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Sonja Bramble

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Payson, AZ 85541
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OPEN MEETING AGENDA ITEM

RECEIVED
2013 OCT 22 P 4: 14
AZ CORP COMMISSION
DOCKET COMMITTEE

October 21, 2013

Arizona Corporation Commission

DOCKETED

OCT 22 2013

Arizona Corporation Commission
Commissioners Wing
1200 W. Washington – 2nd Floor
Phoenix, Arizona 85007

DOCKETED BY [Signature]

Dear Bob Stump,

I am writing to protest the proposed water rate increase for the community of Flowing Springs by the Payson Water Company. The lack of communication, information, and justification for this outrageously high increase is disturbing. The date of the hearing was less than a week from the day we got the notice, and since both my husband and I work, we were unable to attend the hearing. That has been the ONLY communication to us from the new owner of our local water company about his desire to more than double our monthly water bills.

From reading reports in the local newspaper, it appears the new owner of the water company (previously owned by Brooke Utilities) wants to recoup his expected costs of having to provide Cragin Reservoir water to Mesa del Caballero on the backs of all the other surrounding communities. The reason none of the other communities, besides Mesa del, elected not to participate in the Cragin water project is because it was not a realistic financial option for us. Our water is pumped from within our individual communities and is not tied in with Mesa del in any conceivable way.

Having lived in Flowing Springs for over twelve years and watched the frequent changing of hands with our water company (this is the third water owner now), we do not understand why a rate increase of 118% is financially required. It does not cost any more today than it did yesterday to pump the water out of the ground (less than ¼ mile from our house) and have it flow to our homes. We have not seen any improvements to the water infrastructure since we moved here. The cost to provide water to our homes has not increased a penny; in fact, we are "cash cows" to the Payson Water Company.

The only justification I can see for the 118% increase for ALL Payson Water Company users is that we are meant to subsidize the tremendously high costs to provide Cragin water to the residents of Mesa del. Mesa del residents voted to obtain this water and they are the only ones who should be expected to pay for it.

When an individual purchases a company that has historically lost money, you have to wonder about the motives of this individual. I would think that they either need a write-off for their taxes or they see an opportunity to make money and indeed they are – by

immediately asking for an unheard-of rate increase! I think Payson Water Company customers have the right to know what the cost of service is **specific to their community** to support this requested 118% rate increase.

Since water is a public utility, we do not have the option to "shop around," and that is why the Arizona Corporation Commission is designed to be the watchdog for the public and protect us from individuals coming in to small, rural areas and implementing usurious rate increases with no improvement to infrastructure.

As quoted in the September 24, 2013 issue of the "Payson Roundup," a utility has an obligation to provide adequate services," Jodi Jerich, executive director ACC, "(But) a water utility is entitled to fair and reasonable rates, (and) customers are entitled to fair and reasonable rates (too)."

Rate increases for public utilities are part of life today, and fair, reasonable increases are expected. I would request that a full investigation of Mr. Williamson's business practices be made and that this information then be made available to all the customers of Payson Water Company, prior to any further action being taken by ACC on this rate hike request.

Sincerely,



Sonja Bramble