

From: [Contact TPUC](#)
To: [Ectory R. Lawless](#)
Subject: FW: Docket# 2400044
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24-00044

From: George Gregory [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, January 20, 2025 1:30 PM
To: Contact TPUC <Contact.TPUC@tn.gov>
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Docket# 2400044

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Greetings. I have a few comments and questions concerning the request by Limestone Water Utility Operating Company ("Limestone") to raise the water rates at Candlewood Lakes community in Hardeman County.

For background information. An online search states that the average water bill in the United States is \$47/mo and the average Tennessee state water bill is \$43/mo. I'm assuming that the vast majority of homes have meters, which makes comparisons between metered and non-metered homes difficult at best.

Initially I would like to know if Limestone is legally or morally obligated to inform their customers of any request to raise water rates? I understand that this process started in June of 2024 and I learned of it from The Bulletin Times newspaper dated Jan 16, 2025. Is transparency not an issue?

The request is to raise the unmetered rate from \$40/mo to \$67.50/mo. My calculation tells me that is a 68% increase. Is that even a reasonable suggestion? Will TPUC even consider such a demand objectively? The residents in Candlewood Lakes are primarily widows, widowers, and retirees living on fixed incomes. Those residents that do work are also basically living on fixed incomes in their professions. Most folks do not have means to increase take home pay at will. Who might afford a 68% increase in fees for a necessary commodity such as water?

Since purchasing the water system in April of 2023, to my knowledge, Limestone has replaced all flush valves on the property and replaced the water pump at the water well. Are these physical acts considered general maintenance or improvements? If Limestone is seeking to

pay for these 'improvements' via a rate increase, I dare say there has not been enough activity performed to merit a 68% rate increase. General maintenance is part and parcel of a system such as ours and should not be charged to the residents. Limestone was aware that the system at Candlewood Lakes was built in the 1970's and the physical plant needed multiple upgrades and maintenance. That should have been considered before purchase and factored into the transaction.

Alternatively. Is Limestone is seeking to pay for upcoming upgrades with rate increases beforehand? The community has been in negotiations with the state of Tennessee over a backup well for over 10 years, with no resolution. The cost of said well has been quoted as from \$80,000 to \$200,000. In addition, the only equitable way to charge for water is by usage. This requires a meter. Limestone has said that meters are on the bucket list for Candlewood, with no defined date established. Does this approach merit a 68% rate increase now. I for one would much prefer to pay for these two major improvements after the fact. I don't like to pay for activities that may or may not be accomplished.

I trust that the Tennessee Public Utility Commission will perform its due diligence with this request and keep in mind the public interest of the residents of Candlewood Lakes.

Regards.

George Gregory

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]