



Control Number: 44236



Item Number: 103

Addendum StartPage: 0

DOCKET NO. 44236

APPLICATION OF CUSTOM WATER
COMPANY, LLC FOR A WATER
RATE/TARIFF CHANGE

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RECEIVED
PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION
JAN 12 2016
OF TEXAS
FILING CLERK

JOINT PROPOSED ORDER AND REQUEST TO ADMIT EVIDENCE

I. BACKGROUND

On January 12, 2015, Custom Water Company, LLC (Custom Water) filed an application for a rate/tariff change with a proposed effective date of March 20, 2015. This Proposed Order and Request to Admit Evidence includes findings of fact, conclusions of law, and ordering paragraphs and are timely filed on or before February 12, 2016.

II. REQUEST TO ADMIT EVIDENCE

Custom Water and Staff (Staff) of the Public Utility Commission of Texas (Commission) jointly request to admit the following evidence into the record of this proceeding: (a) the Application of Custom Water and all attachments thereto, filed on January 12, 2015; (b) Custom Water's Request to Withdraw Application, filed on November 2, 2015; and (c) Commission Staff's Recommendation on Final Disposition and all attachments thereto, including Custom Water's tariff, filed on December 8, 2015.

III. PROPOSED ORDER

The Proposed Order (Attachment 1) would: (a) set the final rate as those rates previously established by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, consisting of a base rate of \$36.00 for a residential 5/8" or 3/4" meter size as the monthly base rate including 1,000 gallons, and \$5.00 per 1,000 gallons used over the first 1,000 gallons; (b) require Custom Water to refund the rates paid by customers from March 20, 2015 to September 22, 2015 that were over and above the final rates within 180 days of the date of the final order; and (c) require Custom Water, within 210 days of the final order, to make a compliance filing in this docket attesting to the completion of the refunds.

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III. CONCLUSION

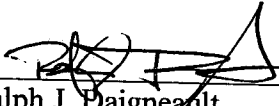
Based on Staff's Recommendation, filed December 8, 2015, the parties respectfully request that the Commission adopt the attached Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law as well granting the admittance of the specified pieces of evidence.

DATED: February 12, 2016

Respectfully Submitted,

Margaret Uhlig Pemberton
Division Director – Legal Division


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Managing Attorney – Legal Division



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Public Utility Commission of Texas
1701 N. Congress Avenue
P.O. Box 13326
Austin, Texas 78711-3326

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I certify that a copy of this document will be served on all parties of record on February 12, 2016, in accordance with 16 TAC § 22.74.



Ralph J. Daigneault

ATTACHMENT 1

DOCKET NO. 44236

APPLICATION OF CUSTOM WATER	§	PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION
COMPANY, LLC FOR A WATER	§	
RATE/TARIFF CHANGE	§	OF TEXAS
	§	

PROPOSED ORDER

This Proposed Order addresses the application of Custom Water Company, LLC (Custom Water) for a water rate/tariff change for water certificate of convenience and necessity No. 13211 in Montague County, Texas, pursuant to Tex. Water Code § 13.187 (TWC) and 16 Tex. Admin. Code § 24.21 and 24.22 (TAC) (Application). Staff (Staff) of the Public Utility Commission of Texas (Commission) filed a memorandum recommending (a) the final rate be set as those rates previously established by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, consisting of a base rate of \$36.00 for a residential 5/8" or 3/4" meter size as the monthly base rate including 1,000 gallons, and \$5.00 per 1,000 gallons used over the first 1,000 gallons; (b) Custom Water be required to refund the rates paid by customers from March 20, 2015 to September 22, 2015 that were over and above the final rates within 180 days of the date of the final order; and (c) Custom Water be required, within 210 days of the final order, to make a compliance filing in this docket attesting to the completion of the refunds. Customer Water does not oppose Staff's recommendations. Staff's recommendations are approved.

Consistent with the above discussion, the Administrative Law Judge makes the following findings of fact and conclusions of law.

I. FINDINGS OF FACT

1. On January 12, 2015, Custom Water filed an application for a rate/tariff change with a proposed effective date of March 20, 2015. Under Custom Water's proposed rates, the monthly base rate including 1,000 gallons for a residential 5/8 or 3/4 pipe would increase from \$36.00 to \$54.43, and the gallonage charge would increase from \$5 to \$7 for each additional 1,000 gallons over the minimum.

2. On January 20, 2015, Order No. 1 was issued requiring Staff recommendation on the application, or to propose a procedural schedule, if necessary.
3. On February 13, 2015, Order No. 2 was issued deeming the application and notice deficient, suspending the effective date of the proposed rate changes and requiring Custom Water to submit corrections to the application and notice.
4. On February 26, 2015, Order No. 3 was issued deeming the application administratively complete, approving an effective date of March 20, 2015 for the proposed rate changes, and adopting a procedural schedule.
5. Between March 20, 2015 and September 22, 2015, Customer Water charged its customers at the proposed rates.
6. On July 20, 2015, Staff filed a request for a hearing and that the proceeding be referred to the State Office of Administrative Hearings (SOAH).
7. On July 27, 2015, an Order of Referral and Order Setting Prehearing Conference and requiring Notice was issued by Commission Advising & Document Management.
8. On August 31, 2015, SOAH Order No. 1 was issued memorializing the prehearing conference, setting the procedural schedule, requiring notice of hearing, granting motions to intervene and establishing filing and service procedures.
9. On September 16, 2015, Commission Staff filed a motion for interim rates.
10. On September 24, 2015, Custom Water filed its direct case in support of its application.
11. On October 7, 2015, SOAH Order No. 2 was issued setting interim rates back to Custom Water's previously approved rates. Customer Water's previously approved rates consist of a base rate of \$36.00 for a residential 5/8" or 3/4" meter size as the monthly base rate including 1,000 gallons, and \$5.00 per 1,000 gallons used over the first 1,000 gallons.
12. On October 23, 2015, Commission Staff filed direct testimony, supporting a decrease to Custom Water's previously approved rates.
13. On November 2, 2015, Custom Water filed a request to withdraw its application and agreeing to issue a refund or credit to customers.

14. On November 16, 2015, SOAH Order No. 3 was issued ordering Staff to file a status update including suggested ordering language address the refund of rates paid by customers from March 20, 2015 to September 22, 2015 that are over and above the rates then in effect under the interim rate order.
15. On November 30, 2015, Staff filed a status update and recommendation.
16. On December 3, 2015, SOAH Order No. 4 was issued, dismissing the matter from the SOAH docket, based upon Custom Water's request to withdraw and Staff status update and recommendation, and remanding the matter to the Commission for action on the refund of fees collected.
17. On December 3, 2015, Commission Order No. 4 was issued requiring Staff to file a recommendation regarding final disposition of this docket.
18. On December 8, 2015, Staff filed Commission Staff's Recommendation on Final Disposition, recommending that Custom Water refund the excess amounts it collected between March 20, 2015 and September 22, 2015, plus interest, within 90 days, and that Custom Water make a compliance filing within 120 days of a final order that attests to the completion of the refunds.
19. On December 16, 2015, Order No. 5 was issued requiring the parties to this proceedings to file a joint proposed order, including findings of fact, conclusions of law, and ordering paragraphs along with a request to admit evidence and proposed tariff (if necessary).
20. On January 8, 2016, Staff filed a request for good cause exception and extension of time to file a joint proposed order to allow Custom Water to file supplemental information regarding the refunds.
21. On January 12, 2016, Order No. 6 was issued finding good cause to extend the deadline for Custom Water to file supplemental information regarding the refunds and for Staff to propose an updated procedural schedule.
22. On January 25, 2016, Custom Water filed supplemental information regarding the refunds.
23. On February 5, 2016, Staff filed a response to Order No. 6 and proposed an updated procedural schedule and recommending that Custom Water refund the excess amounts it collected between March 20, 2015 and September 22, 2015, plus interest, within 180 days,

and that Custom Water make a compliance filing within 210 days of a final order that attests to the completion of the refunds.

24. On February 8, 2016, Order No. 7 was issued requiring the parties to this proceedings to file a joint proposed order, including findings of fact, conclusions of law, and ordering paragraphs along with a request to admit evidence and proposed tariff by February 12, 2016.
25. On February 12, 2016, Staff filed a joint proposed order, including findings of fact, conclusions of law, and ordering paragraphs along with a request to admit evidence and proposed tariff.

II. CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

1. Custom Water is a public utility as defined in TWC § 13.002(23).
2. The Commission has jurisdiction over this application pursuant to TWC § 13.187 and 16 TAC § 24.21 and 24.22.
3. This docket was processed in accordance with the requirements of the TWC, Texas Administrative Procedure Act, and Commission rules.
4. The rates approved are just and reasonable, comply with the ratemaking provisions in TWC, Chapter 13, and are not unreasonably discriminatory, preferential, or prejudicial.

III. ORDERING PARAGRAPHS

In accordance with these findings of fact and conclusions of law, the Commission issues the following Order:

1. Custom Water's tariff, included with this Order as Attachment 2, is approved.
2. Custom Water's final rate is set as those rates previously established in the attached tariff (Attachment 2), consisting of a base rate of \$36.00 for a residential 5/8" or 3/4" meter size as the monthly base rate including 1,000 gallons, and \$5.00 per 1,000 gallons used over the first 1,000 gallons.

3. Custom Water shall refund all sums collected in excess of the final rate, plus interest, paid by customers from March 20, 2015 to September 22, 2015 within 180 days of the date of this Order. All over or under billings should accrue interest monthly at the Commission approved interest rate. The 2015 Commission-approved interest rate for overbilling is 0.12%.
4. Custom Water shall, within 210 days of this Order, make a compliance filing in this docket attesting to the completion of the refunds.
5. All other motions, requests for entry of specific findings of fact or conclusions of law, and any other requests for general or specific relief, if not expressly granted herein, are hereby denied.

SIGNED AT AUSTIN, TEXAS the _____ day of _____, 2016.

PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION OF TEXAS

WATER UTILITY TARIFF FOR

Custom Water Co., LLC
(Utility Name)

146 Alamo Road
(Business Address)

Montague, Texas 76251
(City, State, Zip Code)

(940) 894-3172
(Area Code/Telephone)

This tariff is effective for utility operations under the following Certificate of Convenience and Necessity:

13211

This tariff is effective in the following county (ies):

Montague

This tariff is effective in the following cities or unincorporated towns (if any):

Montague

This tariff is effective for the following subdivisions or systems:

Montague Water System: PWS #1690004
Oak Shores Water System: PWS #1690011

The above utility lists the following sections of its tariff (if additional pages are needed for a section, all pages should be numbered consecutively):

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APPROVED TARIFF BY SP/JL

SECTION 1.0 -- RATE SCHEDULE

Section 1.01 - Rates

<u>Meter Size</u>	<u>Monthly Minimum Charge</u>	<u>Gallorage Charge</u>
5/8" or 3/4"	<u>\$36.00</u> (Includes 1000 gallons)	<u>\$5.00</u> per 1000 gallons over 1000 gallons
1"	<u>\$70.72</u>	
1 1/2 "	<u>\$135.24</u>	
2"	<u>\$212.67</u>	
3"	<u>\$393.34</u>	

FORM OF PAYMENT: The utility will accept the following forms of payment:
 Cash X, Check X, Money Order X, Credit Card _____, Other (specify) _____
 THE UTILITY MAY REQUIRE EXACT CHANGE FOR PAYMENTS AND MAY REFUSE TO ACCEPT
 PAYMENTS MADE USING MORE THAN \$1.00 IN SMALL COINS. A WRITTEN RECEIPT WILL BE
 GIVEN FOR CASH PAYMENTS.

REGULATORY ASSESSMENT 1.0%
 TCEQ RULES REQUIRE THE UTILITY TO COLLECT A FEE OF ONE PERCENT OF THE RETAIL
 MONTHLY BILL.

Section 1.02 - Miscellaneous Fees

TAP FEE \$350.00
 TAP FEE COVERS THE UTILITY'S COSTS FOR MATERIALS AND LABOR TO INSTALL A
 STANDARD RESIDENTIAL 5/8" or 3/4" METER. AN ADDITIONAL FEE TO COVER UNIQUE
 COSTS IS PERMITTED IF LISTED ON THIS TARIFF.

TAP FEE (Unique costs) Actual Cost
 FOR EXAMPLE, A ROAD BORE FOR CUSTOMERS OUTSIDE OF SUBDIVISIONS OR RESIDENTIAL
 AREAS.

TAP FEE (Large meter) Actual Cost
 TAP FEE IS THE UTILITY'S ACTUAL COST FOR MATERIALS AND LABOR FOR METER SIZE
 INSTALLED.

METER RELOCATION FEE Actual Relocation Cost, Not to Exceed Tap Fee
 THIS FEE MAY BE CHARGED IF A CUSTOMER REQUESTS THAT AN EXISTING METER BE
 RELOCATED.

METER TEST FEE \$ 25.00
 REQUESTS A SECOND METER TEST WITHIN A TWO-YEAR PERIOD AND THE TEST INDICATES
 THAT THE METER IS RECORDING ACCURATELY. THE FEE MAY NOT EXCEED \$25.

RATES LISTED ARE EFFECTIVE ONLY
 IF THIS PAGE HAS TCEQ APPROVAL STAMP

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SECTION 1.0 – RATE SCHEDULE (Continued)

RECONNECTION FEE

THE RECONNECT FEE MUST BE PAID BEFORE SERVICE CAN BE RESTORED TO A CUSTOMER WHO HAS BEEN DISCONNECTED FOR THE FOLLOWING REASONS (OR OTHER REASONS LISTED UNDER SECTION 2.0 OF THIS TARIFF):

- a) Non payment of bill (Maximum \$25.00) \$25.00
- b) Customer's request that service be disconnected..... \$50.00

TRANSFER FEE \$50.00
THE TRANSFER FEE WILL BE CHARGED FOR CHANGING AN ACCOUNT NAME AT THE SAME SERVICE LOCATION WHEN THE SERVICE IS NOT DISCONNECTED

LATE CHARGE (EITHER \$5.00 OR 10% OF THE BILL)..... \$5.00
TCEQ RULES ALLOW A ONE-TIME PENALTY TO BE CHARGED ON DELINQUENT BILLS. A LATE CHARGE MAY NOT BE APPLIED TO ANY BALANCE TO WHICH THE PENALTY WAS APPLIED IN A PREVIOUS BILLING.

RETURNED CHECK CHARGE \$25.00
RETURNED CHECK CHARGES MUST BE BASED ON THE UTILITY'S DOCUMENTABLE COST.

CUSTOMER DEPOSIT RESIDENTIAL (Maximum \$50)..... \$50.00

COMMERCIAL & NON-RESIDENTIAL DEPOSIT . 1/6TH OF ESTIMATED ANNUAL BILL

GOVERNMENTAL TESTING, INSPECTION AND COSTS SURCHARGE:
WHEN AUTHORIZED IN WRITING BY TCEQ AND AFTER NOTICE TO CUSTOMERS, THE UTILITY MAY INCREASE RATES TO RECOVER INCREASED COSTS FOR INSPECTION FEES AND WATER TESTING. [30 TAC 291.21(K)(2)]

LINE EXTENSION AND CONSTRUCTION CHARGES:
REFER TO SECTION 3.0--EXTENSION POLICY FOR TERMS, CONDITIONS, AND CHARGES WHEN NEW CONSTRUCTION IS NECESSARY TO PROVIDE SERVICE.

RATES LISTED ARE EFFECTIVE ONLY
IF THIS PAGE HAS TCEQ APPROVAL STAMP

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APPROVED TARIFF BY SP/JL

SECTION 2.0 -- SERVICE RULES AND POLICIES

The utility will have the most current Texas Commission on Environmental Quality Rules, Chapter 291, Water Utility Regulation, available at its office for reference purposes. The Rules and this tariff shall be available for public inspection and reproduction at a reasonable cost. The latest Rules or Commission approved changes to the Rules supersede any rules or requirements in this tariff.

Section 2.01 - Application for Water Service

All applications for service will be made on the utility's standard application or contract form (attached in the Appendix to this tariff), will be signed by the applicant, any required fees (deposits, reconnect, tap, extension fees, etc. as applicable) will be paid and easements, if required, will be granted before service is provided by the utility. A separate application or contract will be made for each service location.

Section 2.02 - Refusal of Service

The utility may decline to serve an applicant until the applicant has complied with the regulations of the regulatory agencies (state and municipal regulations) and for the reasons outlined in the TCEQ Rules. In the event that the utility refuses to serve an applicant, the utility will inform the applicant in writing of the basis of its refusal. The utility is also required to inform the applicant that a complaint may be filed with the Commission.

Section 2.03 - Fees and Charges & Easements Required Before Service Can Be Connected

(A) Customer Deposits

If a residential applicant cannot establish credit to the satisfaction of the utility, the applicant may be required to pay a deposit as provided for in Section 1.02 - Miscellaneous Fees of this tariff. The utility will keep records of the deposit and credit interest in accordance with TCEQ Rules.

Residential applicants 65 years of age or older may not be required to pay deposits unless the applicant has an outstanding account balance with the utility or another water or sewer utility which accrued within the last two years.

Nonresidential applicants who cannot establish credit to the satisfaction of the utility may be required to make a deposit that does not exceed an amount equivalent to one-sixth of the estimated annual billings.

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APPROVED TARIFF BY SP/SL

SECTION 2.0 - SERVICE RULES AND POLICIES (Continued)

Refund of deposit - If service is not connected, or after disconnection of service, the utility will promptly refund the customer's deposit plus accrued interest or the balance, if any, in excess of the unpaid bills for service furnished. The utility may refund the deposit at any time prior to termination of utility service but must refund the deposit plus interest for any residential customer who has paid 18 consecutive billings without being delinquent.

(B) Tap or Reconnect Fees

A new customer requesting service at a location where service has not previously been provided must pay a tap fee as provided in Section 1. A customer requesting service where service has previously been provided must pay a reconnect fee as provided in Section 1. Any applicant or existing customer required to pay for any costs not specifically set forth in the rate schedule pages of this tariff shall be given a written explanation of such costs prior to request for payment and/or commencement of construction. If the applicant or existing customer does not believe that these costs are reasonable or necessary, the applicant or existing customer shall be informed of their right to appeal such costs to the TCEQ or such other regulatory authority having jurisdiction over the utility's rates in that portion of the utility's service area in which the applicant's or existing customer's property(ies) is located.

Fees in addition to the regular tap fee may be charged if listed specifically in Section 1 to cover unique costs not normally incurred as permitted by 30 T. A. C. 291.86(a)(1)(C). For example, a road bore for customers outside a subdivision or residential area could be considered a unique cost.

(C) Easement Requirement

Where recorded public utility easements on the service applicant's property do not exist or public road right-of-way easements are not available to access the applicant's property, the Utility may require the applicant to provide it with a permanent recorded public utility easement on and across the applicant's real property sufficient to provide service to that applicant. Such easement(s) shall not be used for the construction of production, storage, transmission or pressure facilities unless they are needed for adequate service to that applicant.

Section 2.04 - Utility Response to Applications for Service

After the applicant has met all the requirements, conditions and regulations for service, the utility will install tap, meter and utility cut-off valve and/or take all necessary actions to initiate service. The utility will serve each qualified applicant for service within 5 working days unless line extensions or new facilities are required. If construction is required to fill the order and if it cannot be completed within 30 days, the utility will provide the applicant with a written explanation of the construction required and an expected date of service.

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SECTION 2.0 – SERVICE RULES AND POLICIES (Continued)

Except for good cause where service has previously been provided, service will be reconnected within one working day after the applicant has met the requirements for reconnection.

Section 2.05 - Customer Responsibility

The customer will be responsible for furnishing and laying the necessary customer service pipe from the meter location to the place of consumption. Customers will not be allowed to use the utility's cutoff valve on the utility's side of the meter. Existing customers may install cutoff valves on their side of the meter and are encouraged to do so. All new customers may be required to install and maintain a cutoff valve on their side of the meter.

No direct connection between a public water supply system and any potential source of contamination or between a public water supply system and a private water source (ex. private well) will be allowed. A customer shall not connect, or allow any other person or party to connect, onto any water lines on his premises.

Section 2.06 - Customer Service Inspections

Applicants for new service connections or facilities which have undergone extensive plumbing modifications are required to furnish the utility a completed customer service inspection certificate. The inspection certificate shall certify that the establishment is in compliance with the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality Rules and Regulations for Public Water Systems, Section 290.46(j). The Utility is not required to perform these inspections for the applicant/customer, but will assist the applicant/customer in locating and obtaining the services of a certified inspector.

Section 2.07 - Back Flow Prevention Devices

No water connection shall be allowed to any residence or establishment where an actual or potential contamination hazard exists unless the public water facilities are protected from contamination by either an approved air gap, backflow prevention assembly, or other approved device. The type of device or backflow prevention assembly required shall be determined by the specific potential hazard identified in §290.47(i) Appendix I, Assessment of Hazards and Selection of Assemblies of the TCEQ Rules and Regulations for Public Water Systems.

The use of a backflow prevention assembly at the service connection shall be considered as additional backflow protection and shall not negate the use of backflow protection on internal hazards as outlined and enforced by local plumbing codes. When a customer service inspection certificate indicates that an adequate internal cross-connection control program is in effect, backflow protection at the water service entrance or meter is not required.

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APPROVED TARIFF BY SPAL

SECTION 2.0 - SERVICE RULES AND POLICIES (Continued)

At any residence or establishment where it has been determined by a customer service inspection, that there is no actual or potential contamination hazard, as referenced in Section 290.47(i) Appendix I, Assessment of Hazards and Selection of Assemblies of the TCEQ Rules and Regulations for Public Water Systems, then a backflow prevention assembly or device is not required. Outside hose bibs do require, at a minimum, the installation and maintenance of a working atmospheric vacuum breaker.

All backflow prevention assemblies or devices shall be tested upon installation by a TCEQ certified backflow prevention assembly tester and certified to be operating within specifications. Backflow prevention assemblies which are installed to provide protection against health hazards must also be tested and certified to be operating within specifications at least annually by a certified backflow prevention assembly tester.

If the utility determines that a backflow prevention assembly or device is required, the utility will provide the customer or applicant with a list of TCEQ certified backflow prevention assembly testers. The customer will be responsible for the cost of installation and testing, if any, of backflow prevention assembly or device. The customer should contact several qualified installers to compare prices before installation. The customer must pay for any required maintenance and annual testing and must furnish a copy of the test results demonstrating that the assembly is functioning properly to the utility within 30 days after the anniversary date of the installation unless a different date is agreed upon.

Section 2.08 - Access to Customer's Premises

The utility will have the right of access to the customer's premises at all reasonable times for the purpose of installing, testing, inspecting or repairing water mains or other equipment used in connection with its provision of water service, or for the purpose of removing its property and disconnecting lines, and for all other purposes necessary to the operation of the utility system including inspecting the customer's plumbing for code, plumbing or tariff violations. The customer shall allow the utility and its personnel access to the customer's property to conduct any water quality tests or inspections required by law. Unless necessary to respond to equipment failure, leak or other condition creating an immediate threat to public health and safety or the continued provision of adequate utility service to others, such entry upon the customer's property shall be during normal business hours and the utility personnel will attempt to notify the customer that they will be working on the customer's property. The customer may require any utility representative, employee, contractor, or agent seeking to make such entry identify themselves, their affiliation with the utility, and the purpose of their entry.

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SECTION 2.0 - SERVICE RULES AND POLICIES (Continued)

All customers or service applicants shall provide access to meters and utility cutoff valves at all times reasonably necessary to conduct ordinary utility business and after normal business hours as needed to protect and preserve the integrity of the public drinking water supply.

Section 2.09 - Meter Requirements, Readings, and Testing

One meter is required for each residential, commercial, or industrial connection. All water sold by the utility will be billed based on meter measurements. The utility will provide, install, own and maintain meters to measure amounts of water consumed by its customers.

Meters will be read at monthly intervals and as nearly as possible on the corresponding day of each monthly meter reading period unless otherwise authorized by the Commission.

Meter tests. The utility will, upon the request of a customer, and, if the customer so desires, in his or her presence or in that of his or her authorized representative, make without charge a test of the accuracy of the customer's meter. If the customer asks to observe the test, the test will be made during the utility's normal working hours at a time convenient to the customer. Whenever possible, the test will be made on the customer's premises, but may, at the utility's discretion, be made at the utility's testing facility. If within a period of two years the customer requests a new test, the utility will make the test, but if the meter is found to be within the accuracy standards established by the American Water Works Association, the utility will charge the customer a fee which reflects the cost to test the meter up to a maximum \$25 for a residential customer. Following the completion of any requested test, the utility will promptly advise the customer of the date of removal of the meter, the date of the test, the result of the test, and who made the test.

Section 2.10 - Billing

(A) Regular Billing

Bills from the utility will be mailed monthly unless otherwise authorized by the Commission. The due date of bills for utility service will be at least sixteen (16) days from the date of issuance. The postmark on the bill or, if there is no postmark on the bill, the recorded date of mailing by the utility will constitute proof of the date of issuance. Payment for utility service is delinquent if full payment, including late fees and the regulatory assessment, is not received at the utility or the utility's authorized payment agency by 5:00 p.m. on the due date. If the due date falls on a holiday or weekend, the due date for payment purposes will be the next workday after the due date.

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SECTION 2.0 - SERVICE RULES AND POLICIES (Continued)

(B) Late Fees

A late penalty of either \$5.00 or 10.0% will be charged on bills received after the due date. The penalty on delinquent bills will not be applied to any balance to which the penalty was applied in a previous billing. The utility must maintain a record of the date of mailing to charge the late penalty.

(C) Information on Bill

Each bill will provide all information required by the TCEQ Rules. For each of the systems it operates, the utility will maintain and note on the monthly bill a local or toll-free telephone number (or numbers) to which customers can direct questions about their utility service.

(D) Prorated Bills

If service is interrupted or seriously impaired for 24 consecutive hours or more, the utility will prorate the monthly base bill in proportion to the time service was not available to reflect this loss of service.

Section 2.11- Payments

All payments for utility service shall be delivered or mailed to the utility's business office. If the business office fails to receive payment prior to the time of noticed disconnection for non-payment of a delinquent account, service will be terminated as scheduled. Utility service crews shall not be allowed to collect payments on customer accounts in the field.

Payment of an account by any means that has been dishonored and returned by the payor or payee's bank, shall be deemed to be delinquent. All returned payments must be redeemed with cash or valid money order. If a customer has two returned payments within a twelve month period, the customer shall be required to pay a deposit if one has not already been paid.

Section 2.12 - Service Disconnection

(A) With Notice

Utility service may be disconnected if the bill has not been paid in full by the date listed on the termination notice. The termination date must be at least 10 days after the notice is mailed or hand delivered.

The utility is encouraged to offer a deferred payment plan to a customer who cannot pay an outstanding bill in full and is willing to pay the balance in reasonable installments. However, a customer's utility service may be disconnected if a bill has not been paid or a deferred payment agreement entered into within 26 days from the date of issuance of a bill and if proper notice of termination has been given.

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APPROVED TARIFF BY SAL

SECTION 2.0 - SERVICE RULES AND POLICIES (Continued)

Notice of termination must be a separate mailing or hand delivery in accordance with the TCEQ Rules.

B) Without Notice

Utility service may also be disconnected without notice for reasons as described in the TCEQ Rules.

Section 2.13 - Reconnection of Service

Utility personnel must be available during normal business hours to accept payments on the day service is disconnected and the following day unless service was disconnected at the customer's request or due to a hazardous condition.

Service will be reconnected within 36 hours after the past due bill, reconnect fees and any other outstanding charges are paid or the conditions which caused service to be disconnected are corrected.

Section 2.14 - Service Interruptions

The utility will make all reasonable efforts to prevent interruptions of service. If interruptions occur, the utility will re-establish service within the shortest possible time. Except for momentary interruptions due to automatic equipment operations, the utility will keep a complete record of all interruptions, both emergency and scheduled and will notify the Commission in writing of any service interruptions affecting the entire system or any major division of the system lasting more than four hours. The notice will explain the cause of the interruptions.

Section 2.15 - Quality of Service

The utility will plan, furnish, and maintain production, treatment, storage, transmission, and distribution facilities of sufficient size and capacity to provide a continuous and adequate supply of water for all reasonable consumer uses. Unless otherwise authorized by the Commission, the utility will maintain facilities as described in the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality Rules and Regulations for Public Water Systems.

Section 2.16 - Customer Complaints and Disputes

If a customer or applicant for service lodges a complaint, the utility will promptly make a suitable investigation and advise the complainant of the results. Service will not be disconnected pending completion of the investigation. If the complainant is dissatisfied with the utility's response, the utility must advise the complainant that he has recourse through the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality complaint process. Pending resolution of a complaint, the commission may require continuation or restoration of service.

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SECTION 2.0 – SERVICE RULES AND POLICIES (Continued)

The utility will maintain a record of all complaints which shows the name and address of the complainant, the date and nature of the complaint and the adjustment or disposition thereof, for a period of two years after the final settlement of the complaint.

In the event of a dispute between a customer and a utility regarding any bill for utility service, the utility will conduct an investigation and report the results to the customer. If the dispute is not resolved, the utility will inform the customer that a complaint may be filed with the Commission.

Section 2.17 - Customer Liability

Customer shall be liable for any damage or injury to utility-owned property shown to be caused by the customer.

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SECTION 3.0 -- EXTENSION POLICY

Section 3.01 - Standard Extension Requirements

LINE EXTENSION AND CONSTRUCTION CHARGES: NO CONTRIBUTION IN AID OF CONSTRUCTION MAY BE REQUIRED OF ANY CUSTOMER EXCEPT AS PROVIDED FOR IN THIS APPROVED EXTENSION POLICY.

The Utility is not required to extend service to any applicant outside of its certified service area and will only do so under terms and conditions mutually agreeable to the Utility and the applicant, in compliance with TCEQ rules and policies, and upon extension of the Utility's certified service area boundaries by the TCEQ.

The applicant for service will be given an itemized statement of the costs, options such as rebates to the customer, sharing of construction costs between the utility and the customer, or sharing of costs between the customer and other applicants prior to beginning construction.

The Utility is not required to extend service to any applicant outside of its certificated service area and will only do so under terms and conditions mutually agreeable to the Utility and the applicant, in compliance with TCEQ rules and policies, and upon extension of the Utility's certificated service area boundaries by the TCEQ.

Section 3.02 - Costs Utilities and Service Applicants Shall Bear

Within its certified area, the utility will pay the cost of the first 200 feet of any water main or distribution line necessary to extend service to an individual residential customer within a platted subdivision.

However, if the residential customer requesting service purchased the property after the developer was notified in writing of the need to provide facilities to the utility, the utility may charge for the first 200 feet. The utility must also be able to document that the developer of the subdivision refused to provide facilities compatible with the utility's facilities in accordance with the utility's approved extension policy after receiving a written request from the utility.

Residential customers will be charged the equivalent of the costs of extending service to their property from the nearest transmission or distribution line even if that line does not have adequate capacity to serve the customer. However, if the customer places unique, non-standard service demands upon the system, the customer may be charged the additional cost of extending service to and throughout their property, including the cost of all necessary transmission and storage facilities necessary to meet the service demands anticipated to be created by that property.

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SECTION 3.0 -- EXTENSION POLICY (Continued)

Unless an exception is granted by the TCEQ's Executive Director, the residential service applicant shall not be required to pay for costs of main extensions greater than 2" in diameter for water distribution and pressure wastewater collection lines and 6" in diameter for gravity wastewater lines.

Exceptions may be granted by the TCEQ Executive Director if

- adequate service cannot be provided to the applicant using the maximum line sizes listed due to distance or elevation, in which case, it shall be the utility's burden to justify that a larger diameter pipe is required for adequate service;
- or larger minimum line sizes are required under subdivision platting requirements or building codes of municipalities within whose corporate limits or extraterritorial jurisdiction the point of use is located; or the residential service applicant is located outside the CCN service area.

If an exception is granted, the Utility shall establish a proportional cost plan for the specific extension or a rebate plan which may be limited to seven years to return the portion of the applicant's costs for oversizing as new customers are added to ensure that future applicants for service on the line pay at least as much as the initial service applicant.

For purposes of determining the costs that service applicants shall pay, commercial customers with service demands greater than residential customer demands in the certified area, industrial, and wholesale customers shall be treated as developers. A service applicant requesting a one inch meter for a lawn sprinkler system to service a residential lot is not considered nonstandard service.

If an applicant requires service other than the standard service provided by the utility, such applicant will be required to pay all expenses incurred by the utility in excess of the expenses that would be incurred in providing the standard service and connection beyond 200 feet and throughout his property including the cost of all necessary transmission facilities.

The utility will bear the full cost of any over-sizing of water mains necessary to serve other customers in the immediate area. The individual residential customer shall not be charged for any additional production, storage, or treatment facilities. Contributions in aid of construction may not be required of individual residential customers for production, storage, treatment or transmission facilities unless otherwise approved by the Commission under this specific extension policy.

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SECTION 3.0 -- EXTENSION POLICY (Continued)

Section 3.03 - Contributions in Aid of Construction

Developers may be required to provide contributions in aid of construction in amounts sufficient to furnish the development with all facilities necessary to provide for reasonable local demand requirements and to comply with Texas Commission on Environmental Quality minimum design criteria for facilities used in the production, transmission, pumping, or treatment of water or Texas Commission on Environmental Quality minimum requirements. For purposes of this subsection, a developer is one who subdivides or requests more than two meters on a piece of property. Commercial, industrial, and wholesale customers will be treated as developers.

Any applicant who places unique or non-standard service demands on the system may be required to provide contributions in aid of construction for the actual costs of any additional facilities required to maintain compliance with the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality minimum design criteria for water production, treatment, pumping, storage and transmission.

Any service extension to a subdivision (recorded or unrecorded) may be subject to the provisions and restrictions of 30 TAC 291.86(d). When a developer wishes to extend the system to prepare to service multiple new connections, the charge shall be the cost of such extension, plus a pro-rata charge for facilities which must be committed to such extension compliant with the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality minimum design criteria. As provided by 30 T.A.C. 291.85(e)(3), for purposes of this section, commercial, industrial, and wholesale customers shall be treated as developers.

A utility may only charge a developer standby fees for unrecovered costs of facilities committed to a developer's property under the following circumstances:

- Under a contract and only in accordance with the terms of the contract; or
- if service is not being provided to a lot or lots within two years after installation of facilities necessary to provide service to the lots has been completed and if the standby fees are included on the utility's approved tariff after a rate change application has been filed. The fees cannot be billed to the developer or collected until the standby fees have been approved by the commission or executive director.
- for purposes of this section, a manufactured housing rental community can only be charged standby fees under a contract or if the utility installs the facilities necessary to provide individually metered service to each of the rental lots or spaces in the community.

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SECTION 3.0 -- EXTENSION POLICY (Continued)

Section 3.04 - Appealing Connection Costs

The imposition of additional extension costs or charges as provided by Sections 3.0 - Extension Policy of this tariff shall be subject to appeal as provided in this tariff, TCEQ rules, or the rules of such other regulatory authority as may have jurisdiction over the utility's rates and services. Any applicant required to pay for any costs not specifically set forth in the rate schedule pages of this tariff shall be given a written explanation of such costs prior to payment and/or commencement of construction. If the applicant does not believe that these costs are reasonable or necessary, the applicant shall be informed of the right to appeal such costs to the TCEQ or such other regulatory authority having jurisdiction over the utility's rates in that portion of the utility's service area in which the applicant's property(ies) is located.

Section 3.05 - Applying for Service

The Utility will provide a written service application form to the applicant for each request for service received by the Utility's business offices. A separate application shall be required for each potential service location if more than one service connection is desired by any individual applicant. Service application forms will be available at the Utility's business office during normal weekday business hours. Service applications will be sent by prepaid first class United States mail to the address provided by the applicant upon request. Completed applications should be returned by hand delivery in case there are questions which might delay fulfilling the service request. Completed service applications may be submitted by mail if hand delivery is not possible.

Where a new tap or service connection is required, the service applicant shall be required to submit a written service application and request that a tap be made. A diagram, map, plat, or written metes and bounds description of precisely where the applicant desires each tap or service connection is to be made and, if necessary, where the meter is to be installed, along the applicant's property line may also be required with the tap request. The actual point of connection and meter installation must be readily accessible to Utility personnel for inspection, servicing, and meter reading while being reasonably secure from damage by vehicles and mowers. If the Utility has more than one main adjacent to the service applicant's property, the tap or service connection will be made to the Utility's nearest service main with adequate capacity to service the applicant's full potential service demand. Beyond the initial 200 feet, the customer shall bear only the equivalent cost of extending from the nearest main. If the tap or service connection cannot be made at the applicant's desired location, it will be made at another location mutually acceptable to the applicant and the Utility. If no agreement on location can be made, the applicant may refer the matter to the TCEQ for resolution.

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SECTION 3.0 -- EXTENSION POLICY (Continued)

Section 3.06 - Qualified Service Applicant

A "qualified service applicant" is an applicant who has: (1) met all of the Utility's requirements for service contained in this tariff, TCEQ rules and/or TCEQ order, (2) has made payment or made arrangement for payment of tap fees, (3) has provided all easements and rights-of-way required to provide service to the requested location, (4) delivered an executed customer service inspection certificate to the Utility, if applicable, and (5) has executed a customer service application for each location to which service is being requested.

The Utility shall serve each qualified service applicant within its certified service area as soon as practical after receiving a completed service application. All service requests will be fulfilled within the time limits prescribed by TCEQ rules once the applicant has met all conditions precedent to achieving "qualified service applicant" status. If a service request cannot be fulfilled within the required period, the applicant shall be notified in writing of the delay, its cause and the anticipated date that service will be available. The TCEQ service dates shall not become applicable until the service applicant has met all conditions precedent to becoming a qualified service applicant as defined by TCEQ rules.

Section 3.07 - Developer Requirements

As a condition of service to a new subdivision, the Utility shall require a developer (as defined by TCEQ rule) to provide permanent recorded public utility easements as a condition of service to any location within the developer's property.

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SECTION 4.0 -- DROUGHT CONTINGENCY PLAN
(Utility must attach copy of TCEQ approved Drought Contingency Plan)

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APPENDIX A -- SAMPLE SERVICE AGREEMENT

From 30 TAC Chapter 290.47(b), Appendix B

SERVICE AGREEMENT

- I. **PURPOSE.** The NAME OF WATER SYSTEM is responsible for protecting the drinking water supply from contamination or pollution which could result from improper private water distribution system construction or configuration. The purpose of this service agreement is to notify each customer of the restrictions which are in place to provide this protection. The utility enforces these restrictions to ensure the public health and welfare. Each customer must sign this agreement before the NAME OF WATER SYSTEM will begin service. In addition, when service to an existing connection has been suspended or terminated, the water system will not re-establish service unless it has a signed copy of this agreement.
- II. **RESTRICTIONS.** The following unacceptable practices are prohibited by State regulations.
 - A. No direct connection between the public drinking water supply and a potential source of contamination is permitted. Potential sources of contamination shall be isolated from the public water system by an air-gap or an appropriate backflow prevention device.
 - B. No cross-connection between the public drinking water supply and a private water system is permitted. These potential threats to the public drinking water supply shall be eliminated at the service connection by the installation of an air-gap or a reduced pressure-zone backflow prevention device.
 - C. No connection which allows water to be returned to the public drinking water supply is permitted.
 - D. No pipe or pipe fitting which contains more than 8.0% lead may be used for the installation or repair of plumbing at any connection which provides water for human use.
 - E. No solder or flux which contains more than 0.2% lead can be used for the installation or repair of plumbing at any connection which provides water for human use.

APPENDIX A -- SAMPLE SERVICE AGREEMENT (Continued)

III. SERVICE AGREEMENT. The following are the terms of the service agreement between the NAME OF WATER SYSTEM (the Water System) and NAME OF CUSTOMER (the Customer).

- A. The Water System will maintain a copy of this agreement as long as the Customer and/or the premises is connected to the Water System.
- B. The Customer shall allow his property to be inspected for possible cross-connections and other potential contamination hazards. These inspections shall be conducted by the Water System or its designated agent prior to initiating new water service; when there is reason to believe that cross-connections or other potential contamination hazards exist; or after any major changes to the private water distribution facilities. The inspections shall be conducted during the Water System's normal business hours.
- C. The Water System shall notify the Customer in writing of any cross-connection or other potential contamination hazard which has been identified during the initial inspection or the periodic reinspection.
- D. The Customer shall immediately remove or adequately isolate any potential cross-connections or other potential contamination hazards on his premises.
- E. The Customer shall, at his expense, properly install, test, and maintain any backflow prevention device required by the Water System. Copies of all testing and maintenance records shall be provided to the Water System.

IV. ENFORCEMENT. If the Customer fails to comply with the terms of the Service Agreement, the Water System shall, at its option, either terminate service or properly install, test, and maintain an appropriate backflow prevention device at the service connection. Any expenses associated with the enforcement of this agreement shall be billed to the Customer.

CUSTOMER'S SIGNATURE: _____

DATE: _____

APPENDIX B -- APPLICATION FOR SERVICE
(Utility Must Attach Blank Copy)