

ORIGINAL

COMMISSIONERS
BOB STUMP - Chairman
GARY PIERCE
BRENDA BURNS
BOB BURNS
SUSAN BITTER SMITH



ARIZONA CORPORATION COMMISSION

January 29, 2013

To: Docket Control

RE: Far West Water & Sewer, Inc. - Petition
Docket No. WS-03478A-12-0307

Please docket the attached 80 customer signatures 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

Arizona Corporation Commission
DOCKETED

JAN 29 2013

DOCKETED BY *[Signature]*

RECEIVED
2013 JAN 29 P 3:35
ARIZONA CORPORATION COMMISSION
DOCKET CONTROL

WS-03478A-12-0307

ARIZONA CORPORATION COMMISSION
UTILITY COMPLAINT FORM

Investigator: Scott Friedson

Phone:

Fax:

Priority: Respond Within Five Days

Opinion No. 2013 - 108124

Date: 1/29/2013

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

First:

Last:

Complaint By: PETITION

PETITION

Account Name: PETITION PETITION

Home: (000) 000-0000

Street: Unknown

Work:

City: Yuma

CBR:

State: AZ Zip: 85367

is:

Utility Company: Far West Water & Sewer, Inc.

Division: Sewer

Contact Name:

Contact Phone:

Nature of Complaint:

1/29/13

*****PETITION***** Letters sent in by 10 consumers all OPPOSED*****WS-03478A-12-0307*****

Arizona Corporation Commission
1200 W. Washington
Phoenix, Arizona 85007

RE: Docket No. WS-03478A-12-0307

To Whom It May Concern:

We are writing to you as concerned property owners. We recently received notification regarding a proposed price increase of 188%. This increase is not only excessive, but far above and beyond any acceptable increase due to operating expenses incurred due to annual inflation. It is disturbing that Far West find it necessary to inflict such a steep increase when they do not participate in the standard practice of charging tap fees which fund the expansion capital for the majority of utility companies throughout the country.

Considering that a large percent of Far West's clientele is comprised of part-time residents who spend an average of 4 months each year using the current sewer system, Far West appears to be attempting to gain expansion capital for service not rendered. Under close examination, the proposed increase will cost the average part-time resident an average of \$187.90 per month of use while inhabiting their residence.

Current Fee: \$21.75
188% increase: \$62.65
Increased rate per year: \$751.80
Average for a 4 month resident: \$187.95

ARIZONA CORPORATION COMMISSION
UTILITY COMPLAINT FORM

It is not unexpected to incur small increases in service fees, such as 10-15%, on occasion. It is also expected that a fee for the administrative cost of maintaining service during months of disuse. However, an increase of 188% exceeds simply "excessive".

It would be in the best interest of ACC to advise Far West to consider the implementation of standard tap-fees as employed by similar utility companies. This would serve Far West's need to build expansion capital for future expansion of their utilities, and still serve their current clients at reasonable rates.

Signed by:

1. Mr. & Mrs. Norman Shepherd
 2. Cliff & Carolyn Flintoff
 3. Darcy and Arline St. Martin
 4. Philip L. & Donna Morken
 5. Jack & Ileana Gaskins
 6. Harold E. Hefner
 7. Ronald & Phyllis Unke
 8. Dorothy L. Ward
 9. Mike Clark
 10. Paul & Thelma Slaughter
- *End of Complaint*

Utilities' Response:

Investigator's Comments and Disposition:

1/29/13 Comments entered for the record and filed in docket # WS-03478A-12-0307. CLOSED.
End of Comments

Date Completed: 1/29/2013

Opinion No. 2013 - 108124

WS-03478A-12-0307

ARIZONA CORPORATION COMMISSION
UTILITY COMPLAINT FORM

Investigator: Scott Friedson

Phone:

Fax:

Priority: Respond Within Five Days

Opinion No. 2013 - 108126

Date: 1/29/2013

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

Complaint By: First: PETITION Last: PETITION

Account Name: PETITION PETITION

Home: (000) 000-0000

Street: Unknown

Work:

City: Yuma

CBR:

State: AZ Zip: 85367

is:

Utility Company: Far West Water & Sewer, Inc.

Division: Sewer

Contact Name:

Contact Phone: \

Nature of Complaint:

1/29/13

*****PETITION***** Letters sent in by 3 consumers all OPPOSED*****WS-03478A-12-0307*****

Arizona Corporation Commission
1200 W. Washington
Phoenix, Arizona 85007

RE: Docket No. WS-03478A-12-0307

To Whom It May Concern:

I/we are writing as a concerned citizen(s) regarding the current problems and requested rate increase by Far West.

In the past, Far West has been granted funds by the City, County, State and Federal Government for the installation of a fully-functioning sewer system in the Foothills area. To date, they have not fulfilled the "fully-functioning" part of this project for which they received public-funded grant funds. At this time, it is prudent to have a full disclosure of the use of the funds appropriated to Far West to insure the funds are not being misappropriated and are being used in accordance with the Federal Utilities Commission and individual grant guidelines.

It is the opinion of the undersigned property owner that it would be in the best interest of the community to issue a temporary moratorium on the development of and sale of the properties served by Far West, to ensure the preservation of the public health in the area, until such time as this issue is resolved and Far West has a fully-functioning sewer system. Furthermore, I/we believe Far West should remain under strict observation by ACC to ensure both accountability as a public utility and safety of the public health.

ARIZONA CORPORATION COMMISSION
UTILITY COMPLAINT FORM

At this time, Far West has received public grants and continues to collect fees for monthly service from part-time residents who do not require service for a majority of the year, but they are neither still able to fulfill their obligations nor remain operating within a positive-cash-flow budget. Regardless of the reasons for the current situation, - be they mismanagement, misappropriation, miscalculations, or simply poor planning, - it is obvious by their request for a 188% increase in fees, that Far West continues to lack the ability to adequately manage the area's sewage disposal system. However, they continue to be permitted to expand their development with an inadequate system.

I/we strongly urge ACC to take immediate action in addressing the sewage issue with Far West. It would be in the best interest of ACC and the property owners directly affected to hold a public meeting in Yuma before mid-March when many of the part-time residents return to their summer residences. This would provide ACC with the broadest spectrum of issues and possible resolutions to this on-going issue.

Signed by:

1. Ruth Barber
 2. Dorothy Crown
 3. Leonard T. & Bertha A. Reed
- *End of Complaint*

Utilities' Response:

Investigator's Comments and Disposition:

1/29/13 Comments entered for the record and filed in docket # WS-03478A-12-0307. CLOSED.
End of Comments

Date Completed: 1/29/2013

Opinion No. 2013 - 108126

WS-03478A-12-0307

ARIZONA CORPORATION COMMISSION
UTILITY COMPLAINT FORM

Investigator: Al Amezcua

Phone:

Fax: (

Priority: Respond Within Five Days

Opinion No. 2013 - 108130

Date: 1/29/2013

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

Complaint By: First: PETITION Last: PETITION

Account Name: PETITION PETITION

Home: (000) 000-0000

Street: N/A

Work: (000) 000-0000

City: Yuma

CBR:

State: AZ Zip: 85367

is:

Utility Company: Far West Water & Sewer, Inc.

Division: Sewer

Contact Name:

Contact Phone:

Nature of Complaint:

1/29/2013

PETITION OPPOSED WS-03478A-12-0307 ***** Letters sent in by 16 consumers all

To Whom It May Concern:

RE: Docket No. WS-03478A-12-0307
Far West Water & Sewer, Inc.

We are home owners in the Foothills of Yuma, Arizona. We wish register our very strongest objections to the proposed wastewater increase by Far West Water and Sewer, Inc. In the filing of Docket No. WS-03478A-12-0307 Far West Water and Sewer, Inc. has filed for a residential wastewater increase from \$21.75 to \$62.65 per month, or 188.05% increase.

We request that the Arizona Corporation Commission decline this request by Far West and do not allow this 188.05% increase to pass.

The Foothills area of Yuma, Arizona is a community made up largely of retired senior citizens living in small homes, modular homes, park model units and recreational vehicles. An increase of this amount would present an enormous hardship on this entire population who are already struggling with fixed and declining income late in life. It would dramatically impact the ability of most of this population to remain in their homes and even in this area. Given the size of this increase, the possible resulting departure of this population from the Foothills of Yuma would in no small way impact the City of Yuma and the County given the tax base they represent.

Please use the power given to protect the small home owner and refuse this request.

Thank you for taking the time to register our objection to the proposed 188.05% increase.

ARIZONA CORPORATION COMMISSION
UTILITY COMPLAINT FORM

Yours Sincerely,

Submitted by:

1. Lyle & Jade Matlock
 2. Mel Parse
 3. Jack Lowrey
 4. Vernon & Gwen Ellison
 5. Don Hermance
 6. Alice Young
 7. Sharon Johnson
 8. Donald & Violet R Vigne
 9. Ron Carter & Flora Ayres
 10. Jasper M Purdy
 11. James F Sattler
 12. Earl D Smith
 13. Larry & Deborah McCurdy
 14. Tony & Juanita Quinn
 15. Richard Geide
 16. Tom & Della Beckham
- *End of Complaint*

Utilities' Response:

Investigator's Comments and Disposition:

Comments noted for the record and docketed. CLOSED.

End of Comments

Date Completed: 1/29/2013

Opinion No. 2013 - 108130

WS-03478A-12-0307

**ARIZONA CORPORATION COMMISSION
UTILITY COMPLAINT FORM**

Investigator: Tom Davis

Phone:

Fax:

Priority: Respond Within Five Days

Opinion No. 2013 - 108131

Date: 1/29/2013

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

Complaint By: **First:** PETITION **Last:** PETITION

Account Name: PETITION PETITION

Home: (000) 000-0000

Street: n/a

Work: (000) 000-0000

City: n/a

CBR:

State: AZ Zip: n/a

is:

Utility Company: Far West Water & Sewer, Inc.

Division: Sewer

Contact Name:

Contact Phone:

Nature of Complaint:

***** WS-03478A-12-0307 ***** ***** Petition signed by 25 customers *****

Customer sent the following -

We would like to ask the Arizona Corporation Commission to NOT APPROVE the application submitted by Far West Water and Sewer Company, Docket Number - WS-03478A-12-0307.

Far West provides water and sewer service to the Foothills area east of Yuma. There are approximately 8,000 residential and commercial customers in this unincorporated area of Yuma County who would receive a rate increase of 188.05%. Once approved, this new rate would be the permanent rate and would continue until Far West decided to raise the rates again.

Winter residents increase Yuma's population each year by more than 80,000 people with the majority of them living in the Foothills. As customers of Far West they are required to pay for 12 months of service but may only be in residence 3-4 months.

If the proposed increase passes it would only succeed in further devastating the local economy. There are many folks who live paycheck to paycheck and the increase could potentially force many people to sell or go into foreclosure.

WE FEEL THIS ENORMOUS INCREASE IS NOT JUSTIFIED!!!!!!

Submitted by:

- 1 - Michael & Connie Norquist
- 2 - Charles Humphreys
- 3 - Leon & Linda Magill
- 4 - Barbara McKay

ARIZONA CORPORATION COMMISSION
UTILITY COMPLAINT FORM

- 5 - Daniel McKay
- 6 - Deryl R & Linda M Hadlock
- 7 - Verna M. Oliver
- 8 - Ken Williamson
- 9 - Jeanne Watterberg
- 10 - Robert Horn
- 11 - Frank L Simon
- 12 - Jack R French
- 13 - Vincent G. Sindt
- 14 - Anna Darlene Young
- 15 - Lance B. Watterburg
- 16 - Verna S. Berghoff
- 17 - Violet R. Coburn
- 18 - Sue Tilley
- 19 - Allen Tuma
- 20 - Betty & Norm Miller
- 21 - Carolyn Landes
- 22 - Lewis C. Rounds
- 23 - Norman Wagner
- 24 - Dan Emerson
- 25 - Cecil & Helen Bowers
- *End of Complaint*

Utilities' Response:

Investigator's Comments and Disposition:

Comments entered for the record and filed with Docket Control.

CLOSED

End of Comments

Date Completed: 1/29/2013

Opinion No. 2013 - 108131

ARIZONA CORPORATION COMMISSION

UTILITY COMPLAINT FORM

because, since 2003, they pay for 6 months of sewer fees despite being unable to flush their toilets because they have returned to their primary residences.

E. Of the "full time" Foothills residents there is a large percentage of Retirees living on a fixed income. Many more are the working class. If the proposed increase passes it would only succeed in further devastating the local economy. There are many folks who live paycheck to paycheck as it is. A fee increase as proposed could potentially force many people to sell or foreclose. With the housing market as it is today, this will only add to the declining economy.

IN CONCLUSION:

* We don't feel that the current customers should incur the costs necessary to cover a new wastewater plant needed to serve future growth. At most this cost should be absorbed by impact fees on the new lots being developed. We believe they have not suggested this because it would reduce the parent company's building profits, in part due to the recession limiting the builder's inability to charge more than the market will bear.

* We further feel that this increase is also being requested as a direct result of negligence on the part of Far West Water & Sewer. It appears as if they're poor planning failed to prevent numerous ADEQ violations. We the customers of Far West Water and Sewer do not feel that this is a cost that should be transferred to current customers.

* We feel that Far West Water and Sewer Co., should have maintained the current facilities as repeated violations have been submitted since 1990 from ADEQ as well as the September 9, 2008, 49 page compliant in Maricopa County Superior Court in which 50 counts were filed against these companies, and again in 2010 when additional fines were filed for wastewater violations and negligence. In 2006 the plant finally came into compliance with ADEQ receiving permission to allow more hookups. Maintaining is what the company should have focused on, but instead they only increased their lagoon by 300%.

THEREFORE, we feel that this enormous increase is not justified. We the current owners feel that the extra charges requested are to aid H & S Developers and Far West Water and Sewer in paying settlements incurred due to lawsuits and penalties owed to ADEQ for lack of safety and loss of life. We also feel it is possible that Far West is trying to offset the costs incurred by H & S Development Co.'s newer developments. Their lack of sales and poor investments are not our responsibility. Far West Water and Sewer and H & S Developers for years should have been investing their revenues in maintaining the system they have in place. If that had been the case, they would not be requesting this large increase.

Other cities in Arizona* have been investigated and it has been found that they have seen rate increases of 5 - 9.5%. A small percentage is acceptable and necessary, but 188% IS NOT. We the customers cannot afford this increase. We hope you will consider our concerns and VOTE NAY on this application Thank you.

Dated this 27th day of December, 2012

*Average Sewer Rates around Arizona"

Tuscon: \$40.89/month- however if you are gone for 1 month or more only monthly service fee of \$11.86 is charged.

Phoenix: \$34.25/ month

Submitted by:

1. Robin Soule
2. Kenneth & Dorothy Sackrider
3. Al & Brenda Hardy
4. Larry Glover
5. Marion L Buzzard
6. Emry Latimer

ARIZONA CORPORATION COMMISSION
UTILITY COMPLAINT FORM

7. Joyce Spaulding
 8. Darrel E Morrison
 9. Paul B Larimore
 10. Clayne Benson
 11. Loretta G Edwards
 12. Richard L Plehn
 13. Candace Abbott
 14. Keith M Goodall
 15. Lindell & Elva Keller
 16. Lynn Page
 17. Raymond Butler
 18. Harold & Frances Scidmore
 19. Vincent & Ladda Pinola
 20. Norman L Canada
 21. Steve M & Janet M Hren
 22. Kenneth Fleming
 23. Donna & C Leroy Pease
 24. E Scott Tabery
 25. Carol Cornett
 26. Donald & Geraldine Myles
- *End of Complaint*

Utilities' Response:

Investigator's Comments and Disposition:

1/29/13 Comments noted for the record and docketed. CLOSED.
End of Comments

Date Completed: 1/29/2013

Opinion No. 2013 - 108129
