

From: [Fred Harvey](#)
To: [Statements](#)
Subject: Statement of Position Submitted by Fred Harvey
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Statement of Position Submitted

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Docket

w-354,sub399398

Message

As a resident in the area of Carteret County that would be served by Aqua, I stand opposed to Aqua's acquisition of our water system for the following reasons: • Second only to air, water is life's most essential element. The county's water systems delivers it, and it's a substance that no for-profit enterprise should ever have control over delivering. • The system was created by Carteret Country and its maintenance was promised by the county when it did so, whether expressly or implicitly. The sale of the system breaches that promise. • The county's water system customers should have been paying for its maintenance via fees charged for their water. If they were not, it is owing entirely to incompetent management and budgeting of the water system by county officials. We, the customers of that systems, should not be the ones paying the price for that incompetency. We wanted to pay for its maintenance and thought we were doing so. To relieve themselves of responsibility for their own ineptitude in managing the water system, the commissioners cited a suddenly-discovered shortfall in collections that was years in the making. They were appalled and aghast to discover the shortfall, of course, and the only possible remedy was obvious to them: sell the dastardly thing before its shortfall grew completely out of control. The comedy here is obvious on more than one level but stops when one considers the insidiousness of their staging that newly discovered shortfall as the platform for justifying the sale of the system as if no other solution were available. The \$7 million offer from Aqua was just too attractive to them, as it would ease the commissioners' budgeting burdens and hand them an extra bonus of cash for to spend by caprice. • If Carteret County sells the system to Aqua, the sale will create a de facto corporate monopoly on the supply of water. In doing so the county will have abandoned all control and oversight over rates charged, the quality of the water delivered, and the care and thoroughness given to system's maintenance. And finally, the rates Aqua's customers pay will be at the whim of the corporate officers whose jobs will be to target and obtain specific profit margins, however high those desired profit margins might reach. Water is not cable or internet or cellular phone service. It is far more essential than that and should not be subject to private, for-profit motivations. • Based on third-party reports, in other places Aqua has a history of sharp rate

hikes, poor management of water systems, and delivery of diminished water quality. We don't need that kind of service and we don't need water of a lower quality. • Allowing the county to spin off the system into the hands of a for-profit corporation will absolve the county's commissioners of their incompetency in managing the system, relieve them of any future responsibilities of similar kinds with other systems and programs, and signal that they will be absolved of any responsibility to follow through on other good-faith commitments to its citizens. It will also put the system's customers helplessly under the bootheel of a corporation whose officers will be accountable only to their profit-seeking shareholders. The sale of Carteret County's water system is a bad idea. Bad for the system's customers, bad for residents of other incorporated governmental entities who have extended promises to them, and bad for the notion of governmental accountability in general. Profit should never be a motive when delivering a substance to homes that is crucial to life itself and for the supply of which there is no affordable alternative. I stand opposed to the sale.