

I am writing to request your assistance. I know that being the dedicated representative of our citizens that you are; you will continue to work to help the families that depend on your abilities to fight for their concerns.

There are 2,023 households in the "Northern Neck" area of Virginia that urgently request help to ensure that water will continue to be provided to them, at a reasonable cost. The communities needing your help specifically are: Ebb Tide Beach, Church Point, Cabin Point, Glebe Harbor, Potomac Shores, Westmoreland Shores, Stratford Harbour, Montross Mobile Home Village, Bay Quarter Shores and Sherwood Forest. Recently, United Water Virginia announced that they were applying to the state commission for a 55% rate hike. This is a problem that requires an immediate intervention.

I live in the Potomac and Westmoreland Shores Community. As a community, we have very limited recourse against a privately owned company that is trying to make a profit and use one asset to offset losses of another. With many other businesses increasing rates, it is probably reasonable that a small increase in rates may be appropriate, as they have not had a rate increase, recently. However, the recent housing boom in our communities should have significantly increased the profit margin, by virtue of numbers.

Because each of these communities are small, we jointly attempted to have a law firm represent our communities, but due to the short notice and extravagant legal and accounting fees, despite desire to fight back, this could not be done. The only individual from Westmoreland County, I am aware of getting involved, is Woody Hynson, a supervisor, who is appealing United Water Virginia's failure to give 60 days notice, before the rate hike is to be initiated. No other town or county governments have intervened, as this is a private water company. It does not service their government buildings.

All of the water supplied by United Water Virginia is ground water that is filtered and delivered to homes. This water does not go through a manned water treatment plant for purification. It is the same water residents used to receive, via wells, in their backyards. It has an odor, a poor taste quality and often some sediment. Almost all users purchase filtered water or have water filters in their homes for drinking water. They do not supply water to any fire hydrants in the Westmoreland or Potomac Shores neighborhoods (I do not know if any neighborhoods actually have fire hydrants provided). All water from United Virginia is consumer purchased.

There may be new pipes installed for new customers, but no other pipes have been replaced in our communities. The biggest expense by this utility company is in reading the meters, billing and accounting. There have been no new renovations to justify a 55% rate hike. Based on the current number of households served, at the minimum use charge, this would provide a \$415,908.57 increased profit, annually. There have been no changes in the current water service, of which I am aware, that would warrant the minimal use fee to change from \$ 62.30 bimonthly to \$94.45. NOTE: The minimum usage is 6,000 gallons bimonthly. We have a few large families, but mostly 1-3 residents per household. Many households have a water supply and no residence on the property or use the property for weekend/summer vacation and pay for minimal usage year round.

With the economy being poor, many families are barely able to pay their current water bills. There are many homes for sale due to loss of jobs and limited incomes. Property taxes have increased, cost of living has increased and the household incomes, as we all know, have suffered losses. If a comparison is done, United Water Virginia has close to the highest rates in the state of Virginia, already (their service does not include sewerage or other services and minimal usage is not standard with other areas). Privately held utilities will merely turn the water supply off, in any home that cannot pay the minimal fees. At least the electric companies are closely regulated with indigent service plans and are required to justify any rate increases.

Many of our wonderful families desperately need your help, so that they may continue to enjoy having running water in their homes. Please, try to help us, so that no one has to go without basics of clean clothes, warm water to bathe and indoor plumbing to flush toilets. Too many people are barely able to heat homes and feed the family. We ask for assistance in blocking this request for a 55% rate hike. The people in your district need your help, today. I thank you for any of your time and assistance that you can render to our communities.

Sincerely, _____