

**STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA  
UTILITIES COMMISSION  
RALEIGH**

DOCKET NO. W-354, Sub 398

BEFORE THE NORTH CAROLINA UTILITIES COMMISSION

In the Matter of Application by Carolina Water ) Service, Inc. of North Carolina, ) 5821 Fairview Road, Suite 401, ) Charlotte, North Carolina 28209, ) for Determination of Fair Value ) of Utility Assets Pursuant to N.C. ) Gen. Stat. § 62-133.1A and ) Establishment of Rate Base for ) Acquisition of the Carteret ) County Water System )	RESPONSE TO CUSTOMER CONCERNS---BEAUFORT NC PUBLIC HEARING OCTOBER 18, 2022
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**NOW COMES** Carolina Water Service, Inc. of North Carolina (“CWSNC” or “Company”) and files its report addressing customer service and service quality complaints expressed at the Beaufort public hearing, which was held on October 18, 2022. The Commission’s scheduling order of September 13, 2022, at Ordering Paragraph 4, page 6, required that the report be filed within 14 days after the public witness hearing, which made it due on Tuesday, November 1, 2022. The Company, in the evidentiary proceeding on November 4<sup>th</sup> and in a written request filed on November 7, 2022, requested that the Commission extend the deadline for filing by one week, until Tuesday, November 8<sup>th</sup>.

In response to the expressions of customer concerns about quality, CWSNC submits the following:

**A. CUSTOMER SERVICE/SERVICE QUALITY COMPLAINTS:**

The service quality complaints brought forward variously by four witnesses

addressed yellow water, low pressure, and chalky/foggy residue.

**Patrick Kelly, 204 Shell Landing Road, Beaufort, North Carolina** *Tr. Vol 1, pp. 37 & 41.*

Mr. Kelly testified that “....several people in the neighborhood...” had noticed a decrease in water pressure around 8:00 or 9:00 p.m. and he stated that he had noticed the same for the past four months. He stated that he had not complained to the County, based on a view that it would not do any good (*Tr. Vol.1, p. 41*).

**Company Response:** CWSNC field personnel—after personal contact with Mr. Kelly---reported that Mr. Kelly was complaining of low water pressure, pink rings in toilet and sink, and sediment in the water. Mr. Kelly was not home when the Company initially investigated, and the Company could not test outside spigots because the customer’s outside spigots are connected to a private well (presumably used for irrigation). A door tag was left for Mr. Kelly, inviting him to contact CWSNC personnel to set up an in person meeting to test water quality. CWSNC operations staff again visited the residence on October 25<sup>th</sup>, met with Mr. Kelly, performed a field test of the system water, and did not see any staining or sediment in the water. The results of the field test and an explanatory document are submitted as Attachment A; it shows nothing outside the acceptable range of measurement except for the Secondary MCL standard for Manganese.

**Ms. Lisa Camp, 108 Cupid Drive, Beaufort.** *Tr. Vol. 1, pp. 53-63.*

Ms. Camp complained that she and her hairdresser had noticed the water had become yellow (p. 56). She discussed the experience with yellow water, indicated

she had not complained about it because she did not think it would matter, and stated that she had not experienced problems with low pressure. (p. 62)

**Company Response:** When the Operations team visited Ms. Camp's house, no one was home so the technician left a door tag informing the customer that the Company had come by for an inspection and providing instructions on how to contact CWSNC. In a field visit consisting of visual inspection of the water and a field test via an analysis of the water, no yellow water was visible. In addition to the visual inspection, the Company tested the pH, chlorine, phosphate, iron, free ammonia and Monochloramines and all parameters were found to be in the normal range. The results were all within normal ranges.

**Ms. Jennifer Day, 207 Wallace Road, Beaufort** (*Tr. Vol. 1, pp. 63--69*), complained of low pressure and yellow water. She testified to a strong smell, on an intermittent basis, which she correlated with testing and treatment (*pp. 65-66*).

**Company Response:** Ms. Day was home when the CWSNC tech investigated, and so she was notified in person of what the Company was doing. The water quality was tested on an outside spigot. Water pressure was 52 psi with a flow rate of 6.5 gallons per minute—both of which are in the normal range. The customer is the last home on a dead-end water main. No yellow water was visible. Field test were analyzed and all are within the range of normal.

As to the intermittent strong smell of chlorine, the Company believes that Ms. Day is correct in surmising that it is associated with the fact that her residence is the final service on a dead-end line. The Company will increase flushing frequency to

allow for better water turnover.

**Ms. Liz Ponder, 163 Shell Landing Road, Beaufort** (*Tr. Vol. 1, pp. 69---84*)

complained of low pressure, yellow water, and a chalky finish on her dishes.

**Company Response:** The customer was not home when the CWSNC tech came to investigate and several attempts to contact her have been unsuccessful. No outside spigots were visible so water could not be tested. A door tag was left informing Ms. Ponder that CWSNC can schedule a time to meet to test water quality in person. The Company will continue to try to contact her.

#### **B. COMPLAINTS ABOUT INTERMITTANT DROPS IN PRESSURE IN THE EVENING HOURS.**

This remains a mystery. While a slight decrease in pressure could be attributed to heavy use during peak demand hours, some customers reported the occurrence during the middle of the night. The County had received no complaints about this phenomenon, so County personnel have no insight into existence of the problem, cause, frequency, or duration. CWSNC has checked the water tower levels for anomalies which would affect the water pressure in the system and found little fluctuation, which indicates consistent pressure has been maintained. The Company has ordered and will install a pressure recorder in the distribution system to record the pressure over a two-to-three-day period. It will request that one of the customers who complained about low pressure agree to have the recorder installed at their residence, and it will arrange a system of communication with that customer regarding their observation of a low pressure event.

#### **C. RESPONSE FROM COUNTY**

CWSNC consulted with Carteret County sources and is advised that the County had received no complaints concerning yellow water or pressure issues until the public hearing in Beaufort. The County reports that both issues have been investigated by CWSNC and are unsubstantiated at this point, but that the County continues to monitor the situation.

**D. CONCLUSION**

CWSNC's investigation has consisted of field visits and other attempts to contact customers, visual analyses and field tests of the water (where possible), and analyses of the tanks to search for explanations of pressure anomalies. The answers are thus far elusive, but the Company intends to continue to respond to complaints, which have surfaced for the first time in the context of the public hearing. Continuing efforts include the intention to install a pressure recorder somewhere in the system, at a residence that has reported having low pressure issues. When that is done and after a period of reasonable examination, which should be determined by the Company in accordance with its professional judgment and good practice, the Company proposes that it make a follow-up report to the Commission, filed in the docket.

Respectfully submitted, this the 7<sup>th</sup> day of November, 2022.

**Electronically Submitted**

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*Attorneys for Carolina Water Service,  
Inc. of North Carolina*


**VERIFICATION**

Tony Konsul, being duly sworn, deposes and says: that he is the Operations Director of Carolina Water Service, Inc. of North Carolina; that he is familiar with the facts set out in the attached Response to Customer Concerns, filed by CWSNC in Docket No. W-354 Sub 398; that he has read the foregoing Response and knows the contents thereof; and that the same is true of his knowledge except as to those matters stated therein on information and belief, and as to those he believes them to be true.

  
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Tony Konsul

Sworn to and subscribed before me this  
the 7<sup>th</sup> day of November, 2022.

 Donna Stegall  
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Notary Public Expires: January 8<sup>th</sup>, 2024 



## CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I hereby certify that a true and exact copy of the foregoing Response has been served on all parties or their counsel of record in these dockets by either depositing same in a depository of the United States Postal Service, first-class postage prepaid, or by electronic delivery.

This the 7<sup>th</sup> day of November, 2022.

**/s/Jo Anne Sanford**

*Attorney for Carolina Water Service, Inc.  
of North Carolina*