

ACOF 081208KX

Pauley, Jessica

From: Governor Reply

Sent: Wednesday, August 06, 2008 4:12 PM

To: 'Alex Cofield'

07-1112-WS-AIR

Dear Alex Cofield:

Thank you for your recent email regarding Ohio American Water's request for rate increases. I appreciate you taking the time to contact me about this matter.

I have forwarded your email to the Public Utilities Commission and I have asked that your concern be reviewed and addressed as promptly and thoroughly as possible.

Thank you again for taking the time to write, and please feel free to contact my office in the future.

Sincerely,



TED STRICKLAND
GOVERNOR

77 South High Street
30th Floor
Columbus, Ohio 43215
(614) 644-4357 Constituent Hotline
(614) 466-9354 fax
[Contact the Governor, click here.](#)

Responses to this email address are not monitored.
Should you need additional assistance, please call the Constituent Hotline or visit the Governor's website to submit another inquiry.

This message and any response to it may constitute a public record and thus may be publicly available to anyone who requests it.

From: Alex Cofield [mailto:aacofield@columbus.gov]

Sent: Wednesday, August 06, 2008 2:20 PM

To: Strickland, Governor

Cc: Governor Reply

Subject: Governor Site Issues

Name: Alex Cofield

Email: aacofield@columbus.gov

Address: 3515 Makassar Dr.

City, State ZIP: Westerville Ohio, 43081

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Technician _____ Date Processed 8-13-08

8/6/2008

RECEIVED-DOCKETING DIV
2008 AUG 13 AM 10:42
PUCO

Phone: 614-895-1134

Comments:

Governor Strickland: I write in response to Ohio American Water's (OAW) request for rate increases to provide water and sewer services as it relates to the Huber Ridge neighborhood, Blendon Township, Franklin County, Ohio and PUCO's recommended revenue increase (Case No. 06-433-WS-AIR). I am asking you to urge PUCO to reconsider their recommended rate increase as it penalizes customers for speaking out against defective products. I am opposed to the proposed rate increase request by OAW and am dumfounded by PUCO's recommendation. OAW requested a rate increase of 30.08% for water and a 36.61% rate increase for wastewater and PUCO nearly wholeheartedly agreed to the water rate increase, recommending an increase of 29.97%, and going over the top and recommending a 37.08% waste water increase! This would increase a monthly \$41.00 bill (using only 3 Ccf per month) to approximately \$54.00. Nearly every year for the past five or so years, OAW has submitted annual requests to PUCO for rate increases. (The last rate increase was approved and implemented in early 2007). I understand that they are allowed to do this to recoup costs after they have been incurred. I also understand that prices go up and expect a reasonable rate increase. However, the percentages requested and the percentages recommended are unreasonable. During the 2006-2007 rate increase request/public comment period/determination, the residents of Huber Ridge spoke out against the quality of water and service problems, resulting in a reasonable rate increase (in the single digits) and many additional requirements that OAW had to fulfill to improve their product. Residents complained about the continuous discolored water and its impact on water filters and laundry as well as particulates in the water. Brown bottles of water were displayed as were brown water filters that were only a month old (they have a three month life span). Because residents told their stories through words and hard evidence, OAW was required to do more monitoring and to make improvements to the water plant so that the end product was clear, particulate-free water. Yes, OAW has expended resources to improve their product. Yes, they probably had spent more money than planned. But does this mean that they should recoup all that they spent? The answer is no. OAW should bear the burden of the improvements incurred since the last rate increase because they chose not to maintain their operation. They chose not to address long standing, well known problems until they were forced to do so. Businesses, not consumers, need to be held accountable for faulty products. PUCO, by approving the exorbitant rate increases, is penalizing residents/consumers for speaking up and for demanding products free of defects. What makes this even more difficult is that water is a basic utility, as is electric and natural gas, and is needed for health and safety reasons. One cannot go without water. Compounding this is the fact that the water service in Huber Ridge is a monopoly. Unlike electric, gas, and telephone, there is not any competition. Residents are required to purchase water from OAW. Unlike municipalities that provide water, there is not anyone at OAW who is accountable to the people. We do not elect OAW leaders, so we cannot vote them out of office. The only recourse we have is to make our case to PUCO – an appointed body. I urge PUCO to reconsider their rate increase recommendation and reduce the increase to something reasonable, say 5%, because it was OAW who chose not to address issues and because it is not appropriate to penalize a consumer who is required to purchase a health/safety commodity from a sole source. Thank you for your time. Sincerely, Alex Cofield

Response: No