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April 30, 2022

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Hon. Kimberly A. Moss, Administrative Law Judge  
Office of Administrative Law  
33 Washington Street  
Newark, NJ 07012

BOARD OF PUBLIC UTILITIES  
TRENTON, NJ

CC: Mayor Richard Innella, Montague Township

\* Aida Camacho-Welch, Secretary, Board of Public Utilities  
Sussex County Board of Chosen Freeholders  
Assemblymen Parker Space and Harold Worths

**Re: BPU Docket No. WR22010018, OAL Docket No. PUC 00535-22,  
Montague Water Company, Montague Sewer Company**

Judge Moss,

I live at 120A Hemlock Hill in Montague, NJ. I am in receipt of Notice of Virtual Public Hearing for the Montague Water and Sewer Company/Notice of Filing of Petition for an Increase in Rates for Water and Sewer Service (BPU Docket No. WR22010018, OAL Docket No. PUC 00535-22).

I am writing to express my extreme concern that Montague Water and Sewer Company finds it necessary to increase residential base 5/8" charge for water usage by **79.3%** or usage per 1,000 gal. by **107.3%** according to this notice.

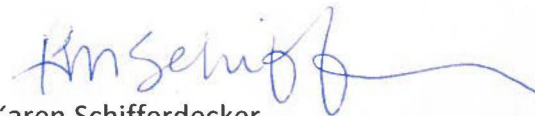
The notice further states that "the average general metered service residential water customer using 2,608 gallons of water per month will see their bill increase from **\$41.74 to \$82.63**, or **98%**. Our water bill is generally about \$40/month making my household a prime example of an "average general metered service residential water customer".

The notice states this has been the first rate increase since 2013. I'm not sure it's good business management to not increase rates for almost 10 years but then completely shock customers' budgets by increasing rates by 98%. Furthermore, customers should not be financially punished by poor management practices for something that is a necessity (aka water). I understand costs have gone up for private citizens and businesses alike for a variety of reasons in recent years, but a **98% rate increase** coming on top of the inflation we are all experiencing and in a post-Covid economy seems unnecessarily harsh (and honestly out of left field...why such a huge increase all of a sudden?).

Additionally, I have lived in several places (Nantucket, MA; Hawthorne, NJ) with very high-quality public water. I would not rate the Montague Water Company's product as "high-quality". We have to use both a whole-house water filter as well as a 4-stage reverse osmosis filter in order to get decent drinking water. The water is "hard" and leaves a rusty-colored residue; these are not just our observations -- community chat groups have discussed these issues, which are town-wide. I find it ridiculous that Montague Water expects us to suddenly pay 98% more for what is already an inferior "product".

Judge Moss, I ask respectfully that the you, the Board of Public Utilities, Montague Township, and the Sussex County Board of Chosen Freeholders step in and protect us, the Montague citizens, from what seems like an excessive and needlessly greedy **98%** price hike for our water.

Thank you for your consideration of this important matter.



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