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PLACE: Onslow County Courthouse
 Jacksonville, North Carolina
DATE: Tuesday, October 25, 2022
DOCKET NO.: W-354, Sub 400
TIME: 7:03 p.m. - 7:28 p.m.
BEFORE: Commissioner Floyd B. McKissick, Jr., Presiding
 Commissioner Kimberly W. Duffley
 Commissioner Karen M. Kemerait

 IN THE MATTER OF:
 Application by
 Carolina Water Service, Inc. of North Carolina,
 4944 Parkway Plaza Boulevard, Suite 375,
 Charlotte, North Carolina 28217,
 for Authority to Adjust and
Increase Rates for Water and Sewer Utility Service in
 All Its Service Areas in North Carolina
 and for Approval of a Water and
 Sewer Investment Plan

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A P P E A R A N C E S:
FOR CAROLINA WATER SERVICE, INC. OF NORTH CAROLINA:
Jo Anne Sanford, Esq.
Sanford Law Office, PLLC
721 North Bloodworth Street
Raleigh, North Carolina 27604

FOR THE USING AND CONSUMING PUBLIC:
John D. Little, Esq.
Public Staff - North Carolina Utilities Commission
4326 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, North Carolina 27699-4300

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T A B L E O F C O N T E N T S
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E X H I B I T S

IDENTIFIED/ADMITTED

(No exhibits were presented)

P R O C E E D I N G S

1
2 COMMISSIONER McKISSICK: The hour has
3 arrived. Let's go ahead and begin this processed
4 hearing. Let me thank all of you for being here this
5 evening. I want to thank the sheriff here, Sheriff
6 Hans Miller for opening up this courthouse. And Clerk
7 of Superior Court, Lisa Brown, and Deputy Palma for
8 being here this evening as well, as well as all of you
9 that are here. I thank our court reporter who is
10 here, Tonja Vines, and all of the Public Staff that
11 has arrived as well, as well as those that are here on
12 behalf of the Carolina Water System.

13 We are going to go ahead through the
14 formalities of opening this hearing. I believe at
15 this point in time, we have one witness who is here
16 who will testify, and we thank you for being here, and
17 we look forward to receiving your testimony. Having
18 to go through the typical formalities that we would go
19 through, it may sound a bit formal, but the reason is
20 we do have a court reporter here who is transcribing
21 all of the testimony and we want to follow all the
22 appropriate process procedures, dot the I's and cross
23 the T's in the event there are any questions that
24 arise at some point in the future.

1 So I'm going to officially open this hearing
2 at this time. It's several minutes past 7:00 or about
3 three minutes past. We'll give people adequate time
4 to get here. Let us come to order and go on the
5 record. I'm Commissioner Floyd B. McKissick, Jr.,
6 presiding Commissioner for this hearing. With me this
7 evening are Commissioners Kimberly W. Duffley and
8 Karen M. Kemerait.

9 I now call for hearing Docket No. W-354, Sub
10 400, in the Matter of the Application by Carolina
11 Water Service, Incorporated of North Carolina for
12 Authority to Adjust and Increase Rates and Charges for
13 Water and Sewer Utility Service in All Service Areas
14 of North Carolina and Approval of a three-year Water
15 and Sewer Investment Plan.

16 On July 1, 2022, Carolina Water Service of
17 North Carolina, who I will refer to at times this
18 evening simply as Carolina Water Service or the
19 Company, filed an application with the Commission
20 seeking authority to adjust and increase its rates for
21 providing water and sewer utility service in all of
22 its North Carolina service areas and for approval to
23 establish and implement a Water and Sewer Investment
24 Plan pursuant to North Carolina General Statute

1 § 62133.1A and Commission Rule R1-17A. Carolina Water
2 Service proposes new rates for a base year and a
3 three-year rate period included in its Water and Sewer
4 Investment Plan. Carolina Water Service currently
5 provides service to approximately 34,565 water
6 customers and 21,469 sewer customers in 38 counties
7 throughout the State of North Carolina. The proposed
8 rate increase is based on a Test Period ending
9 March 31, 2022.

10 On July 22nd, 2022, the Commission issued an
11 Order establishing a general rate case and suspending
12 rates.

13 On September 2nd, 2022, the Commission
14 issued an Order Scheduling Hearing, establishing
15 intervention and testimony due dates, and discovery
16 guidelines and requiring notice. The Order scheduled
17 hearings for the purpose of taking Public Witness
18 Testimony for tonight in Jacksonville, as well as
19 hearings in Raleigh, Boone, and Charlotte. There was
20 also a Public Witness Hearing held virtually by Webex.
21 The Order further scheduled a hearing for the purpose
22 of accepting expert witness testimony to begin on
23 November 28, 2022 in Raleigh beginning at 2 p.m.

24 On September 15th, 2022, Carolina Water

1 Service filed a Certificate of Service showing that a
2 customer notice has been filed.

3 On September 19th, 2022, Carolina Water
4 Service filed updated information regarding its rate
5 case application. That brings us to today. Pursuant
6 to North Carolina General Statute § 138A-15,
7 Subsection (E), I remind Members of the Commission of
8 our duty to avoid conflicts of interest and inquire,
9 at this time, as to whether any Commissioner has any
10 known conflict of interest with respect to this
11 Docket.

12 (No response)

13 COMMISSIONER McKISSICK: Let the record
14 reflect that I have no such conflict and that my
15 fellow Commissioners have not identified any such
16 conflict. I now call upon counsel for the parties to
17 announce their appearances for the record, beginning
18 with the Applicant.

19 MS. SANFORD: Thank you, Commissioner
20 McKissick and Commissioners Duffley and Kemerait. I'm
21 Jo Anne Sanford with the Sanford Law Office in Raleigh
22 representing Carolina Water Service, Inc. of North
23 Carolina this evening. With me at counsel table is
24 State President Don Denton of Carolina Water. And if

1 I might, there are other representatives -- I don't
2 know which way to look and talk. There are other
3 representatives of the Company who are here tonight.
4 I'd like to ask them if they would stand so that the
5 Commission, Public Staff, and our witness know who
6 they are, and they're available for discussions later
7 or after the hearing. Would you stand, please. We
8 have six people stand.

9 COMMISSIONER McKISSICK: Thank you.

10 MS. SANFORD: Thank you. And I won't ask to
11 make an opening statement tonight, but I will thank
12 the Commission, Commissioners, and the witness for
13 coming out to participate in this hearing. We
14 appreciate it.

15 COMMISSIONER McKISSICK: Thank you. Public
16 Staff.

17 MR. LITTLE: Yes. John Little, the Staff
18 Attorney with the Public Staff, and also present in
19 the courtroom is Shashi Bhatta, an Engineer with the
20 Public Staff's Water, Sewer, and Telephone Division.

21 COMMISSIONER McKISSICK: Are there any
22 preliminary matters that we need to go through at this
23 time?

24 MS. SANFORD: No, sir.

1 MR. LITTLE: None from the Public Staff.

2 COMMISSIONER McKISSICK: Okay. Before we
3 begin, I would like to say a few words regarding the
4 process for the hearing tonight. First, I'd like to
5 say that we appreciate you coming here this evening to
6 voice your views and perspectives relating to this
7 important matter, and we welcome your testimony and
8 want to hear from you.

9 In conducting this hearing, the Commission
10 functions in a judicial capacity as we're required to
11 do by North Carolina law. Because the Commission
12 functions as a court, we cannot respond to your
13 questions. Instead, we are here to receive evidence
14 from you, all of you that are in this room this
15 evening who are here to present your testimony. The
16 Public Staff, which represents the Using and Consuming
17 Public, is made a party to this proceeding pursuant to
18 North Carolina General Statute § 62-15 Subsection (D)
19 in this proceeding. The Public Staff represents you,
20 the Using and Consuming Public, and the Public Staff
21 will assist you in providing your testimony tonight.
22 In order to facilitate a full and fair opportunity for
23 all speakers to participate, we will use the following
24 procedures:

1 First, witnesses who wish to testify must
2 sign up with the Public Staff. The Public Staff will
3 call each witness in the order listed on the roster.

4 Number two, in order to allow each person an
5 equal amount of time, there will be a limit of three
6 minutes for each witness to speak. Therefore, we
7 would appreciate it if witnesses would try to avoid
8 any cumulative, repetitive, and redundant testimony.
9 I don't think we're going to have that problem this
10 evening.

11 To comply with the Rules of Procedure and
12 evidence, I must have each witness swear or affirm the
13 truth of his or her testimony. Prior to providing
14 that testimony, when you hear your name called, please
15 proceed to the stand and I will deliver the oath. If
16 you would prefer to affirm your testimony, please let
17 me know that when you come to the stand.

18 After your testimony has been sworn or
19 affirmed, I will ask you to please state your name and
20 address for the evidentiary record and then you may
21 provide your testimony. And please refrain from all
22 opinions or matters that are not related to Carolina
23 Water Services application which is before the
24 Commission in this docket. Also, please be sure to

1 address your testimony to the Commission and not
2 members of the audience. In lieu of oral testimony,
3 you may submit written testimony as long as you swear
4 to its accuracy. Written statements must be submitted
5 by a person under oath during this hearing.

6 Number five, counsel for any party may ask
7 questions of the witnesses tonight. In addition, the
8 Commission will have the opportunity to ask questions.
9 This means that if you provide testimony, you might be
10 asked questions by the attorneys or by the
11 Commissioners.

12 Number six, testimony is being recorded by a
13 court reporter. Therefore, to ensure the accuracy of
14 the record, we ask that you speak clearly and not
15 engage in any conventional -- unconventional modes of
16 testimony such as singing or snapping your fingers or
17 applause. Additionally, please remain quiet when you
18 are not testifying so the court reporter is able to
19 hear the testimony of testifying witnesses.

20 As a final reminder, the Commission and
21 attorneys for the parties are not allowed to respond
22 to your questions during this hearing. However, both
23 the Public Staff and Carolina Water Service have
24 representatives here who will be available after the

1 hearing to answer your questions.

2 Okay. Now, it's time to begin. I
3 understand there are no opening statements?

4 MS. SANFORD: No, sir.

5 COMMISSIONER McKISSICK: From the Company or
6 from the Public Staff?

7 (No response)

8 COMMISSIONER McKISSICK: So the Public Staff
9 can go ahead and call out the first witness, and we
10 appreciate it.

11 MR. LITTLE: Yes, your Honor. The Public
12 Staff would call Mr. John Gumbel to the stand.

13 COMMISSIONER McKISSICK: Mr. Gumbel, please
14 come over here to the stand, witness stand. Thank
15 you. Place your left hand on the bible.

16 JOHN GUMBEL;
17 having been duly sworn,
18 testified as follows:

19 COMMISSIONER McKISSICK: Thank you. Go
20 ahead and be seated. Adjust the microphone to where
21 it's comfortable for you, and feel free to provide
22 your testimony. We're going to be lenient when it
23 comes to that three-minute limitation because I don't
24 see a room full of witnesses waiting to testify.

1 THE WITNESS: So I'm John Gumbel. And any
2 other information you need?

3 COMMISSIONER McKISSICK: If you could state
4 your full address for the record.

5 THE WITNESS: Sure. It's 107 Boros Landing,
6 New Bern, 28567

7 COMMISSIONER McKISSICK: And are you a
8 customer of Carolina Water Service?

9 THE WITNESS: For fixed rate sewer.

10 COMMISSIONER McKISSICK: Okay. In what
11 subdivision?

12 THE WITNESS: Carolina Pines.

13 COMMISSIONER McKISSICK: Okay. Go right
14 ahead.

15 STATEMENT BY MR. GUMBEL:

16 A So you've heard me speak before. I was a speaker
17 on the 19th during one of the six people that
18 spoke on that. I'm kind of amazed at how few
19 people are coming because the last time I was in
20 this courtroom, there was at least 10 us. And so
21 I'm glad I didn't listen to my wife who said you
22 need to quit testifying at these because nothing
23 ever changes. I'm glad I came. So yes, I didn't
24 show up for nothing. It's a long drive from

1 Raleigh.

2 But so I've had Carolina Water
3 Service in there since they bought out our local
4 sewer, and that's been, oh what, since at least
5 maybe 2006 I think is when they bought them out.
6 The rate that I was paying back in the day, you
7 know, when it was privately owned -- the sewer's
8 privately owned now, but when it was owned before
9 Carolina Water Service, was \$33.13. My latest
10 increase, which was the February, '22 increase,
11 is \$85.12.

12 So in the past, what, since 2009,
13 it's gone up 157 percent, which is -- and that's
14 just through the February, '22 increase. That's
15 five and a half times the rate of inflation. And
16 I know we don't really look at CPI that much, but
17 I do -- you know, my degree's in economics from
18 UCLA. I got a couple other master's degrees too,
19 and what I see or what I have seen during this
20 period is Carolina Water Service is doing
21 probably what any company would do. They're
22 taking advantage of the law, they're doing what's
23 required by the law, and they are milking the
24 customers for every dime they can with increase,

1 after increase, after increase. And
2 unfortunately, you know, to the Commissioners --
3 and you haven't been the same Commissioners all
4 along. You know, we've had different
5 Commissioners over this period of time -- is that
6 the Commission never saw a rate increase they
7 didn't like, and they were almost completely
8 approved every time within just a hair.

9 I think that 2022's increase
10 was -- the request was for 88 bucks and it came
11 in at 85. So now, I'm paying over \$1,000 a year
12 just for sewer. \$1,000 a year. And with the
13 requested increases, it would go to \$1,327. So
14 the last two years of increases, the 2021 and the
15 2022, totaled 56 percent compounded. And now,
16 they're asking for another 30 percent compounded
17 over a three-year period. And now, that brings
18 us to what, 234 percent in increases over the
19 last 16 years, which is well beyond the rate of
20 inflation. But we don't consider the rate of
21 inflation, and we don't consider any past
22 increase. It's not even prescribed in
23 Chapter 62, Article 7. It does not tell us how
24 to take care of the consumer. What it says is

1 you must -- to the Commission, you must be fair,
2 reasonable, and just to the consumer. Must,
3 m-u-s-t, is in the law, but it does not prescribe
4 how to do that. It prescribes in infinite detail
5 how to be fair and just to the provider, but
6 nothing is completely silent on how to be fair to
7 me and my fellow consumer. That is left to you
8 to decide how to do. You have the capability and
9 you have the leeway to determine how to be fair
10 and just. But if you never look back at previous
11 increases, you won't have any idea what's being
12 done to the consumer.

13 And I've asked about that before
14 with the Public Staff and others how do you
15 measure compared to what you've done in the past,
16 and the answer is we don't because we are not
17 required to because it's not prescribed in the
18 law. But again, the law does say that you must
19 be fair, must be fair, just, and reasonable to
20 the consumer. And I don't understand. I don't
21 think in any court of law that I could bring the
22 statistics that are easily available to me and
23 that I've compiled over the years that shows the
24 rate of these increases compared to either the

1 CPI or compared to my other utilities: my
2 electric, my propane, my water, all of which have
3 trended down, and I've grasped -- which I've
4 already provided to the Commission. And you've
5 seen what I've provided. My trend lines are all
6 down on those, from 2006 to now, are all down
7 with one exception. And its that, because I have
8 no control over fixed rate sewer.

9 I have lowered my water usage
10 since 2006 until now. I've lowered my electrical
11 usage because I've used LED bulbs and
12 high-efficiency items. I've lowered my gas
13 usage, my propane usage. I can't do anything
14 with my sewer. Now, in some of the previous
15 hearings, we've listened to customers talk about
16 the -- that have variable rates where they have
17 the fixed portion and variable portion, and I
18 think it was the last hearing that we've decided
19 that we would put more into the variable portion
20 because people, you know, wanted to be able to
21 have some control of their efficiencies, that
22 they'd get some reduction from that.

23 Of course that does nothing for me
24 with fixed rate. Nothing. So mine just keeps

1 going up. Things like, you know -- I don't know.
2 I got some other issues in there too that I
3 should probably bring up before I could get to,
4 one of which -- I'll just bring it up now so I
5 don't forget to do it. We got a letter this week
6 from Carolina Water Service saying "Hey, guess
7 what? You can now use any form of payment and
8 we're not going to charge you for it." You know,
9 you can now use credit cards or you can have
10 debit or you can have, you know, whatever you
11 can, like whatever you want to use on that.

12 That was approved last February
13 and went into the rates last February. There was
14 an increase that was authorized to do that. And
15 now, they're just turning it on now, and we've
16 been paying those rates since February. And oh,
17 by the way, when I went in there today to their
18 website to turn that on for me, it still lists
19 all the charges you have to pay to do that.
20 They're all on there. So you've been getting
21 paid since February 1st and you're just turning
22 it on now. And oh, by the way, your website
23 doesn't reflect that. It lists charges for
24 credit cards, charges for debit. It lists

1 charges for direct debit from checking accounts,
2 still on the website.

3 So that to the Commission, you
4 allowed them an increase to fix that, and here it
5 is it's the end of October and yet you've
6 collected that money since the 1st of February,
7 and they're just turning that on now. So that's
8 a side point, but my major point is that -- that
9 the Commission has a requirement in the law to be
10 fair and reasonable and just to the consumer.
11 And just because it's not prescribed how to do
12 that doesn't alleviate that responsibility. And
13 I have never seen that portion of it being done
14 because they get every rate increase. And oh, by
15 the way, it says in the law that the rates must
16 come down because of efficiencies gained by these
17 improvements. I have never had a rate decrease.
18 It does not come down unless it was for a tax
19 reason, you know, like Trump's tax cut or
20 something. Then, I've gotten a slight decrease,
21 but all that happens is the rates go up and up,
22 and they compound on each other.

23 So in the letter that we got from
24 Bob, it said that "Hey, this is far more

1 efficient for us to do it this way," to ask for
2 four rate increases in three years, and they keep
3 coming back here every year. It may be efficient
4 for him. It's not so efficient for me, but he
5 wants the 10 percent, 10.7 percent return on
6 investment. If you notice from this, they don't
7 make the investment. We do. That there is no
8 risk. And if I had a 10.7 percent return from a
9 no-risk investment, I would take it in a heart
10 beat, but I can't invest with them. They're
11 owned by the Forest Group up there, but they're
12 in Victoria, British Columbia which works only
13 for public investment funds up there in Canada,
14 so I can't buy into that. So 10 percent -- 10.7
15 percent return when there is no risk whatsoever
16 involved because every bit of this improvement
17 comes from these rate increases. You know, no --
18 they shouldn't be getting 10.7. I mean -- as an
19 economist, that's absurd for an understatement.

20 I -- you know, I'm -- I'm glad you
21 gave me an opportunity to vent because, you know,
22 I've been in here many times. I've been into the
23 New Bern courthouse. I've been on the phone
24 since we've started -- doing them on the phone

1 during Covid. And each of these comments, taking
2 time with us every day, I really appreciate that,
3 and I appreciate this but, you know, having an
4 opportunity to say pretty much everything I've
5 been wanting to say for these last, you know, 15
6 years just has been pretty helpful to me and I'll
7 be able to tell my wife that it was worth the
8 50-mile drive, you know, down here to do this.

9 So I'm begging you guys and I'm
10 asking the Commission this time, please, this
11 time, ask the economist that's on the Public
12 Staff because they have one. Ask them to produce
13 the data on Carolina Water Service going back at
14 least the last 10 years and maybe the last 15,
15 and compare it to the CPI, and you could see that
16 they're 550 percent above the CPI without this
17 latest increase. And that, you know -- anyway,
18 I've burned up enough of your time.

19 COMMISSIONER McKISSICK: Well, let me thank
20 you for testimony. We had ability to provide some
21 flexibility this evening because we don't have a
22 courtroom full of witnesses. You referred to a
23 document at times. Do you want to submit that as an
24 exhibit?

1 THE WITNESS: It is submitted already from
2 the --

3 COMMISSIONER McKISSICK: Okay. Can you
4 identify what it is then, and what was the date of the
5 letter? Where's it to, where's it from?

6 THE WITNESS: Yeah. John, you distributed
7 it already to the Commissioners and it's posted under
8 the, you know, public comments pages, so it's
9 already --

10 MR. LITTLE: It's under the consumer
11 statements of position under the Sub 400 Docket on the
12 Commission's website, your Honor. It was the letter
13 that was submitted electronically on the October 19th,
14 2022 virtual Webex hearing.

15 COMMISSIONER McKISSICK: Same document?

16 MR. LITTLE: Same document, your Honor.

17 COMMISSIONER McKISSICK: Yeah. I'm familiar
18 with that, very familiar with it.

19 THE WITNESS: This one then, you saw the
20 graph and you saw my quotes from the North Carolina
21 General Statute.

22 COMMISSIONER McKISSICK: Okay. Thank you.
23 As long as we can incorporate it by reference since it
24 has been previously submitted.

1 MR. LITTLE: Yes, it has been.

2 COMMISSIONER McKISSICK: Are there any
3 questions?

4 MS. SANFORD: Nothing on his comment. I
5 just want to be sure I'm clear. Mr. Gumbel testified
6 at the virtual hearing?

7 COMMISSIONER McKISSICK: He did.

8 MS. SANFORD: Okay. That's it. Thank you.

9 COMMISSIONER McKISSICK: Any questions from
10 Public Staff?

11 MR. LITTLE: No, your Honor.

12 THE WITNESS: Oh, come on. We've got lots
13 of time.

14 COMMISSIONER McKISSICK: Any questions from
15 the Commissioners?

16 COMMISSIONER KEMERAIT: I do have a
17 question.

18 EXAMINATION BY COMMISSIONER KEMERAIT:

19 Q You talked about that Carolina Water purchased
20 the wastewater system in 2006. What was the
21 entity that owned it prior to that transaction?

22 A It was Carolina Pines. The only thing is it was
23 a development.

24 Q Okay.

1 A And they had put it in there so they could
2 develop the property, so it was privately owned
3 by the actual community. Well, they didn't own a
4 share of it, but the development owned it, and
5 then they sold it to Carolina Water Service. And
6 Carolina Water Service has a track record of
7 buying them, and then raising rates and raising
8 rates and raising rates for both water and for
9 sewer.

10 The Public Staff asked me, you
11 know, on a phone call, was it four -- asked me is
12 your service okay? And to that, I always say
13 it's sewer, you know. There's not much damage you
14 can really do unless it backs up somehow, but I
15 listen to the public testimony from the people
16 that have water service, and that is remarkable
17 that everybody buys bottled water. You know, not
18 everybody. That's an exaggeration, but, you
19 know, an awful lot of people.

20 And they testified again, and
21 again, and again to brown water and having to buy
22 bottled water, and nothing ever changes except
23 the rates go up. Except for my sewer, nothing
24 ever changes. I mean, it's sewer, you know, for

1 what? You know, for \$1,000 a year, you know, not
2 to be too facetious here, but they should be
3 coming to my house to clean the bathrooms for
4 \$1,000 bucks a year. I mean, it's sewer. I've
5 got a grinder pump system that -- it goes going
6 down and then my own pump pumps it into their
7 sewer lines. I have to maintain that. I change
8 the pumps out personally, the floats.

9 The control panel, they don't pay
10 for any of that. For \$1,000 bucks a year, they
11 don't even touch my system. And now, we're going
12 to \$1,300 bucks a month. That's what the guy
13 said on the phone. It's going to be more than my
14 mortgage. If I was still paying my mortgage,
15 that would be more than my mortgage. That would
16 be one of my last few years of mortgage payment,
17 would be what I'd be paying for this sewer. And
18 then pretty soon, it's about to cross the line I
19 spent for heating gas, for propane. It's well
20 above water. I mean, my water's a quarter or
21 less than a quarter of that.

22 COMMISSIONER McKISSICK: Were there any
23 other questions, Commissioner?

24 COMMISSIONER KEMERAIT: I was going to ask

1 about service but you went ahead and answered that, so
2 thank you.

3 THE WITNESS: Yeah.

4 COMMISSIONER McKISSICK: Okay. Since there
5 are no further questions, I want to thank you for your
6 testimony and sharing with us here your views and
7 perspective.

8 THE WITNESS: I appreciate it, again, being
9 heard. And I'm sorry everybody had to come all the
10 way out here for just me, but I thought there would be
11 more of us.

12 COMMISSIONER McKISSICK: All right. I will
13 look to the Public Staff and ask if there are any
14 other witnesses who would have entered the courtroom
15 or who have signed up.

16 MR. LITTLE: The Public Staff is not aware
17 of any other witnesses, your Honor.

18 COMMISSIONER McKISSICK: All right. Are
19 there any other matters we need to attend to this
20 evening, at this time?

21 MS. SANFORD: No, sir, not from Carolina
22 Water.

23 COMMISSIONER McKISSICK: Any from the Public
24 Staff?

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MR. LITTLE: None, your Honor.

COMMISSIONER McKISSICK: On that note, let me thank you-all for being here and we thank you for coming in to testifying, sir, and we hereby stand adjourned.

WHEREUPON, the proceedings were adjourned.)

C E R T I F I C A T E

I, TONJA VINES, DO HEREBY CERTIFY that the proceedings in the above-captioned matter were taken before me, that I did report in stenographic shorthand the Proceedings set forth herein, and the foregoing pages are a true and correct transcription to the best of my ability.



Tonja Vines