

COMMISSIONERS
KRISTIN K. MAYES - Chairman
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SANDRA D. KENNEDY
BOB STUMP



0000094633

AVO

ARIZONA CORPORATION COMMISSION

March 17, 2009

ORIGINAL

To: Docket Control

RE: Far West Water & Sewer, Inc. - Customer Comments
Docket No. WS-03478A-08-0454

Please docket the attached 9 customer comments **OPPOSING** the above filed rate case.

Customer comments can be reviewed in E-docket under the above docket number.

Filed by: Utilities Division – Consumer Services

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2009 MAR 17 P 2:45
ARIZONA CORPORATION COMMISSION
DOCKET CONTROL
Arizona Corporation Commission
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MAY 1 2009
DOCKETED BY [Signature]

Arizona Corporation Commission Public Comment Form

Step 1

This form should be used for public comments pertaining to a specific pending case only. Please be sure to reference the appropriate docket number so your comments are filed in the docket promptly. Please use the Consumers Services Assistance Form for complaints, inquiries or general inquiries.

Step 2

YOUR NAME Deanna Hardt	DATE 3/11/2009
ADDRESS, CITY, STATE AND ZIP 12803 E 45th Dr, Yuma, AZ 85367	YOUR PHONE NUMBER (928) 329-9652
DOCKET YOU WISH TO COMMENT ON: Rate Application of Far West Water & Sewer Co	DOCKET NUMBER WS-03478A-08-0454
CASE OR UTILITY NAME Far West Water & Sewer	YOUR POSITION ON THE DOCKET PRO <input type="radio"/> CON <input checked="" type="radio"/> OTHER <input type="radio"/>
YOUR E-MAIL ADDRESS stargazer7575@aol.com	

Step 3

ENTER YOUR COMMENTS HERE:

My complaint is primarily in regards to the water bill, however, the complaint I feel is valid, because of the extremely high rates that Far West Water & Sewer charge. Their charges are unethical. In May 2004, I bought a home in the Foothills. The house was vacant for 6 months because my husband, boyfriend at the time, was doing work on the tile P/T before our Wedding in November. One month's bill was approximately \$660 and the company said they would charge us \$50 to have the meter checked. They said all they would do is place the meter on a machine and run water through it. They suggested ways for us to check for leaks on our own, which we did and found no leaks. So, nevertheless, we paid the amount since they would not do anything for us. The amount of water stated on the bill that we used, was approximately 330,000 gallons. I do not know how they ever got away with this. We kept the bills for future reference, if needed.

If you need additional space for your comments, please use the continuation page below.

Step 4

This form may be completed electronically, printed and mailed to:
Arizona Corporation Commission, Consumer Services Section, 1200 W. Washington St.
Phoenix, Arizona 85007;
or

You may e-mail it as an attachment to:
mailmaster@azcc.gov

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Director Utilities

**Arizona Corporation Commission
Public Comment Form
Continuation Page**

CONTINUE YOUR COMMENTS HERE:

After that, we cut down on watering the grass, and during the first couple of years the bill was around \$200. Finally, the bill dropped to a little under \$100, and the water use has remained the same. Far West's monthly rates are significantly higher than the city, and they have already been approved for an increase at least once that I am aware of during the last five years. At one point, the water out of the sinks smelled like sewer and shortly thereafter, we received a notice stating that the contents of sewer were higher than normal, and that they did correct the problem. At least ten years ago, there was a huge lawsuit against Far West for unsuitable practices resulting in employment death. We believe the rate increases and unethical charges are a means of cushioning the costs of the lawsuit. There was also a situation where an employee was caught embezzling money from H & S Developers, the umbrella company for Far West Water & Sewer. We also believe the rate increases and unethical charges are a means of making up for company loss. Hence, I firmly disagree with the rate increase proposal. If anyone would like copies of the bills I have referred to, please contact me at the above telephone number, and/or E-mail address. Thank you.

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Step 2

YOUR NAME Gerie D Reywalds	DATE 03/06/09
ADDRESS, CITY, STATE AND ZIP 13348 S. AVE 14 1/2 E YUMA AZ 85367	YOUR PHONE NUMBER 503-869-8908
DOCKET YOU WISH TO COMMENT ON: Request for Permanent Rate Increase	DOCKET NUMBER WS-03478A-08-0454
CASE OR UTILITY NAME Far West Water & Sewer	YOUR POSITION ON THE DOCKET PRO <input type="radio"/> CON <input type="radio"/> OTHER <input checked="" type="radio"/>
YOUR E-MAIL ADDRESS grswtp2@Roadrunner.com	

Step 3

ENTER YOUR COMMENTS HERE:

Far West Water & Sewer Co. (FWWS) customers protest the proposed rate hike. According to the joint news release from ADEQ and the Arizona Attorney General's Office, dated September 10, 2008, FWWS has had long standing violations. The neglect of their responsibility to construct and maintain their sewer system resulted in their present crisis. FWWS apparently cut corners to save money and the owners profited in the continued growth as they developed other business interests. This, combined with inadequate planning to maintain compliance with ADEQ regulations resulted in their self made crisis. Now that ADEQ has required them to bring all treatment sites up to standards, FWWS wants customers to pay for the mismanagement. Please deny the FWWS request for a rate hike. Any alleged financial hardship appears to be associated with poor management and greed and therefore, is not the responsibility of the customers.

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Step 2

YOUR NAME <i>MICHAEL RODRIGUEZ</i>	DATE <i>03/10/09</i>
ADDRESS, CITY, STATE AND ZIP <i>11599 E. 27TH ST YUMA, AZ 85367</i>	YOUR PHONE NUMBER <i>773-456-2563</i>
DOCKET YOU WISH TO COMMENT ON: Request for Permanent Rate Increase	DOCKET NUMBER WS-03478A-08-0454
CASE OR UTILITY NAME Far West Water & Sewer	YOUR POSITION ON THE DOCKET PRO <input type="radio"/> CON <input checked="" type="radio"/> OTHER <input type="radio"/>
YOUR E-MAIL ADDRESS <i>MRVOLPP@VAH100.COM</i>	

Step 3

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 AZ CORP COMM
 Director Utilities

WS-03478A-08-0454

ARIZONA CORPORATION COMMISSION
UTILITY COMPLAINT FORM

Investigator: Richard Martinez

Phone: [REDACTED]

Fax: [REDACTED]

Priority: Respond Within Five Days

Opinion No. 2009 77369

Date: 3/9/2009

Complaint Description: 08A Rate Case Items - Opposed
N/A Not Applicable

Complaint By: First: Barbara Last: Cate

Account Name: Barbara Cate

Home: [REDACTED]

Street: [REDACTED] et

Work:

City: Yuma

CBR:

State: AZ Zip: 85367

is:

Utility Company: Far West Water & Sewer, Inc.

Division: Water

Contact Name: [REDACTED]

Contact Phone: [REDACTED]

Nature of Complaint:

(WS-03478A-08-0454)

Customer is against proposed rate increase by Arizona American Water Company as she does not believe the increase to the sewer rate is justified. Especially those charge a minimum monthly fee while they are not in town and away during the summer months.

End of Complaint

Utilities' Response:

na

End of Response

Investigator's Comments and Disposition:

I told customer that her Opinion would be entered into the database for the record and her Opinion would be docketed so that the Commissioners would have an opportunity to read her concerns prior to rendering their decision. FILE CLOSED.

I called Barbara Cates (an elderly woman) and asked her if the water company's proposed rate increase she was objecting to was AAWC and she said no it was Far West. This is not what she initially told me when I asked her.

Deb, thanks for catching this before it was docketed. I changed this as well on my Opinion # 77369.

I emailed this OPINION to Carmen Madrid @ ACC Phoenix Office to have this docketed towards Far West Water & Sewer, Inc.- Docket No.WS-03478A-08-0454

End of Comments

Date Completed: 3/9/2009

ARIZONA CORPORATION COMMISSION
UTILITY COMPLAINT FORM

Opinion No. 2009 - 77369

WS-03478A-08-0454

ARIZONA CORPORATION COMMISSION
UTILITY COMPLAINT FORM

Investigator: Carmen Madrid

Phone: [REDACTED]

Fax: [REDACTED]

Priority: Respond Within Five Days

Opinion No. 2009 76892

Date: 2/24/2009

Complaint Description: 08A Rate Case Items - Opposed
N/A Not Applicable

Complaint By: First: Wallace Last: Nesbitt

Account Name: Wallace Nesbitt

Home: (000) 000-0000

Street: [REDACTED]

Work: (000) 000-0000

City: Yuma

CBR: [REDACTED]

State: AZ Zip: 85367

is: E-Mail

Utility Company: Far West Water & Sewer, Inc.

Division: Water

Contact Name: n/a

Contact Phone: n/a

Nature of Complaint:

From: Wallace Nesbitt [mailto:[REDACTED]]
Sent: Thursday, February 19, 2009 10:10 PM
To: Utilities Div - Mailbox
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: docket # -WS-03478A-08-0454

Hello.

Regarding Proposed Rate increases for Far West Water & Sewer Yuma Foothills,

We are new owners out here in the Foothills - 2 yrs. When we purchased I did some homework about utilities and costs and how old the water systems were and if the wastewater treatment plant was new and in compliance. I have spent many yrs around the wastewater industry and have owned and operated wastewater treatment plants in subdivisions and actually financing the R + D on a new type of treatment for waste water. I am very familiar with some of the problems with keeping a wastewater treatment plant in compliance. I was told that there were a few small problems here in the foothills but that is expected when you have a system designed for constant flows and you have all the extra loading in the winter months.

This system should have been engineered from the start for this type of loading. I understand that this system was totally in compliance in 2006.

Small rate increases are expected as operating costs increase but NOT 300% IN ONE YEAR !! that is wrong or some one is guilty of serious mismanagement. If this wastewater treatment plant is now out of compliance or is overloaded with new or expected new volumes of waste water flows then it should be up to the developer bringing the new flows on stream to enlarge the waste water treatment plant or build a new one to handle these added flows at there expense.

If the state changed the discharge criteria then that is different but NOT to treat larger volumes of flows that are being created by the same developer.

The state of Arizona / county or who ever is in charge of granting development permits should know what

ARIZONA CORPORATION COMMISSION
UTILITY COMPLAINT FORM

volume a wastewater treatment plant is capable of and should NOT be granting new development permits unless the developer agrees to burden the expense of upgrading the waste water treatment plant themselves. It appears obvious that Far West's urgency is to increase the volumes of wastewater treatment to occupy the expected new flows from new subdivisions and not to bring the present flows up to a new treatment standard. We ask you NOT to approve this rate increase.

Best Regards
Wallace Nesbitt
[REDACTED]

Yuma AZ
85367

End of Complaint

Utilities' Response:

Investigator's Comments and Disposition:

Opinion noted and filed in docket WS-03478A-08-0454. closed

End of Comments

Date Completed: 3/11/2009

Opinion No. 2009 - 76892

Arizona Corporation Commission Public Comment Form

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Step 2

YOUR NAME Russell L. Jensen	DATE 3/2/2009
ADDRESS, CITY, STATE AND ZIP 13446 East 55th Street, Yuma, AZ. 85367	YOUR PHONE NUMBER (435) 650-1387
DOCKET YOU WISH TO COMMENT ON: Far West Water and Sewer rate increase	DOCKET NUMBER WS-03478A-08-0454
CASE OR UTILITY NAME Far West Water and Sewer Company	YOUR POSITION ON THE DOCKET PRO <input type="radio"/> CON <input checked="" type="radio"/> OTHER <input type="radio"/>
YOUR E-MAIL ADDRESS rjensen51@hotmail.com	

Step 3

ENTER YOUR COMMENTS HERE:

I am opposed to the proposed rate increase by Far West Water and Sewer. The Company proposes to increase our current rate of \$21.75 by 150 percent in phase one, 195 percent in phase two and over 240 percent in phase three. These increases are way out of line with current rates in Arizona and nationwide. For example Phoenix's monthly rate as of 03-03-08 is \$28.50, Pima County \$23.61 as of 09-11-08, Prescott has a \$9.50 base rate plus \$2.05 per 1,000 gal. of water usage. The national average is \$23.00 per month according to the American Water Works Association. Many residents suspect gross mismanagement and lack of oversight as a prime reason Far West may be in trouble financially. There should be a complete audit of their operations and records. Subdivisions continue to be built without regard to what it is doing to the system.

If you need additional space for your comments, please use the continuation page below.

Step 4

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 Arizona Corporation Commission, Consumer Services Section, 1200 W. Washington St.
 Phoenix, Arizona 85007;
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**Arizona Corporation Commission
Public Comment Form
Continuation Page**

CONTINUE YOUR COMMENTS HERE:

I realize that everyone is being impacted by these tough economic times including companies like Far West Water. Individuals are likewise being impacted by the economy and this is no time to burden society with unjust expenses.

I would support a legitimate request for an increase that would reflect the State and National averages.

I realize that ability to pay is not a good reason to approve or disapprove a rate increase, however, there are a lot of individuals living in the area served by Far West Water and Sewer that are retired and living on a fixed income. Inappropriate rate increases is just another way that will decrease their quality of life.

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Step 2

YOUR NAME <i>Rose MARIE MOORE</i>	DATE <i>3/11/09</i>
ADDRESS, CITY, STATE AND ZIP <i>14151 E 49th Lane, Yuma, AZ 85367</i>	YOUR PHONE NUMBER <i>928-342-2577</i>
DOCKET YOU WISH TO COMMENT ON: Request for Permanent Rate Increase	DOCKET NUMBER WS-03478A-08-0454
CASE OR UTILITY NAME Far West Water & Sewer	YOUR POSITION ON THE DOCKET PRO <input type="radio"/> COM <input checked="" type="radio"/> OTHER <input type="radio"/>
YOUR E-MAIL ADDRESS	

Step 3

ENTER YOUR COMMENTS HERE:

Far West Water & Sewer Co. (FWWS) customers protest the proposed rate hike. According to the joint news release from ADEQ and the Arizona Attorney General's Office, dated September 10, 2008, FWWS has had long standing violations. The neglect of their responsibility to construct and maintain their sewer system resulted in their present crisis. FWWS apparently cut corners to save money and the owners profited in the continued growth as they developed other business interests. This, combined with inadequate planning to maintain compliance with ADEQ regulations resulted in their self made crisis. Now that ADEQ has required them to bring all treatment sites up to standards, FWWS wants customers to pay for the mismanagement. Please deny the FWWS request for a rate hike. Any alleged financial hardship appears to be associated with poor management and greed and therefore, is not the responsibility of the customers.

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Step 2

YOUR NAME Lana P. Hodges	DATE 3/11/2009
ADDRESS, CITY, STATE AND ZIP 13201 East 55th Dr.	YOUR PHONE NUMBER (435) 757-4373
DOCKET YOU WISH TO COMMENT ON: WS-03478A-08-0454 and WS-03478A-08-0608	DOCKET NUMBER Both
CASE OR UTILITY NAME Far West Water & Sewer	YOUR POSITION ON THE DOCKET PRO <input type="radio"/> CON <input type="radio"/> OTHER <input checked="" type="radio"/>
YOUR E-MAIL ADDRESS lhodges99@yahoo.com	

Step 3

ENTER YOUR COMMENTS HERE:

I am a winter resident of the Foothills, and I understand it cost's money to maintain a utility, but what the Far West Sewer Company is asking for is way out of line. They are asking for an increase because of major construction program to upgrade and improve its sewer treatment facilities. Is this up grade to service additional customers or the existing customers? if it is the existing customers, the system should have been built in the begining to handle the those customers and we should not have to pay again. Expecially when the treatmentt plant is not used to full capacity for over 6 months of the year. If any of the rate increase is for new developement, as I understand the owners of Far West are also the developers of many developements that have been started (H & S Dev.) then the new customers should pay for any improvements, and the county of Yuma should have made that a requirement for any new permits (does the county assess impact fees?)

If you need additional space for your comments, please use the continuation page below.

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Arizona Corporation Commission, Consumer Services Section, 1200 W. Washington St.
Phoenix, Arizona 85007;
or

You may e-mail it as an attachment to:
mailmaster@azcc.gov

Lana P Hodges
111 West Hodges Canyon Rd.
Garden City, Utah 84028

**Arizona Corporation Commission
Public Comment Form
Continuation Page**

CONTINUE YOUR COMMENTS HERE:

The amount requested by Far West if approved would be \$7,200,000 for 8,000 customers per year and approximately 50% or more of those customers do not use the system for 6 months or less. I would hope that the commission takes a close audit of the books of Far West to see if there is mismanagement and fraud with this company before any decision is made concerning any increase. I do not think the existing customers should be lining the pockets for private enterprise or bailing out the company and paying for future deveopement, If they cannot manage the utility they should go bankrupt and the County should take over. I would appreciate an email of any decisions. Thank you

Arizona Corporation Commission Consumer Inquiry and/or Complaint Form

Arizona Corporation Commission, Consumer Services Section, 1200 W. Washington St.
Phoenix, Arizona 85007

Before submitting a complaint to the ACC please visit this [link](#) to determine if the Commission regulates this service. If the company is regulated, please contact the company first. If you have already contacted your utility and are not satisfied with its response, please fill out this form and return the address above.

YOUR NAME <i>JERRY L. BARTON</i>	DATE <i>03-12-09</i>
ADDRESS, CITY, STATE AND ZIP <i>14341 E 50th DR - YUMA AZ 85367</i>	PHONE (HOME) <i>928 345 4531</i>
NAME THAT APPEARS ON THE BILL <i>JERRY L. BARTON</i>	ALTERNATE PHONE (DAYTIME) <i>253-334-9994</i>
NAME OF THE UTILITY COMPANY <i>FAR WEST WATER & SEWER INC</i>	ACCOUNT NUMBER <i>0000032056</i>
E-MAIL ADDRESS <i>NONE</i>	CHECK HERE TO CONFIRM THAT YOU HAVE ALREADY CONTACTED THE UTILITY (SEE STEP 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

DOCKET NO. W.S. 034789-08-0454

PLEASE SUMMARIZE YOUR COMPLAINT OR INQUIRY:

To The Commission's Utilities Division Of Yuma County:

My wife and I bought a lot in the foothills that had paved roads, with power, water, sewer, telephone and cable TV on site. Knowing this, we felt that all utilities were in place so that we could build a small home to snowbird in the winter months. It came as quite a shock that Far West Sewer & Water would ask for a 215% rate hike. I understand reasons for rate hikes as cost to operate a facility goes up over time, but a rate increase should be reasonable. It is not the fault of the customers of Far West or the "company" for building an inadequate system. One would think each lot has a potential to produce so much sewage each day and this should have been factored into the system. I would like the commission to really study this problem and perhaps suggest to the company that they find other ways to finance their mistakes.

Please include copies of any documentation, such as bills, that our office would need to provide a response.

Jerry And Janice Barton
14341 E 50th Dr
Yuma, Arizona 85367