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13324 Baker Mills Road  
Pineville, NC 28134  
February 7, 2018

North Carolina Utilities Commission  
4325 Mail Service Center  
Raleigh, NC 27699-4300

**FILED**  
**FEB 12 2018**  
Clerk's Office  
N.C. Utilities Commission

REFERENCE: Rate Increases for Carolina Water Service, Inc. of North Carolina

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing this letter to express my concerns about the frequent and expensive utility rate increases that your Commission has approved over the past few years for Carolina Water Service, Inc. of North Carolina.

My husband and I are native North Carolinians and have lived here our entire lives. We are both approaching retirement age and are extremely concerned about how the recent utility rate increases, renewable energy fees, and taxes we pay on our utilities affect our household budget, especially once we have retired.

We live in an unincorporated portion of Mecklenburg County, and have no other option for water/sewer services but Carolina Water Service. Since 2014, I have noticed the rapid and expensive rate increases that have drastically raised our monthly bill for water/sewage. The biggest one-time increase occurred in early 2014 when you granted them the right to not only continue charging a standard residential wastewater service fee, but also allowed them to add a wastewater fee per 1,000 gallons used (based on water gallons consumed). At the same time, the **rate increased** on the water fee from \$5.00 per 1,000 gallons to \$5.44 per 1,000 gallons. These rate changes substantially increased our monthly bills in 2014.

In March 2015, the NCUC approved new fees for "Water System Improvement Charge," and then in April 2015, added "Sewer System Improvement Charge" fees. Also in December 2015, yet another **rate increase** in the residential water per 1,000 gallons from \$5.44 to \$6.42 and **increased** the residential wastewater per 1,000 gallon rate from \$2.46 to \$2.91, another substantial increase to my bill. It appears that 2015 was very lucrative for Carolina Water and not so great for the consumers.

Continuing on to 2016, Water System Improvement Charge fees approved in April, and then in October, you approved Sewer System Improvement Charge fees and **increased** the Water System Improvement fees.

There was a brief relief in January 2017 due to the NC tax law changes where the water and sewer per 1,000/gallon rate was **decreased** from \$6.42 to \$6.40 and \$2.91 to \$2.90 respectively. Unfortunately, in April 2017, the NCUC approved **increases** in the Water and Sewer System Improvement Charges. The NCUC did make a rate adjustment in September on the Water System Improvement fees to a lower percentage rate, but adjusted the Sewer Improvement Charge slightly higher. Effective November 2017, another substantial rate **increase** was approved on the water base charge per 1,000 gallons from \$6.40 to \$7.70 and the sewer base charge per 1,000 gallons from \$2.90 to \$3.11.

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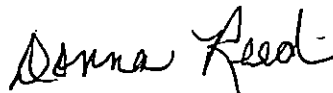
While the rate increases I've outlined in this letter may not seem great to you, they have become a problem for our household budget. The other utilities we use don't seem to request nearly as many expensive rate increases as Carolina Water; however, given that we pay taxes and fees on all our utilities, you can see how this becomes a burden for the average-income family and for retirees.

I noticed in your Mission Statement on your website that you list keeping utility rates economical for the consumer as one of your goals. I feel the consumer is not being properly protected from the constant and drastic rate increases that are being approved for Carolina Water Service. We have seen no obvious improvements in the quality of our water. Our water is and has always been very "hard" water, and we are constantly replacing or repairing appliances due to the high calcium and lime deposits. We don't drink the water very often because it has a bad taste, and we can also sometimes smell bad odors from our faucets. To me, this adds insult to injury each time my rates go up.

I feel that the North Carolina Utilities Commission should review and/or change the process for which these rate increases for Carolina Water Service are granted, and give special attention to the rates per 1,000 gallon water/sewage and base fees before they are increased. These rates dramatically affect the price we pay for water and sewage. I'm wondering if your Commission members ever review the history (frequency and rising costs) of the rate increases when new requests are submitted by Carolina Water. Even though the announcements you mail regarding upcoming rate increases sometimes list public hearings, I feel the consumer should be protected whether they attend a meeting or not. Most citizens do not have the time to attend these types of hearings as we go about our busy lives. I would hope that your members would represent our interests as North Carolina taxpayers when considering any increases, even if we are unable to attend public hearings.

Thank you for your consideration of my concerns, and I trust in the future you will continue to pursue your goal of keeping our utility prices economical!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Donna Reed".

Donna Reed