

Ackerman, Le Anne

From: David Johnson <davidj2744@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, July 21, 2022 11:56 AM
To: ncucpublichearing
Subject: Docket NO. W-1040, SUB 10 Docket NO. W-1328, SUB 4

Dear North Carolina Utilities Commission members,

Docket NO. W-1040, SUB 10

Docket NO. W-1328, SUB 4

Registered to testify at 1:30pm hearing on August 4, 2022

The notice we received regarding the takeover of the Bear Den Campground (BDC) water system by Red Bird Utilities is dated July 1, 2022, but we only received it on July 18. It states that *"Upon acquisition, Red Bird plans to make capital improvements including replacement of the pump at Well No. 1, existing piping in the well houses, and the sight gauge on the water tank."* Based on this wording I assume that Red Bird is taking over the water systems for independently owned cabins (approximately 85 with meters) and for BDC, which has 80 RV sites, several tent sites, 24 rental cabins and an office that is open most of the year. All BDC facilities have water sources. For reasons of public safety, it would seem prudent that Red Bird also manage the BDC water supply. BDC also has several restroom and shower facilities that include washing machines **It is not clear whether BDC's cabins and other camping sites have or will have water meters, thus we are concerned that those of us with meters will be paying far more of the water system costs per gallon than BDC.** We appreciate that Red Bird Utility's need to request a "reasonable" increase in water rates/fees to offset the costs of any improvements to the system. However, their proposed price increases, especially after year 1 to almost \$75/month for 1,500 gallons seems excessive and unfair.

1. Bear Den is NOT a normal residential community. There are approximately 85 "cabins" and most have single owners, but some are rentals, and the BDC website lists 10 furnished cabins with baths and kitchens and 14 Cossey Cabins with only sleeping space and electricity. BDC also has 80 RV sites and several tent sites.

<https://beardenmountainresort.com/>. Access to the cabins, including ours, is via a gravel road off the Blue ridge Parkway that runs through the Campground and is maintained by BDC and we pay a road maintenance fee. There are approximately 85 privately owned lots with cabins and most are like ours with a "Park Unit" mobile home that has been enclosed with an addition and porches. Cabin and camping usage is only significant from early May to the end of October. We winterize and close our cabin in November and reopen in April. There are only about 12 cabins that are used year-round.

2. The Red Bird proposal seems to be heavily based on monthly fees for each water meter, but it would seem fairer to charge based primarily on the volume of water used as that is their primary product. They state that they are basing the new rates on "statewide" rates. According to the web in 2018 North Carolina residents on average paid \$27-\$41 per

month for 5,000 gallons of water. Our water rates at our home in Jonesborough, TN are \$16.00/2,000 gal and \$4.50 per month per 1,000 gallons after 2,000.

3. Will the BDC business who currently owns the water system pay its fair share? How are they going to be charged? BDC rentals outnumber the independent cabin owners like us. We feel that you and the NC Attorney General have an obligation to protect all involved and to assure fairness. Some transparency about how the campsite business water costs will be charged would be appreciated. Charges based on the water volume used seem more appropriate than set fees per month.

4. When we have issues with the water supply in Bear Den, how do we contact Red Bird to repair or maintain it? Will they have someone located in the area who can service the system?

Thank you for listening and for your efforts to serve the people who enjoy the beauty of North Carolina. We own a cabin at 41 Overlook Drive, in Bear Den CampGround.

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