

September 12, 2008

Sharon Ricker
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RECEIVED-DOCKETING DIV
2008 SEP 15 PM 1:25
PUCO

Honorable Ted Strickland
Governor's Office
Riffe Center 30th Floor
77 South High Street
Columbus Ohio 43215-6108

RE: PUCO case # 07-1112-ws-air (Ohio American Water Company)

Governor Strickland,

I am writing again to ask your help with the above water rate increase requested by Ohio American Water. The residents have learned that the PUCO and the OCC have entered into a 'Stipulation and Recommendation' agreement with Ohio American Water (OAWC) to grant the rate increase without a full and open public hearing. The agreement gives OAWC a larger than requested rate increase and we the customers of OAWC are being completely ignored by this action. Item ten on page five of the agreement is of particular concern to the customers of OAWC. It reads as follows,

"In its next application for a base rate increase, Ohio American will propose a step increase program that will provide for annual increases during the proposed step increase period during which the company will not file for another base rate increase."

This sounds like a back door attempt to get annual increases without going through the review process. This language needs to be removed from any further negotiations.

We have to ask why we as customers are being excluded from testifying before a full board. What does the PUCO or the OCC have to hide? There is an obvious conflict of interest or undue influence being exerted in this case. To quote Deep Throat from the Watergate scandal "Follow the money". Governor Strickland, your office has the power to investigate the motives and possibly the campaign contributions behind this action and find out exactly who is applying pressure to settle this case away from the public eye. What is the motivating factor behind granting a larger than requested increase? Follow the money.

This proposed rate increase will only exacerbate the financial difficulties many families are already facing and will devastate our community. We are being penalized for conserving. A drop in revenues is one of the reasons given for the rate increase. The water company no longer charges us for sewage on the additional water we use in the summer so to compensate for a drop

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in sewage revenues they ask for a rate increase to makeup the difference. We try to conserve in order to reduce our consumption and it costs us more? This is completely ludicrous.

Our civic association has compared the water rates of OAWC with Columbus and Westerville and this is what we have discovered based on the OAWC estimate of an average bill of 7ccf per month,

Columbus bill quarterly 22 CCF = \$148.42

Westerville bill x 3 month 7ccf = 21 CCF = \$147.06

OAWC bill x 3 month 7 CCF = 21 CCF = \$249.78 (current rate)

OAWC bill x 3 month 7 CCF x 3 = 21 CCF = **\$333.90 PUCO's new proposed rate**

Based on the above charges, we currently pay \$100 more than either of the neighboring communities for three months of service. Under the new proposal, we will pay over \$180 more than Westerville or Columbus and that is for an inferior product. Other utilities such as Columbia Gas and AEP are asking for huge increases over the next three years however, both companies have raw material costs that the OAWC does not have. .

A representative of OAWC tested my water for hardness and the reading was 140 mg/L to 142 mg/L. The Ohio EPA recommends a water hardness of 120-150 mg/L. Other communities serviced by OAWC have a reading of 120 mg/L. I would like to know why our water hardness is higher and our increase is the largest? Are we not entitled to the same water quality as other communities serviced by OAWC? I was told nothing could be done about the calcium carbonate deposits on my fixtures and mold rings in my toilets and I that just have to live with the

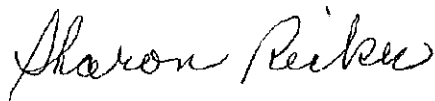
We are outraged that the PUCO and the OCC would even consider such action. We are asking for your help and that of Rep. Jim McGregor in denying the 'Stipulation and Recommendation' agreement and requesting a full and open hearing so that we can come to a fair resolution in this matter. We want to be **heard!**

Water is the most important and vital natural resource we have. As the population expands, conservation will become vital to the sustainability of our communities and farms. Eventually the government, be it state or federal, will need to address the issue of available and affordable water for all of its citizens. The only way to accomplish this will be to nationalize all private for profit water companies in this country.

If the OAWC is granted this increase, they will have received a 45% rate increase in one year. Unbelievable!!!! Apparently, OAWC is out of touch with the economic conditions in this country. Americans are facing increased inflation, job losses, foreclosures, and increased energy costs. We all have to cut back and do with less. If the State of Ohio can cut its budget, so can OAWC.

Governor Strickland we need your intervention.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sharon Ricker".

Sharon Ricker

cc: PUCO

Attention: Docketing Division
180 E. Broad St.
Columbus Ohio 43215
Case # 07-1112-ws-air

Representative Jim McGregor
district20@ohr.state.oh.us

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