

FILE

December 11, 2007

Dear Governor Strickland and PUCO officials:

Please help me, I am in danger. Dramatic? Maybe, but my drinking water is unsafe and I fear for my husband, my children and myself. I am not kidding. This isn't meant to be a joke and I hope you will address my concerns with the level of seriousness that prompted me to write my first ever letter to a public official. In addition to the poor quality of water, we are being charged a fortune for it. My water bill averages **\$154 per month**. Can you imagine? I have 3 people in my house. We watch every drop of water we use. We practice timed showers, full loads of laundry/dishes only, no running water during teeth brushing, flushing only when necessary and we never, ever wash a car or water the lawn. No hot tub – no pool. I would also like you to imagine something else. All of that drama and expense and you can't even drink the stuff without filtering it first. Water is the elixir of life. I could understand if I chose to live in an underdeveloped third world nation but I live in Westerville for crying out loud. We burn through 3 to 4 30 day filters a month trying to get the water clean enough to drink.

I am a resident of the Sunbury Woods Subdivision. I am writing to you today because I am alarmed by the threat of another rate increase from Ohio American Water (OAW).

My neighborhood is not rural and yet we are not afforded public water but are forced to be serviced by a private company. They do not have our best interests at heart. I attended a community meeting last spring to help abate a rate increase. While OAW was allowed a 9% increase we were able as a community to pull together so that we would not be gouged by the proposed 21%. That meeting included residents of Blendon Township who were supported by officials from several clean water groups as well as PUCO and OAW representatives. The thing that surprised me the most was the discussion of the prior failure of OAW to honor the agreement made at the last rate increase. I listened as a list of violations were read that the private water company was suppose to address as a provision of the last granted rate increase. They admitted that they didn't address any of the items the PUCO required. I also listened as my neighbors gave depositions that included proof of the poor quality of our drinking water and I began to feel helpless. Even after all the discussion and proof the OAW was allowed a 9% increase with another promise that they would address all concerns. They haven't done anything that I can see. I called them but they didn't want to discuss it with me.

Less than 1 year after that meeting they want to raise my rates again by 31.86%. I can afford the water here. I can't afford to pay for it and I can't afford to drink it.

Please help me. I need two things:

1. Look into this case (PUCO # 07-1112-WS-AIR) – please make sure that OAW is complying with the provisions of the prior 2 rate increases. Please make sure my water is clean. Please don't let them charge me more for it, not so soon.
2. Please look into legislation that limits the time period between non-emergency requests by water utility to five years. More frequent requests are hard for communities that have few resources to challenge rate increases.

Thank you sincerely for your time and attention to this matter. I realize this country is burdened with many great injustices. Affordable, clean water shouldn't even be a topic of concern. Wouldn't you agree?



Jodi Stuckel
3917 Bluebird Ct
Westerville, Ohio 43081
614-352-3552

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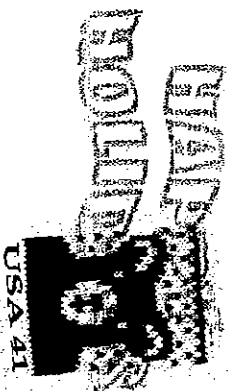
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Mr. & Mrs. Scott D. Stickel
3917 Bluebird Ct.
Westerville, OH 43081

PUCO
ATTENTION: Docketing DIVISION
180 E Broad St.
Columbus OH 43215

COLUMBUS OH 430
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43215+3707

