is provided by the City of Altamonte  
24 Springs with more than 500 people going in and out  
25 for no less than six meetings a week. The water

1 bill there is less than \$20 a month. I pay as much  
2 for water as I do for electricity.

3 I could turn off my water meter completely, I  
4 could shut it off for the entire billing cycle, and  
5 I would still be billed \$49.92 for the privilege of  
6 being a Sunshine Water customer. Now, this \$50 a  
7 month charge is embedded in everyone's bill even  
8 though no product is delivered and no service is  
9 provided.

10 Sunshine Water was granted a price increase  
11 just 18 months ago, in May of 2023. They don't  
12 accept electronic payments directly from banks.  
13 They want a paper check for their system. Why they  
14 don't allow EFTs, I have no idea. If they would  
15 open their mail on time, they wouldn't have to send  
16 me late notices when they got their payment four  
17 days earlier. Again, poor service. It's almost  
18 2025, get onboard with the digital payments.  
19 Rather than EFTs, they want to spend my money on  
20 digital WiFi meter reading. \$20 million. It's  
21 very expensive obviously, the reliability has been  
22 questioned.

23 Just one more thing. Recently they sent out a  
24 notice regarding the possibility of lead or  
25 galvanized pipe. I have been in this house for 30

1           years. Now they tell me they want me to determine  
2           whether or not I have lead pipes or not.

3           Well, apparently there is a self-examination  
4           process available on what was described in the  
5           notification as, quote, "the website", never  
6           identifying which website they were referring to.  
7           Silly me, I thought it was the Sunshine Water  
8           website. The link that I was supposed to find was  
9           not located there, so I replied to the customer  
10          service contact line. Three days later, they  
11          replied with a website link for the information.  
12          It was a dead link. Another example of poor  
13          service. But after 30 years, I am not really  
14          concerned about my pipes. If I get sick, I will  
15          just call John Morgan.

16          So just to be clear, I am not in favor of  
17          handing more money to a monopoly. If Sunshine  
18          Water was forced to compete, service would likely  
19          be better. Prices would be lower. Of course, like  
20          all utilities, consumers have no choice, and that's  
21          understandable, but that's why public service  
22          commissions like you are tasked with regulating  
23          utilities. But for this commission to yet again  
24          rubber stamp another increase after less than two  
25          years would be unconscionable in light of the fact



1 the quality of the product and the level of service  
2 are both poor, I implore you, please, decline this  
3 request for yet another rate increase.

4 CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Excellent. Thank you very  
5 much for your testimony.

6 Are there any questions, Commissioners?

7 Seeing none, we move to the next person.

8 MR. FRIEDMAN: Commissioner --

9 CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Real quick. So, Mr.  
10 Bassin, Commissioner Clark has a question.

11 MR. BASSIN: Yes.

12 COMMISSIONER CLARK: Mr. Bassin, are you  
13 referring to your water and wastewater services  
14 together, or just -- do you take both services or  
15 just one?

16 MR. BASSIN: I get -- I get -- I get both, and  
17 both are high.

18 COMMISSIONER CLARK: All right. So your  
19 \$50 -- your \$50 bill that you said your minimum,  
20 that wasn't just water. That would be both  
21 services, right?

22 MR. BASSIN: Yeah, but if you are not  
23 running -- your sewer service is a percentage of  
24 your water consumption --

25 COMMISSIONER CLARK: Yes, sir.

1 MR. BASSIN: -- which I found out when I  
2 filled my swimming pool one time.

3 COMMISSIONER CLARK: Yeah.

4 MR. BASSIN: So even though I didn't use the  
5 sewer for 20,000 gallons, I was billed for, you  
6 know, sewer.

7 COMMISSIONER CLARK: Right. Okay. That's  
8 what I need. Thank you.

9 MR. BASSIN: Not all utilities do that.  
10 You are welcome.

11 CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: All right. Mr. Friedman.

12 MR. FRIEDMAN: I just have a couple of quick  
13 clarification questions to ask.

14 CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Sure. Of me or of Mr.  
15 Bassin?

16 MR. FRIEDMAN: Mr. Bassin.

17 CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Okay. All right. Mr.  
18 Bassin, if you don't mind fielding a few quick  
19 questions here.

20 MR. FRIEDMAN: Yeah. Mr. Bassin, my name is  
21 Marty Friedman. I am the attorney for --

22 MR. BASSIN: No. Thank you.

23 MR. FRIEDMAN: I am the attorney for Sunshine  
24 Water. I have just got a couple of clarifying  
25 questions to ask.

1           You commented about the discoloration of  
2           water. My records reflect that you made a  
3           complaint for discoloration of water back in May of  
4           2022, but that's the only complaint that you have  
5           made to the utility about that issue. Is that your  
6           recollection as well?

7           MR. BASSIN: That is -- I don't -- I cannot  
8           verify the date, but my recollection is that I made  
9           one complaint. That's correct.

10          MR. FRIEDMAN: Okay. And isn't it also true  
11          that in October of '23, you made the complaint that  
12          you referenced about low water pressure, and that  
13          you haven't made any other complaints about water  
14          pressure other than that one?

15          MR. BASSIN: I made several complaints about  
16          water pressure. Again, I do not have the dates.

17          MR. FRIEDMAN: Would it have been before 2022,  
18          other than the one --

19          MR. BASSIN: No.

20          MR. FRIEDMAN: -- you mentioned?

21          MR. BASSIN: No. I don't think that anything  
22          would have been before that. That's -- we are  
23          almost 2025, so I would say it's probably been in  
24          the last two to -- probably in the last 24 to 30  
25          months, would be my -- would be my guesstimate on

1           that.

2           MR. FRIEDMAN: Okay. I have no further  
3           questions.

4           CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Mr. Bassin, we have got a  
5           few questions from OPC, the Office of Public  
6           Counsel.

7           MR. BASSIN: Thank you.

8           MR. PONCE: Hi. This is Octavio Ponce with --  
9           the attorney with the Office of Public Counsel.

10          Just to clarify, when you say you are having  
11          issues with your water pressure, is it too high,  
12          too low? What is the exact issue?

13          MR. BASSIN: It's too low. It comes out of  
14          the kitchen sink at a trickle.

15          The first time it happened, I thought I had a  
16          host running outside, you know. It's 5:30, six  
17          o'clock in the morning. I am making coffee. I go  
18          outside, everything is shut off. There is no  
19          leaks. And I noticed it probably a couple times a  
20          week over a period of time.

21          MR. PONCE: Okay. And you mentioned that  
22          the --

23          MR. BASSIN: It's not every day at the same  
24          time. I mean -- yeah.

25          MR. PONCE: You mentioned that the company had

1           sent some people to take a look at that. When was  
2           that?

3           MR. BASSIN: They -- the attorney there had  
4           the records. Maybe he has a record of that. I  
5           don't have a date. I know they came twice. They  
6           sent two men and a truck the first time, and I  
7           explained it to them. And, you know, they just  
8           kind of heard it and didn't really have any  
9           answers, so I called again, and they sent one or  
10          two gentlemen out again. And that's when they  
11          installed a -- I guess a pressure meter on one of  
12          the hose bibs. And they came back after about a  
13          week, three or four days. They left it on there.  
14          And a from that, apparently they were able to read  
15          the pressure variations over various 24-hour  
16          periods. And that's when they confirmed to me that  
17          the pressure was, indeed, low, during the times  
18          that I had reported that it was low. But the exact  
19          dates when they came out, I don't recall.

20          MR. PONCE: Thank you, Mr. Bassin. I  
21          appreciate you calling in.

22          MR. BASSIN: Thank you. You are welcome.

23          CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Great. Let's move to the  
24          next customer.

25          MR. PONCE: The next customer is Nygeria

1           Massenburg. It indicates here that they have  
2           already been sworn in.

3           MR. FRIEDMAN: Can I make one question, or  
4           preliminary question about this? The address that  
5           this witness listed is not in Sunshine's service  
6           area. So could we have the witness, as part of  
7           their presentation, to clarify their  
8           representation, what they are commenting about?

9           CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: The customer that we are  
10          calling for now, yes.

11          Nygeria Massenburg, are you on the line? Is  
12          the customer on the line? Nygeria Massenburg, are  
13          you on the line?

14          All right. Well, I think that clarifies that,  
15          if anything. Let's move to the next customer.

16          MR. PONCE: The last customer on my list is  
17          Stephen Baum. It indicates here they have not been  
18          sworn.

19          MR. BAUM: Hi, this is Stephen. I am here.

20          CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Hey, Stephen. Well, thanks  
21          for coming to offer your testimony. It shows -- my  
22          records show that you have not been sworn in. Do  
23          you mind just doing that real quickly with me?

24          MR. BAUM: Sure.

25          (Whereupon, Chairman La Rosa administered the

1 oath to Mr. Stephen Baum.)

2 MR. BAUM: Yes.

3 CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Excellent. Thank you.

4 You may begin.

5 MR. BAUM: Okay. Our service address, I am  
6 634 Longmeadow Circle in Longwood, Florida. I am a  
7 Sunshine Water Services customer.

8 My biggest complaint about Sunshine Water, the  
9 quality is fine. The pressure is fine. No issues  
10 there. My biggest complaint about them is I think  
11 their rate structure is totally messed up. It  
12 seems like ever since they bought, you know,  
13 Sanlando Utilities, which I guess was a  
14 quasi-governmental, you know, authority, so it kept  
15 rates competitive, our rates have doubled. And it  
16 seems like -- it feels like every six or 12 months,  
17 we get another rate increase for water.

18 And just to put it into perspective. We are  
19 part-time residents here in Florida. We live  
20 mostly in Florida, but several months during the  
21 summer, we go out of state. So we literally turn  
22 our water off at the meter, and we leave our power  
23 on. The power, we are running air conditioning,  
24 the refrigerator stays on, various lights are  
25 coming on in such accord, and so forth. Our base

1        water charge, which I would like the first speaker,  
2        I would like to have his charge, ours is, like,  
3        \$70. So when we show zero usage of water, it's a  
4        70-dollar charge. When we are here, washing  
5        dishes, taking showers, washing toilets, again,  
6        both sewer and water, our bill is like \$75 to \$79.  
7        So basically it goes down 10 percent.

8            To put that into perspective, again, going  
9        back to power, when we leave all of these things on  
10       I mentioned, and our bill would normally be 150 to  
11       200 in the summertime. It drops from, like, \$75 to  
12       \$100. That's like a 50-percent decrease.

13           So the fact -- it just infuriates me to think  
14       that our fixed bills are so high that it doesn't do  
15       anything to encourage conservation. They need to  
16       shift their pricing model to where providing the  
17       service is significantly less and charging for  
18       water is more, therefore, people would be more  
19       conscientious about how they use water or how they  
20       waste water.

21           So that's my biggest complaint, is that \$70 --  
22       like I said, I would like to pay the first man's  
23       \$50 fee just to have it, because I have got several  
24       bills that show zero usage of water, and our bill  
25       is \$70. And to me, that just seems ridiculous.



1           CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Thank you.

2           MR. BAUM: So that means --

3           CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Yep -- no, go ahead. I am  
4           sorry. I didn't mean to cut you off.

5           MR. BAUM: That's okay. I said that's  
6           basically my complaint. I think their fixed  
7           charges are just too high. And the fact that you  
8           can shut off, use no water, and your bill drops 10  
9           percent. You leave power on in various functions,  
10          and your bill drops 50 percent. You know, that  
11          just doesn't make any sense. It goes to show that  
12          what you are using is such a small component of  
13          your overall bill. It's the fixed charges that  
14          just ill kill at \$70 a month. That's absurd.

15          CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Sir, thank you for your  
16          testimony. I will ask if there is any questions of  
17          Mr. Baum.

18          Commissioners, any questions? Do any of the  
19          parties have any questions of Mr. Baum?

20          Okay. All right. Mr. Baum, thank you for  
21          your testimony.

22          MR. BAUM: Okay. Thank you.

23          CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: All right. My records  
24          indicate that there are no other speakers that have  
25          signed up. So I will ask, is there anyone on the

1 line that has not had a chance to speak yet? Is  
2 there anyone on the line that has not had an  
3 opportunity to speak yet?

4 All right. Not hearing any, staff, are there  
5 any exhibits that we need -- that need our  
6 attention?

7 MR. SANDY: There are no exhibits that need  
8 our attention. And from staff, there are no  
9 further issues that need your attention.

10 CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Okay. Any of the parties?  
11 I think we are good.

12 Thank you again for attending this service  
13 hearing. Your comments are very important to us  
14 and this process, and we truly appreciate your  
15 willingness to participate.

16 If the Commissioners do not have any other  
17 thoughts, any closing comments, this meeting will  
18 be adjourned.

19 Thank you.

20 (Proceedings concluded.)

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1 CERTIFICATE OF REPORTER

2 STATE OF FLORIDA )  
3 COUNTY OF LEON )  
4

5 I, DEBRA KRICK, Court Reporter, do hereby  
6 certify that the foregoing proceeding was heard at the  
7 time and place herein stated.

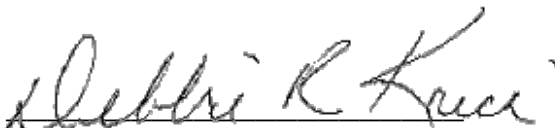
8 IT IS FURTHER CERTIFIED that I  
9 stenographically reported the said proceedings; that the  
10 same has been transcribed under my direct supervision;  
11 and that this transcript constitutes a true  
12 transcription of my notes of said proceedings.

13 I FURTHER CERTIFY that I am not a relative,  
14 employee, attorney or counsel of any of the parties, nor  
15 am I a relative or employee of any of the parties'  
16 attorney or counsel connected with the action, nor am I  
17 financially interested in the action.

18 DATED this 13th day of December, 2024.  
19

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21

  
DEBRA R. KRICK  
NOTARY PUBLIC  
COMMISSION #HH575054  
EXPIRES AUGUST 13, 2028

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