

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Contact TPUC](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Reference to Docket Number 24-00044
Date: Tuesday, February 11, 2025 11:15:36 PM

This Message Is From an Untrusted Sender

You have not previously corresponded with this sender.

Please exercise caution. DO NOT open attachments or click links from unknown senders or unexpected email - STS-Security

Randall and Barbara Huling
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

11 February 2025

Tennessee Public Utility Commission

Subject: Opposition to Proposed Water and Sewer Rate Increase

Dear Members of the Tennessee Public Utility Commission,

I am writing to formally oppose the proposed increase in water rates from \$25.75 per month to \$82.29. and sewer rates \$19.65 to Proposed rate \$86.64 (Monthly regardless of volume). This substantial hike represents an increase of over 200% and 340 % which would impose an undue financial burden on residents and businesses in our community. Below, I outline several key reasons why this application should be denied.

1. Affordability Concerns

The proposed rate increase is not just a nominal adjustment; it represents a dramatic rise that many households and small businesses cannot bear. For instance, for a family of four, this increase could represent a significant portion of their monthly budget. Many residents are already struggling with rising costs in other areas, such as housing and food. An increase of this magnitude could lead to difficult choices, including the potential for residents to skip payments, resulting in service interruptions and further complications.

This Rate increase also changes the current program of charging for usage to a base billing no matter how much is used. I use my home at Pickwick as a second home and during the winter may only get their a few weeks over 5 to 6 months. Therefore with this proposal I would be paying for “no usage” which seems extremely unfair and burdensome.

2. Lack of Justification

The application does not provide sufficient evidence to justify such a steep increase. A thorough review is needed to assess the utility's financial health, operational efficiency, and investment plans. For example, if the utility has not implemented cost-saving measures or explored alternative revenue sources, it raises questions about management practices. Transparency regarding expenditures and planned improvements should be shared with the public to ensure accountability.

3. Impact on Low-Income Residents

The proposed increase disproportionately affects low-income residents, who often spend a higher percentage of their income on utilities. According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, utility costs are among the most significant expenses for low-income households. Implementing such a high increase would worsen financial instability for these families, potentially leading to health and safety risks if they are forced to reduce water use.

4. Comparison to Other Utilities

When assessing the proposed rates, it is important to compare them to those of neighboring communities and similar-sized utilities. Many municipalities offer comparable services at rates that are very similar to the current rates Limestone is currently charging so a rate of this magnitude demonstrates a dramatic over pricing of services compared to other associations.

5. Alternative Solutions

Rather than resorting to drastic rate increases, I urge the Commission to explore alternative solutions. Potential measures include:

- **Cost Reduction Strategies:** Identifying areas for operational efficiencies and cost savings within the utility's budget.
- **Gradual Increases:** If an increase is necessary, implementing a more gradual rate adjustment of 5 no more than 10 % and continue with the charge for only what is used , not flat base rate over several years would allow residents time to adjust their budgets accordingly.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the proposed water and sewer rate is excessive and unjustified, with significant negative implications for our community's residents and businesses. I respectfully request that the Tennessee Public Utility Commission deny this application and advocate for more reasonable and equitable solutions.

Thank you for considering my concerns. I hope the Commission prioritizes the well-being of our community in its decision-making process.

Sincerely,

Randall Huling, M.D.

A solid black rectangular box used to redact the signature of Randall Huling, M.D.