

October 5, 2017

Tennessee Public Utility Commission  
502 Deaderick Street, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Nashville, TN 37243



RE: Petition by Tennessee Water Service

To Commissioners David Jones, Robin Morrison, and Keith Jordon,

I would like to strongly protest the petition that Tennessee Water Company (TWS) has filed with the Tennessee Public Utility Commission (TCPUC) to bill its current and prior customers in the Chalet Village area of Gatlinburg. It appears that the intention of this utility company is to recover lost revenues and capital expenses resulting from the November 28, 2016 wildfires. It seems peculiar and improper for a utility to recapture in this manner the costs they incur to restore infrastructure damaged by a natural and federally declared disaster.

My property on Chalet Village Boulevard was totally destroyed. Before the fires I consistently paid \$20.52 monthly for water – this was the minimum charge as my usage was low. I received the enclosed letter from Utilities Inc. stating that, should their petition succeed, I will be billed \$24.81 for services I am not receiving. This would put me in a status they call “inactive customer,” a term I am not familiar with. In my case this represents a 21% increase over what I paid when I was actually receiving water services. Outrageous! Those of us affected by the fires are hurting and facing the hardship of recovering from a natural disaster that was not our fault. During this difficult time it seems immoral to further victimize the victims.

There should be more humane avenues TWS can turn to for assistance. Surely the company must carry some type of insurance or, in the absence of such, would prudently have maintained some type of contingency fund. And there is also the possibility of FEMA assistance, as President Obama officially declared this a federal disaster. Has any effort been made by TWS to apply for federal aid?

It is my understanding that a hearing date of October 23, 2017 has been requested, and that you have been appointed to a three-commissioner panel empowered to render a final decision. I strongly urge you to vote against this petition as, by its very nature, it is cruel and unfair. We Gatlinburg people like to pride ourselves on being “mountain tough” and have overcome this terrible tragedy with amazing resilience. Please do not permit a large water utility, with no competition, to add to an already very difficult situation.

Thank you for your support,

Charles H. Aikens

Enclosure: Utilities, Inc. Letter of September 22, 2017



September 22, 2017

Re: Notice of Petition for Emergency Interim Relief

Dear Tennessee Water Service Customer:

On September 22, 2017, Tennessee Water Service, Inc. ("TWS" or "Company"), has petitioned the Tennessee Public Utility Commission ("TPUC" or "Commission") for emergency interim relief ("Petition") for TWS.

The purpose of the Petition is to allow TWS to recover the costs of providing drinking water service to its customers during the period of recovery from the devastating, wind-driven wildfires of 2016 ("2016 Wildfires") that destroyed and/or severely damaged most of the homes connected to TWS' drinking water system.

The last TWS rate increase was approved by TPUC on September 15, 2009.

As you may recall, to alleviate the pressure felt by customers affected by the 2016 Wildfires, TWS put a hold on all bills for affected homes. TWS extended the due date on all outstanding balances until March 31, 2017, for services rendered prior to the 2016 Wildfires, and it informed customers that after March 31, 2017, normal billing would resume for those customers for whom water service had been restored.

Currently, capital improvements are needed to address the damage to the drinking water system caused by the 2016 Wildfires and to provide for system reliability, efficiency, and integrity.

As noted, the Company proposes the following emergency interim relief measures:

- a. Interim Emergency Wildfire Restoration Surcharge - a public utility may request and the Commission may authorize a mechanism to recover the operational expenses, capital costs, or both, if such expenses or costs are found to be in the public interest and are related to weather-related natural disasters. TWS proposes that the Commission approve an Interim Emergency Wildfire Restoration Surcharge to be applied to both active and inactive customer bills for capital costs incurred prior to and after the 2016 Wildfires as these costs are directly in line with the public interest in rebuilding the Chalet Village drinking water system. The Restoration Surcharge would be an additional \$3.78 each month for all customers.
- b. Interim Emergency Water Service Availability Surcharge - Currently, TWS is not charging those customers who have not reconnected to the drinking water system since the 2016 Wildfires and are thus inactive customers. TWS proposes that the

Commission approve an Interim Emergency Water Service Availability Surcharge to these inactive customers along with active customers. The Water Service Surcharge would only apply to all TWS customers and would total \$6.77.

c. Interim Emergency Make-Whole Surcharge

TWS proposes that the Commission approve an Interim Emergency Make-Whole Surcharge to be applied to the bills of its inactive customers to offset the O&M expenses that are not being met due to the projected revenue shortfall. The Make-Whole Surcharge would be \$14.26.

A comparison of active and inactive customer monthly bills under the proposed surcharges is shown below:

Changes to Monthly Bills from Surcharges		
Customer Status	Average Monthly Bill Prior to Proposed Surcharges	Average Monthly Bill After Proposed Surcharges
Active	\$58.60	\$69.15
Inactive	\$0.00	\$24.81

- d. Interim Emergency Operational Costs Pass-Through Mechanism - TWS proposes that in the event of an increase or decrease to TWS' non-discretionary operational costs to obtain and distribute water to its customers, which includes at least water purchase costs from Gatlinburg and electricity, the Company may adjust its charges to pass the increase or decrease through to active customers without the need for prior approval from TPUC. TWS will provide Commission and Staff notice of any increase prior to implementing the pass-through.

The four proposed changes to TWS' charges and rates are specifically and narrowly tailored to the needs that have arisen because of the 2016 Wildfires. These proposals are intended to have a limited timeframe of effect. TWS proposes that the interim period for which they are applicable be no more than eighteen (18) months from the date of the Commission's approval of this Petition.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Customer Service at (800) 525-7990 or [customerservice@uiwater.com](mailto:customerservice@uiwater.com).

Sincerely,

Tennessee Water Service, Inc.

## TPUC Utility Complaint Number 170468

Date Filed:	10/05/2017
First Name:	Charles
Last Name:	Aikens
Address:	10901 Lookout Point
City:	Knoxville
State:	TN
Zip Code:	37934
Phone Number:	8659666807
Email Address:	haikens@tds.net
Company That The Complaint Is Against:	Tennessee Water Service utilities Inc.
Type Of Service (Internet, Cable, Phone, etc)	Water
Contacted Utility Regarding Complaint?	No
Link To Additional Documents:	<a href="https://s3.amazonaws.com/files.formstack.com/uploads/1996460/33195133/356089051/33195133_tpuc_letter_100529015.pdf">https://s3.amazonaws.com/files.formstack.com/uploads/1996460/33195133/356089051/33195133_tpuc_letter_100529015.pdf</a>

Tennessee Water Service Has Petitioned The TpuC For Emergency Relief Which Would Involve Billing Prior Customers Whose Homes Burned Down For Services They No Longer Receive. In My Case This Would Result In My Paying 21 More Than I Was Paying When I Actually Received Water Services. This Is Wrong And I Urge Commissioners To Vote Against The Petition. Please Refer To The Attached Documentation. Thanks.

TPUC Utility Complaint Number 170468

From: ConsumerComplaint TRA  
To: haikens@tds.net  
Subject: Utility Acknowledgement Letter

Importance: High

10/5/2017 1:59:00 PM

Dear Charles Aikens,

The Tennessee Public Utility Commission (TPUC) has received your complaint. We will review your complaint and determine if it falls within our jurisdiction. Complaints within our jurisdiction will be forwarded to the utility company for a response.

If you have any additional information, or questions concerning your complaint, please contact the Consumer Services Division at 1-800-342-8359.

Thank you,

Consumer Services Division

Tennessee Public Utility Commission

502 Deaderick Street, 4th Floor

Nashville, TN 37243

(615) 741-2904

1-800-342-8359

consumercomplaint.tra@tn.gov

[www.tn.gov/tpuc](http://www.tn.gov/tpuc)

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TPUC Utility Complaint Number 170468

From: ConsumerComplaint TRA  
To: haikens@tds.net  
Subject: Docket Number: 1700108

Importance: High

10/6/2017 8:24:40 AM

Dear Charles Aikens,

Thank you for filing comments with the Tennessee Public Utility Commission (TPUC). The Petition previously filed by the utility will be presented in a hearing before a randomly selected panel of TPUC Commissioners for a decision of the Petition request.

In order to preserve the integrity of the case, the Consumer Services Division staff is prohibited from discussing the case. However, to ensure consumers have a voice in the proceedings, your comments will be included in the case and reviewed by the TPUC Commissioners.

Thank you,

Consumer Services Division  
Tennessee Public Utility Commission  
502 Deaderick Street, 4th Floor  
Nashville, TN 37243

(615) 741-2904

1-800-342-8359

consumercomplaint.tra@tn.gov

www.tn.gov/tpuc

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