



Control Number: 49554



Item Number: 1

Addendum StartPage: 0



**SouthWest
Water Company**

SWWC Utilities, Inc.
12535 Reed Road
Sugar Land, TX 77478
Phone 281.207.5800
Fax 281.207.5940
www.swwc.com

May 20, 2019

49554

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

Re: Complaint of SWWC Utilities, Inc. dba Water Services, Inc. against the city of Bulverde, Texas for Its Decision Issued on February 12, 2019 in Complaint No. 2018-01 and Sue Wahl, the Complainant in that Case

To the Commission:

Attached for filing are ten copies of this complaint in the above referenced matter. This complaint is filed under the rules and procedures of Chapter 13 of the Texas Water Code and Chapters 22 and 24 of the Commission's rules. Copies have been mailed to the parties.

Please contact me if any questions or if additional information is needed.

Sincerely,

George Freitag, P.E.
Texas Regulatory Manager
SouthWest Water Company
gfreitag@swwc.com
(512) 219 2288

2019 MAY 20 10:03 AM
680 113 65 1103

cc: The City of Bulverde, Texas
Sue Wahl

1

PUC DOCKET NO. _____

COMPLAINT OF SWWC UTILITIES, INC dba WATER SERVICES, INC. AGAINST THE CITY OF BULVERDE, TEXAS FOR ITS DECISION ISSUED ON FEBRUARY 12, 2019 IN COMPLAINT NO. 2018-01 AND SUE WAHL, THE COMPLAINANT IN THAT CASE

To the Public Utility Commission of Texas:

SWWC Utilities, Inc. dba Water Services, Inc. ("Water Services") files this complaint with the Public Utility Commission of Texas ("Commission") pursuant to Texas Administrative Code ("TAC") §22.242 and requests the Commission overturn the order issued on February 12, 2019 ("Order") by the City of Bulverde, Texas ("Bulverde" or "City") in the matter before it styled Complaint No. 2018-01 (Complaint of Sue Wahl against Water Services, Inc.).

Specifically, this complaint is against: (1) Bulverde, which ruled that Water Services overcharged its customer Sue Wahl in the amount of \$604.79 and ordered Water Services to refund that amount to the customer; and (2) Sue Wahl, the complainant in the aforementioned case who alleged she was "overcharged on water bills with no leaks present" during several months of 2018 in a billing complaint filed with Bulverde on October 10, 2018.

This complaint was previously filed with the Commission by Water Services on March 5, 2019 as an appeal of a ratemaking decision pursuant to Texas Water Code ("TWC") §13.043 and TAC §24.201(a) and processed by the Commission under Docket No. 49290. However, per recommendation from Commission Staff, Water Services withdrew its filing on May 1, 2019 and now files this formal complaint pursuant to TAC §22.242. Water Services files this formal complaint without first referring it for informal resolution based on the exception provided under TAC §22.242(c)(1), which provides, "A complainant may present a formal complaint to the commission, without first referring the complaint for informal resolution, if: (D) the complaint has been the subject of a complaint proceeding conducted by a city."

Water Services asserts, based on information provided in this filing, that the water usage resulting in the disputed bill amounts was indeed used by the customer and that the charges billed to the customer were accurate. Water Services requests the Commission overturn the City's Order requiring Water Services to refund the customer the amount of \$604.79 and order the customer to pay all charges associated with the disputed usage amounts.

(1) Jurisdiction

Water Services is a retail public utility providing water service in the State of Texas under Certificate of Convenience and Necessity Number 11106. Bulverde is a home-rule municipality and a political subdivision of the State of Texas, and under TWC §13.042.(a), it has exclusive original jurisdiction over all water and sewer utility rates, operations, and services provided by a water and sewer utility within its corporate limits. Water Services provides retail water utility service to customer Wahl, who is located within the city limits of Bulverde. Therefore, the City has original jurisdiction regarding this matter, and the Commission has jurisdiction to investigate the complaint under TAC §22.242.

(2) Known Parties Affected if Relief is Granted

The City of Bulverde, Texas

Sue Wahl

SWWC Utilities, Inc. dba Water Services

(3) Parties

The City of Bulverde, Texas
c/o Danny Batts, City Manager
30360 Cougar Bend
Bulverde, TX 78163
Phone: 810 980 8832
Fax: 830 438 4339
Email: dbatts@bulverdetx.gov

Sue Wahl
4626 Evening Shadows Dr.
Bulverde, TX 78163
Email: swahl846@gmail.com

SWWC Utilities, Inc. dba Water Services, Inc.
12535 Reed Road
Sugar Land, TX 77478
Phone: 281 207 5800
Fax: 281 207 5940

(4) Description of Facts Giving Rise to the Complaint:

1. On September 17, 2018, Water Services customer Sue Wahl filed a complaint with the Customer Protection Division ("CPD") of the Commission alleging that she was billed excessive amounts on five different occasions since Water Services replaced her meter with a "Smart Meter." On the most recent occasion, her bill was for \$444.38 based on usage of 52,000 gallons of water in the then-current month and 41,000 gallons in the previous month.

2. On September 18, 2018, the CPD referred the matter to Water Services' Customer Care coordinators. After review, Water Services determined the customer was located within the City of Bulverde and that it had the original jurisdiction to review the matter.

3. On September 19, 2019, the CPD responded to the customer that the matter had been received, but that the Commission had no jurisdiction since the customer's residence was within Bulverde. The customer was given the contact information for the City. The CPD also informed Water Services by email that the complaint had been closed (CP2018090639).

4. On September 26, 2018, Water Services contacted the customer by email and stated that it would investigate the issues in the complaint.

5. On October 4, 2018, Water Services had a data log run on the complainant's meter. The data log showed the customer's daily water use for the previous 5 ½ months.

6. On October 5, 2018, Water Services' Customer Care Escalation Team sent a letter to the complainant outlining its investigation conclusions, specifically that the meter was reading accurately and the billed usage had occurred. Additional responses to various concerns of the customer about leaks and the meter were included in that letter.

7. On October 10, 2018, Water Services offered the complainant an installment plan to pay off the outstanding balances of the bill, and on October 17, 2018, the complainant accepted.

8. On October 12, 2018, Bulverde sent a letter to Water Services that it had received a complaint from an in-city resident (the same) and gave instructions to investigate and how to respond. Some backup information was attached.

9. On October 18, 2018, Water Services sent a letter to Mr. Danny Betts, Bulverde City Manager, outlining the findings of its investigations. The findings were that the meter was reading accurately and the billed usage had occurred.

10. On December 3, 2018, Bulverde notified Water Services that it had received the complaint on this same matter and, pursuant to its ordinances, would consider the complaint.

11. On December 17, 2018, the meter at the service location was tested by a third-party testing firm at Water Services' request. The test indicated the meter met AWWA standards.

12. On December 20, 2018, Water Services responded to the City's notification with a letter reemphasizing the findings and conclusions that the meter readings were accurate and the billed usage had occurred. Attached with the letter were copies of the third-party meter test results, the usage data logs, the customer's bills, and other documents.

13. On February 8, 2019, the City sent a letter by priority mail to Water Services stating that it intended to review and rule on the formal complaint on February 12, 2019.

14. On February 14, 2019, the City sent by Priority Mail a copy of the Order that it issued on February 12, 2019 in the subject complaint (Bulverde's Complaint No. 2018-01). In it, the city ordered Water Services to reduce the amount the complainant owed Water Services by \$604.79. The Order indicated the city made its determination based on information in an attached "Exhibit A." *Exhibit A was not included with the copy of the order sent to Water Services.*

15. On February 20, 2019, Water Services credited the complainant's account for \$604.79 and left voice messages with the complainant detailing that fact.

16. On February 26, 2019, Water Services notified Bulverde by mail, and also sent a copy to the customer, that the customer's account had been credited.

17. On May 15, 2019, the City sent by email a copy of "Exhibit A" in response to Water Services' Public Information Request.

18. There is no documentation in the record that indicates how the amount of refund ordered (\$604.79) was determined by the City.

All relevant documents are attached with this filing, including a copy of the Order and its Exhibit A.

(5) Statement of Relief Requested

1. Water Services requests the Commission review the appropriate record in this matter according to applicable rules and standards.

2. Water Services requests the Commission overturn the decision of the City in its Order issued February 12, 2019.

3. Water Services requests the Commission order Sue Wahl to pay all past due charges incurred for the provision of water service during the period of dispute in this case.

(6) Certificate of Service

See attached Certificate of Service

(7) Person to Whom Service May be Had – Complainant's Representative

George Freitag, P.E.
Texas Regulatory Manager
SouthWest Water Company
SWWC Utilities, Inc. dba Water Services, Inc.

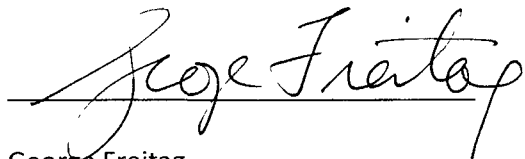
Physical Address:

1620 Grand Avenue Parkway, Suite 140
Pflugerville, TX 78660
Ph: (512) 219 2288
Fax: (512) 252 8782
Email: gfreitag@swwc.com

Mailing Address for Service:

SouthWest Water Company
12535 Reed Road
Sugar Land, TX 77478

Respectfully submitted,



George Freitag

Texas Regulatory Manager
SouthWest Water Company
SWWC Utilities, Inc. dba Water Services, Inc

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I certify that I have sent a true and correct copy of the ORIGINAL PETITION OF SWWC UTILITIES, INC dba WATER SERVICES, INC. APPEALING THE ORDER OF THE CITY OF BULVERDE, TEXAS ISSUED ON FEBRUARY 12, 2019 IN IT'S COMPLAINT NO. 2018-01 to the following, as indicated, on the 20th day of May, 2019.

The City of Bulverde, Texas
c/o Danny Batts, City Manager
30360 Cougar Bend
Bulverde, TX 78163
Phone: 810 980 8832
Fax: 830 438 4339
Email: dbatts@bulverdetx.gov

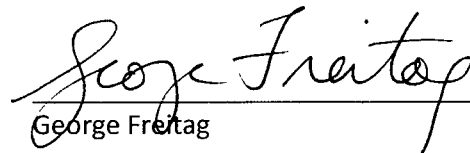
*Via U.S. Mail Priority
Signature Required*

Sue Wahl
4626 Evening Shadows Dr.
Bulverde, TX 78163
Email: swahl846@gmail.com

*Via U.S. Mail
Signature Required*

Public Utility Commission of Texas
Central Records
1701 N. Congress Ave., Suite 8-100
Austin, TX 78701

Via Hand Delivery


George Freitag

**CUSTOMER PROTECTION DIVISION
ON-LINE COMPLAINT FORM**

Complaint

Normal

Wednesday, September 19, 2018

Investigator: **Fraustro, James**
Date Pending: 10/9/2018
Complaint No: **CP2018090639**
Company: **WATER SERVICES INC.**
Complaint: **Non-Juris**
Service No:

Customer:
Last Name: **Wahl**
First Name: **Susan**
Business:
Date Closed: **9/19/2018**
Date Received: **9/17/2018**
Account No: **[REDACTED]**
Spanish: No

Service Address:
[REDACTED]

Mail Address:
4626 Evening Shadows Dr
Bulverde TX 78163
Day: [REDACTED]
Alt: [REDACTED]
Email: [REDACTED]

Alt Last:
Alt First:

Complaint Note:

CCN 11106 : The water company replaced our meters with "Smart Meters" and ever since this has happend I have been billed in excessive amounts 5 different times. The bill I received on Saturday is in the amount of \$444.38 and I am being charged with using 52,000 gallons of water - last month (August) they charged me for 41,000 gallons of water usage! I am at work all day long and have lived in this home for 20+ years and have never had water bills like this - it is ridiculous. When I call them to speak with them they say it must be paid or my water will be turned off. I called them today (9/17) and spoke with them again and she said I have to pay 1/2 which they must have in their hands and they will put me on a payment plan - seriously I did not use 52,000 gallons of water!! There was a water leak in the front

Entered: **9/17/2018 3:45:00 PM**

Entered By: **., Unknown**

000001

CUSTOMER PROTECTION DIVISION

Complaint

Normal

ON-LINE COMPLAINT FORM

Wednesday, September 19, 2018

between my house and my neighbors (before the meters) and it took them six days to fix it after we noticed there was a leak. I will attach a copy of my bill so you can see that they have previously charged me for 35,000, 27,000 and 25,000 and 19,000 gallons of water usage - I just got tired of arguing with these people and paid it because I can not go without water. I am in the only person in my home. All of these issues have been after these new meters were put in.

Entered: 9/17/2018 3:45:00 PM

Entered By: ., Unknown

000002

DeAnn Walker
Chairman

Arthur C. D'Andrea
Commissioner

Shelly L. Botkin
Commissioner

John Paul Urban
Executive Director

Greg Abbott
Governor



Public Utility Commission of Texas

9/19/2018

Ms. Susan Wahl
4626 Evening Shadows Dr.
Bulverde, TX 78163

Dear Ms. Wahl,

The Customer Protection Division (CPD) of the Public Utility Commission of Texas (PUC) received your complaint regarding the increase in your monthly water bill after Water Services Inc installed Smart Meters. Unfortunately, since your residence lies within the city limits of Bulverde, TX, the PUC has no jurisdiction, as the water/sewer rates are set by the city of Bulverde, TX.

However, a copy of your complaint has been forwarded to Water Services Inc, with a request that they review and contact you directly regarding this issue. For further assistance regarding the accuracy of your water/sewer bill, you will need to contact your city council member, the office of the Mayor or the City Manager, through the following contact address:

City of Bulverde, TX

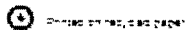
Mr. Bill Krawietz – Mayor
Mr. Gene Hartman - Mayor Pro-Tem
Mr. Danny Batts – City Manager
30360 Cougar Bend
Bulverde, TX 78163
Phone: 830-438-3612
Phone: 830-980-8832
Fax: 830-438-4339
Website: <http://bulverdetx.gov>

We trust that you will find the above contact information helpful.

Sincerely,

James R. Fraustro
Customer Protection Division
Public Utility Commission of Texas

cc: Water Services Inc.



Wahl, Susan S.

From: S Wahl [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, October 3, 2018 11:18 AM
To: Wahl, Susan S.
Subject: [External] Re: Acct. No. [REDACTED]
Attachments: image001.jpg

On Wed, Sep 26, 2018, 6:27 PM TX Utilities - Customer Care <TXUtilities-CustomerCare@swwc.com> wrote:

Dear valued customer,

Thank you for contacting SouthWest Water Company with your comment, question or concern. We have received your email and we will respond to your inquiry as soon as possible. Our hours of operation are Monday – Friday 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Please allow up to two business days as we handle each email in the order received.

Thank you for allowing us the opportunity to serve you.

Sincerely,

SouthWest Water Company

Customer Care

Visit us at www.swwc.com

Call us toll free at 866.654.7992

Hours of operation: Mon. – Fri, 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.





MasterLink Data Collection System

10/4/2018 11:31 am

Data Log Report

Page 1 of 7

From: 4/17/2018 (11:03) To: 10/4/2018 (11:03)

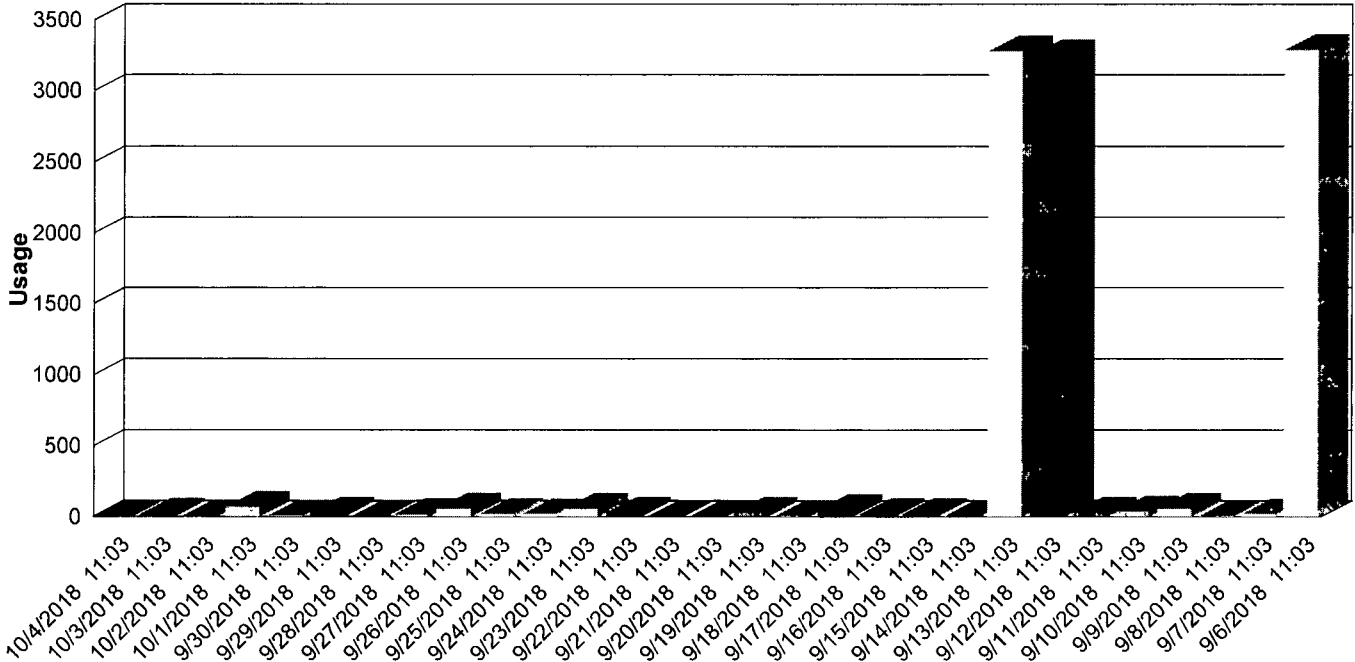
Data Log Event: 2583409:

Address: [REDACTED]

Customer: SUSAN WAHL

MeterSN: 7938646 Electronic ID: 16766180

Peak Consumption: 3820 Occurred 7/22/2018 (11:03)



Date & Time	Reading	Usage
10/4/2018 11:03	146080	10
10/3/2018 11:03	146070	20
10/2/2018 11:03	146050	10
10/1/2018 11:03	146040	70
9/30/2018 11:03	145970	10
9/29/2018 11:03	145960	30
9/28/2018 11:03	145930	10
9/27/2018 11:03	145920	20
9/26/2018 11:03	145900	60
9/25/2018 11:03	145840	20
9/24/2018 11:03	145820	20
9/23/2018 11:03	145800	60
9/22/2018 11:03	145740	30
9/21/2018 11:03	145710	10
9/20/2018 11:03	145700	10
9/19/2018 11:03	145690	30
9/18/2018 11:03	145660	10
9/17/2018 11:03	145650	50
9/16/2018 11:03	145600	20
9/15/2018 11:03	145580	20
9/14/2018 11:03	145560	10
9/13/2018 11:03	145550	3280
9/12/2018 11:03	142270	3250
9/11/2018 11:03	139020	30
9/10/2018 11:03	138990	40
9/9/2018 11:03	138950	60
9/8/2018 11:03	138890	10
9/7/2018 11:03	138880	20
9/6/2018 11:03	138860	3290



MasterLink Data Collection System

10/4/2018 11:31 am

Data Log Report

Page 2 of 7

From: 4/17/2018 (11:03) To: 10/4/2018 (11:03)

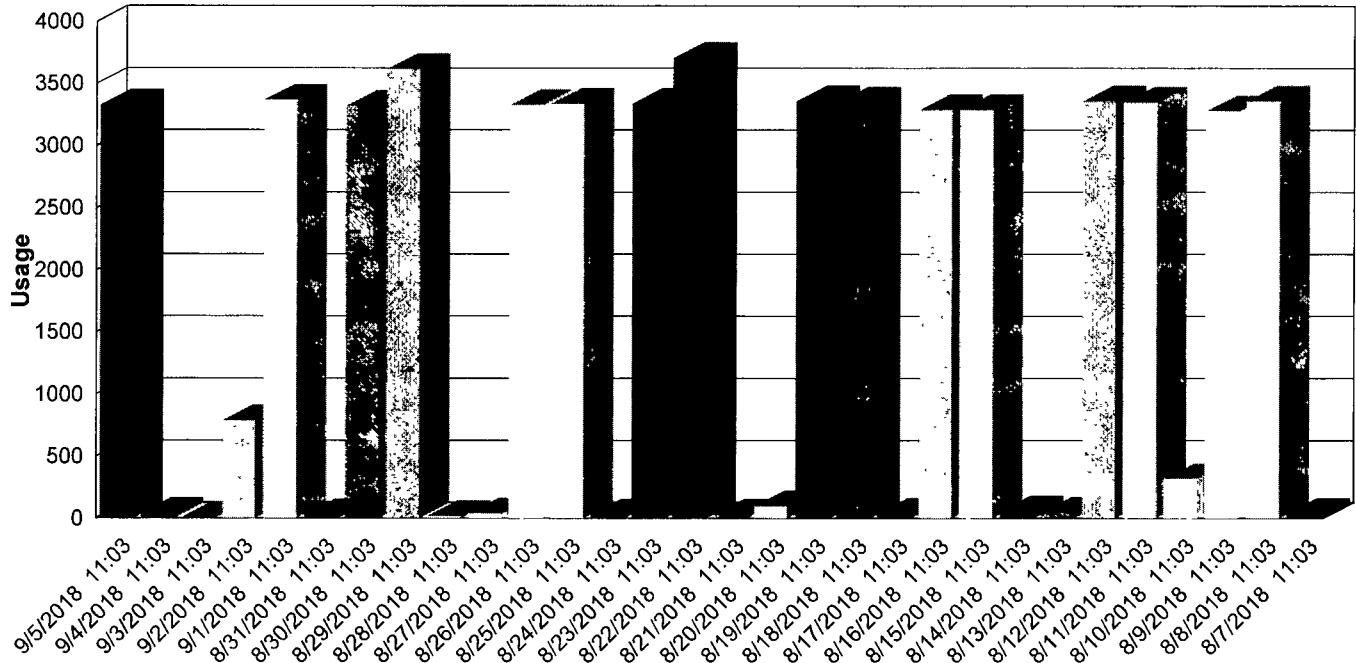
Data Log Event: 2583409:

Address: [REDACTED]

Customer: SUSAN WAHL

MeterSN: 7938646 Electronic ID: 16766180

Peak Consumption: 3820 Occurred 7/22/2018 (11:03)



<u>Date & Time</u>	<u>Reading</u>	<u>Usage</u>
9/5/2018 11:03	135570	3330
9/4/2018 11:03	132240	40
9/3/2018 11:03	132200	10
9/2/2018 11:03	132190	790
9/1/2018 11:03	131400	3370
8/31/2018 11:03	128030	30
8/30/2018 11:03	128000	3320
8/29/2018 11:03	124680	3620
8/28/2018 11:03	121060	20
8/27/2018 11:03	121040	40
8/26/2018 11:03	121000	3330
8/25/2018 11:03	117670	3340
8/24/2018 11:03	114330	30
8/23/2018 11:03	114300	3340
8/22/2018 11:03	110960	3710
8/21/2018 11:03	107250	30
8/20/2018 11:03	107220	100
8/19/2018 11:03	107120	3360
8/18/2018 11:03	103760	3350
8/17/2018 11:03	100410	40
8/16/2018 11:03	100370	3290
8/15/2018 11:03	97080	3290
8/14/2018 11:03	93790	60
8/13/2018 11:03	93730	50
8/12/2018 11:03	93680	3360
8/11/2018 11:03	90320	3350
8/10/2018 11:03	86970	320
8/9/2018 11:03	86650	3280
8/8/2018 11:03	83370	3360
8/7/2018 11:03	80010	40



MasterLink Data Collection System

10/4/2018 11:31 am

Data Log Report

Page 3 of 7

From: 4/17/2018 (11:03) To: 10/4/2018 (11:03)

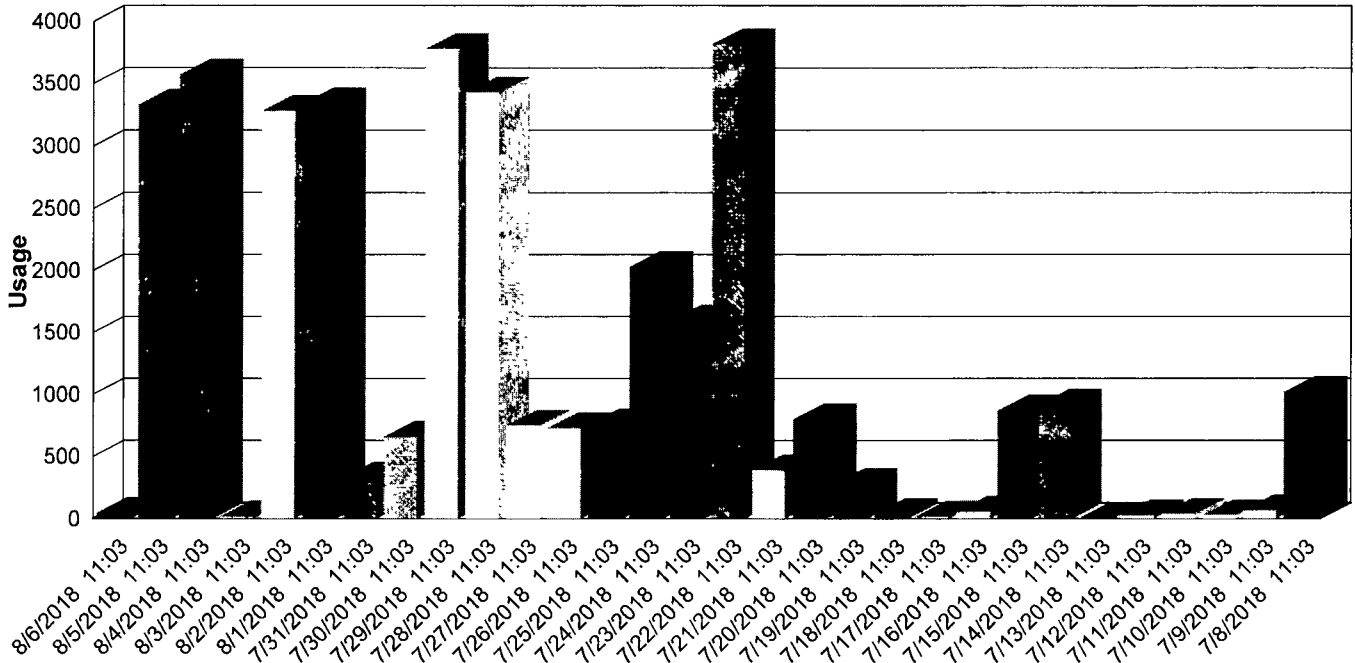
Data Log Event: 2583409:

Address: [REDACTED]

Customer: SUSAN WAHL

MeterSN: 7938646 Electronic ID: 16766180

Peak Consumption: 3820 Occurred 7/22/2018 (11:03)



Date & Time	Reading	Usage
8/6/2018 11:03	79970	50
8/5/2018 11:03	79920	3330
8/4/2018 11:03	76590	3570
8/3/2018 11:03	73020	20
8/2/2018 11:03	73000	3280
8/1/2018 11:03	69720	3340
7/31/2018 11:03	66380	330
7/30/2018 11:03	66050	660
7/29/2018 11:03	65390	3780
7/28/2018 11:03	61610	3430
7/27/2018 11:03	58180	750
7/26/2018 11:03	57430	730
7/25/2018 11:03	56700	760
7/24/2018 11:03	55940	2030
7/23/2018 11:03	53910	1600
7/22/2018 11:03	52310	3820
7/21/2018 11:03	48490	390
7/20/2018 11:03	48100	800
7/19/2018 11:03	47300	280
7/18/2018 11:03	47020	40
7/17/2018 11:03	46980	20
7/16/2018 11:03	46960	60
7/15/2018 11:03	46900	870
7/14/2018 11:03	46030	920
7/13/2018 11:03	45110	10
7/12/2018 11:03	45100	30
7/11/2018 11:03	45070	40
7/10/2018 11:03	45030	30
7/9/2018 11:03	45000	70
7/8/2018 11:03	44930	1020



MasterLink Data Collection System

10/4/2018 11:31 am

Data Log Report

Page 4 of 7

From: 4/17/2018 (11:03) To: 10/4/2018 (11:03)

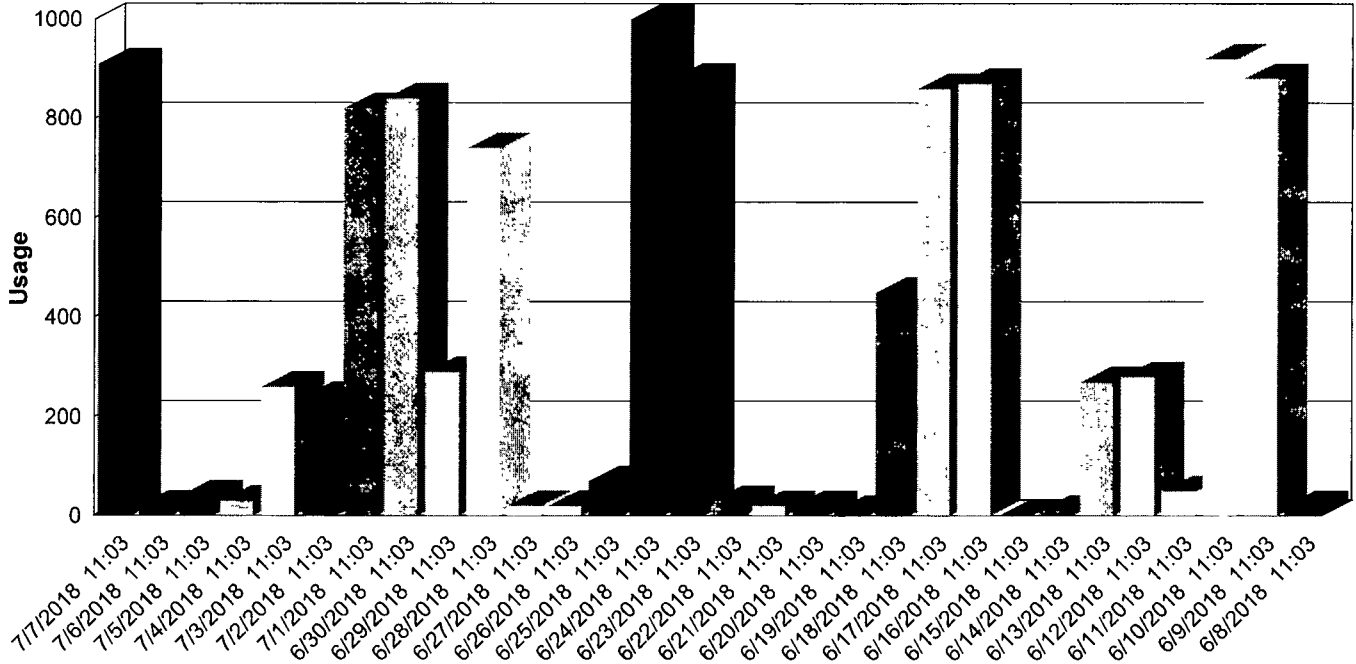
Data Log Event: 2583409:

Address: [REDACTED]

Customer: SUSAN WAHL

MeterSN: 7938646 Electronic ID: 16766180

Peak Consumption: 3820 Occurred 7/22/2018 (11:03)



Date & Time	Reading	Usage
7/7/2018 11:03	43910	910
7/6/2018 11:03	43000	20
7/5/2018 11:03	42980	40
7/4/2018 11:03	42940	30
7/3/2018 11:03	42910	260
7/2/2018 11:03	42650	240
7/1/2018 11:03	42410	820
6/30/2018 11:03	41590	840
6/29/2018 11:03	40750	290
6/28/2018 11:03	40460	740
6/27/2018 11:03	39720	20
6/26/2018 11:03	39700	20
6/25/2018 11:03	39680	70
6/24/2018 11:03	39610	1000
6/23/2018 11:03	38610	880
6/22/2018 11:03	37730	30
6/21/2018 11:03	37700	20
6/20/2018 11:03	37680	20
6/19/2018 11:03	37660	10
6/18/2018 11:03	37650	450
6/17/2018 11:03	37200	860
6/16/2018 11:03	36340	870
6/15/2018 11:03	35470	0
6/14/2018 11:03	35470	10
6/13/2018 11:03	35460	270
6/12/2018 11:03	35190	280
6/11/2018 11:03	34910	50
6/10/2018 11:03	34860	920
6/9/2018 11:03	33940	880
6/8/2018 11:03	33060	20



MasterLink Data Collection System

10/4/2018 11:31 am

Data Log Report

Page 5 of 7

From: 4/17/2018 (11:03) To: 10/4/2018 (11:03)

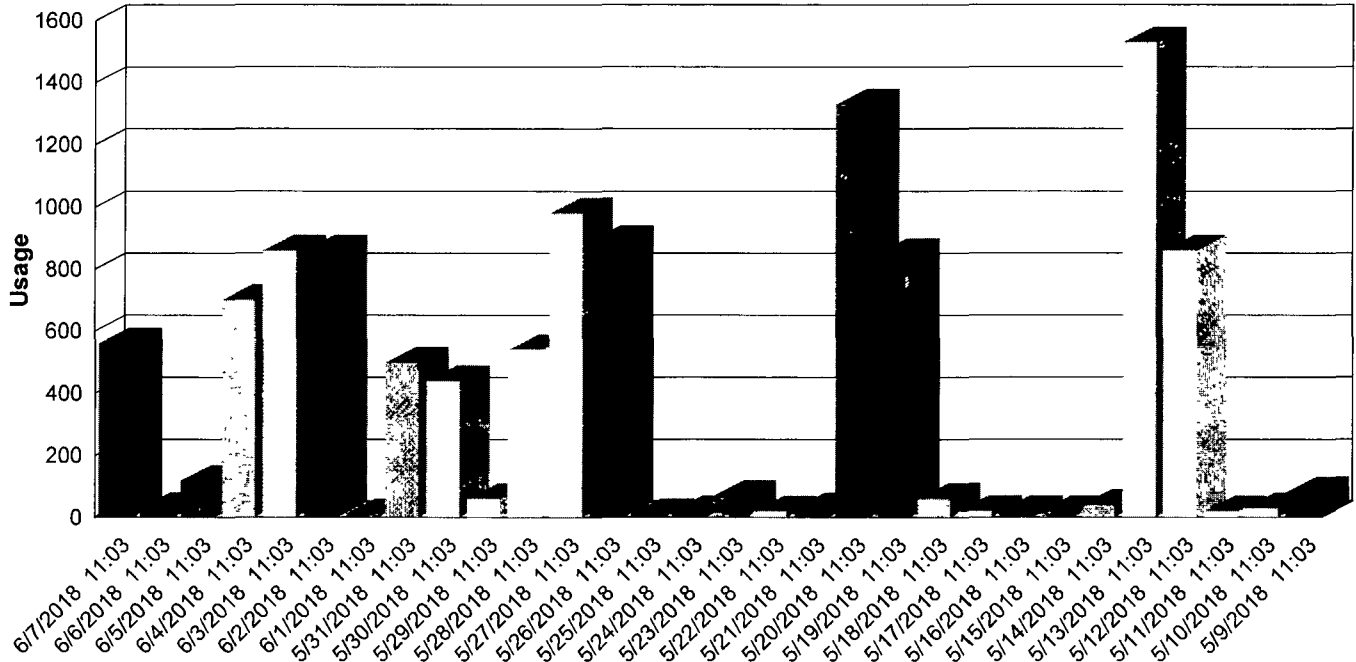
Data Log Event 2583409:

Address: [REDACTED]

Customer: SUSAN WAHL

MeterSN: 7938646 Electronic ID: 16766180

Peak Consumption: 3820 Occurred 7/22/2018 (11:03)



Date & Time	Reading	Usage
6/7/2018 11:03	33040	560
6/6/2018 11:03	32480	30
6/5/2018 11:03	32450	120
6/4/2018 11:03	32330	700
6/3/2018 11:03	31630	860
6/2/2018 11:03	30770	860
6/1/2018 11:03	29910	10
5/31/2018 11:03	29900	500
5/30/2018 11:03	29400	440
5/29/2018 11:03	28960	60
5/28/2018 11:03	28900	540
5/27/2018 11:03	28360	980
5/26/2018 11:03	27380	890
5/25/2018 11:03	26490	10
5/24/2018 11:03	26480	20
5/23/2018 11:03	26460	70
5/22/2018 11:03	26390	20
5/21/2018 11:03	26370	30
5/20/2018 11:03	26340	1330
5/19/2018 11:03	25010	850
5/18/2018 11:03	24160	60
5/17/2018 11:03	24100	20
5/16/2018 11:03	24080	20
5/15/2018 11:03	24060	20
5/14/2018 11:03	24040	40
5/13/2018 11:03	24000	1530
5/12/2018 11:03	22470	860
5/11/2018 11:03	21610	20
5/10/2018 11:03	21590	30
5/9/2018 11:03	21560	80



MasterLink Data Collection System

10/4/2018 11:31 am

Data Log Report

Page 6 of 7

From: 4/17/2018 (11:03) To: 10/4/2018 (11:03)

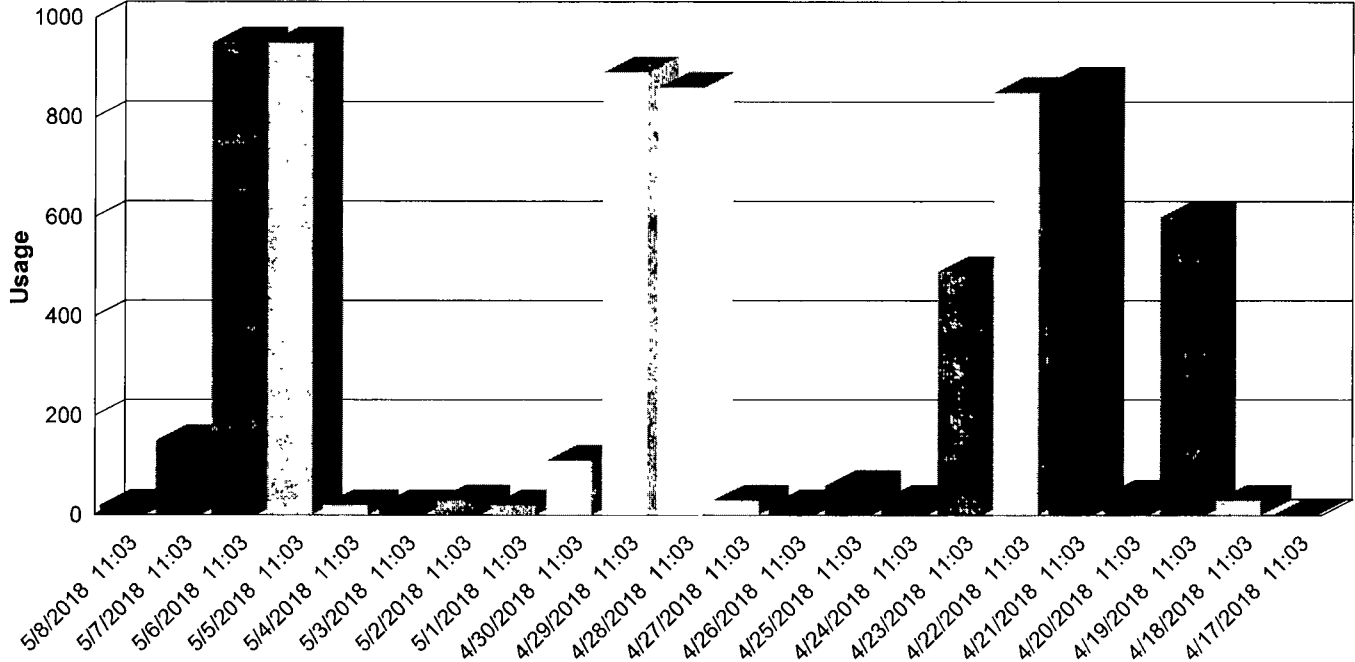
Data Log Event 2583409:

Address: [REDACTED]

Customer: SUSAN WAHL

MeterSN: 7938646 Electronic ID: 16766180

Peak Consumption: 3820 Occurred 7/22/2018 (11:03)



<u>Date & Time</u>	<u>Reading</u>	<u>Usage</u>
5/8/2018 11:03	21480	20
5/7/2018 11:03	21460	150
5/6/2018 11:03	21310	950
5/5/2018 11:03	20360	950
5/4/2018 11:03	19410	20
5/3/2018 11:03	19390	20
5/2/2018 11:03	19370	30
5/1/2018 11:03	19340	20
4/30/2018 11:03	19320	110
4/29/2018 11:03	19210	890
4/28/2018 11:03	18320	860
4/27/2018 11:03	17460	30
4/26/2018 11:03	17430	20
4/25/2018 11:03	17410	60
4/24/2018 11:03	17350	30
4/23/2018 11:03	17320	490
4/22/2018 11:03	16830	850
4/21/2018 11:03	15980	870
4/20/2018 11:03	15110	40
4/19/2018 11:03	15070	600
4/18/2018 11:03	14470	30
4/17/2018 11:03	14440	0



MasterLink Data Collection System

10/4/2018 11:31 am

Data Log Report

Page 7 of 7

From: 4/17/2018 (11:03) To: 10/4/2018 (11:03)

Address: [REDACTED]

Customer: SUSAN WAHL

MeterSN: 7938646 Electronic ID: 16766180

Peak Consumption: 3820 Occurred 7/22/2018 (11:03)

Data Log Event: 2583409:

Number of Readings For This Data Log: 171

Average Usage For This Data Log: 770

Total Usage For This Data Log: 131640

rev 2/2/2011



October 5, 2018

Susan Wahl
4626 Evening Shadows Dr.
Bulverde, Texas 78163

Dear Ms. Wahl:

We are in receipt of your inquiry to the Public Utilities Commission (PUC) regarding rates and charges. Providing each customer with an excellent customer service experience is important to us and thank you for allowing us the opportunity to respond.

Per the PUC inquiry, you are disputing the usage due to being billed excessively since the meter changed to a "Smart Meter." Our records indicate that we replaced the meter register on March 4, 2018. The meter is the same, however, just the register portion of the meter was upgraded as per the notice which accompanied the monthly invoices for March, April, and May that provided Notice of Upcoming Routine Maintenance/Register Upgrades.

The register of the meter installed at your address is an Automatic Meter Reader (AMR) register. These registers send an electronic signal to meter reading software each month allowing for the meters to be read without the need for human intervention. This saves not only time and resources but also inhibits the human element of someone incorrectly keying in a read. Please note that your meter is read every month utilizing this procedure. This is a real read and it is what we use for billing.

Our records further indicate that your account was established on May 18, 2007, for water service, within the Oak Village North area. The monthly meter reads occur on/about the 9th of each month. The invoices in question are for the months of August billed for 41 kgals usage, and September billed for 52 kgals usage.

Based on our records, below are our findings and actions taken on this account:

- August 15th – Billing verified the monthly read of 86, prior to releasing the August bill. No dispute of the 41 kgals was received. We thank you for your payment of \$342.83 on September 5, 2018.
- September 17th - records indicate that a "High Bill Dispute" was received due to usage of 52 kgals billed at \$443.38. We also received your call requesting a payment arrangement, and we did inform that we needed a payment for \$221.69, and then we would assist with setting up the arrangement. Also, we checked for a leak at your property as requested, we recorded the read at 145, and there was no leak detected.
- September 18th – we received this inquiry.
- September 19th – we reread the meter, checked for leaks, and the read was 145, with no leaks detected at the location. Again, the reads were progressing and appeared to be in-line with previous reads and usage recorded and billed.
- October 2, 2018 – we received your payment of \$221.00, and we thank you. The current balance due on your account is \$222.38, which is now past due.
- October 4, 2018 – we received the data log which shows that water went through the meter. Also, we included pictures of before and after the meter accuracy test. The test results revealed the meter is performing accurately and meets the American Water Works Association standards. The read captured was 146, and there was no indication of a leak.

Susan Wahl
October 5, 2018
Page 2

Upon further investigation, we researched the meter reads and found the usage had progressed each month prior to the register upgrade on March 4, 2018, and continues to progress after the register upgrade, without any problems.

Per the inquiry, there was a leak before the meters between your property and your neighbors. According to our records, there have not been any leaks found nor any repairs according to our Field Operations. A check of our records reflect that there was a main line leak repair and flushing within the Oak Village North area, the street affected was Eagle Claw, and this did not affect your property.

To date, there is not a payment arrangement on your account. Although we did advise on September 17, 2018, the payment discussed at that time was \$221.69 and we advised you to call back in order to set up one. We are in accordance with PUC Substantive Rule §24.87 (d) if offering a deferred payment plan between the utility and a customer in which an outstanding bill will be paid in installments. The utility shall offer a deferred payment plan to any residential customer if the customer's bill is more than three times the average monthly bill for that customer for the previous 12 months. In all other cases, the utility is encouraged to offer a deferred payment plan to residential customers who cannot pay an outstanding bill in full but are willing to pay the balance in reasonable installments. Should you feel that one is necessary, please contact us.

Some helpful water conservation tips include:

- Check household faucets for leaks. A faucet with even a slow drip takes 10 to 25 gallons of water.
- A five minute shower can use 10-25 gallons of water. Take short showers and save water.
- Repair leaky toilets. To check for leaks, add 12 drops of food coloring into the tank, and if color appears in the bowl one hour later, your toilet is leaking. (Make sure to flush your toilet at the conclusion of the experiment to prevent staining.)
- Water your lawn in the evening or in the early morning to avoid evaporation. Be careful to water only the lawn and not the sidewalk or street.

Ms. Wahl, we hope that we have answered your concerns. Thank you for being a valued Water Services customer. Should you have any questions or concerns, please contact us at (866) 654-7992 Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Sincerely,

Water Services, Inc.
PUC Escalation Team



Water Services, Inc.

A SouthWest Water Company

October 10, 2018



SUSAN WAHL
4626 EVENING SHADOWS DR
BULVERDE TX 78163-2706

Re: Installment Plan on Account # [REDACTED]

Dear SUSAN WAHL,

Thank you for contacting SouthWest Water Company to establish a payment arrangement to satisfy the outstanding balance currently due on your account. This letter details the terms and conditions of the agreement discussed between you and Southwest Water Company.

As of the date written above, the balance due on your account is [REDACTED]
This amount includes your past due balance of [REDACTED]

You have agreed to make payments each month for 06 months for the total balance owed on your account. As of the writing of this letter this equates to approximately [REDACTED] or each month in addition to your normal bill. Please note, if a new invoice is generated during the 14 day waiting period, it will automatically be incorporated into the new amount due into the payment plan thereby changing the total above.

Installment payments are due on or before the due date indicated on each month's statement, in addition to the current amount due on your monthly bill. IF YOU MISS A PAYMENT, AND/OR DO NOT PAY THE FULL (INSTALLMENT & CURRENT) AMOUNT DUE, BY THE DUE DATE YOUR SERVICE IS SUBJECT TO DISCONNECTION. If you are unable to make your installment payment as agreed, or unable to pay your current month's billing, please contact us **immediately** before the due date of the installment at **(866) 654-7992** to discuss further options.

****IMPORTANT** - THE PAYMENT ARRANGEMENT WILL NOT BEGIN UNTIL THIS FORM IS RETURNED. FAILURE TO SIGN AND RETURN THIS AGREEMENT TO US BY October 30, 2018 DISSOLVES ANY VERBAL AGREEMENT MADE.**

Please date, sign and return a copy of the agreement to us. For your convenience you may fax: (832) 209-5395, email: txcustomer@swwc.com or mail: SouthWest Water Company, c/o Customer Service Department, 12535 Reed Rd, Sugar Land, TX 77478. Failure to complete and return this form does not relieve payment obligation.

TERMINATION NOTICE:

We must receive the signed payment arrangement and/or your full payment of your past due balance of \$222.38 by or before 5:00 pm on October 30, 2018 in order to avoid disconnection.

If your service is disconnected, you will be required to pay a reconnection fee of \$25.00. If no deposit is on file, a deposit per service (water/sewer) will be required. All outstanding fees and account balances must be paid **BEFORE** service is restored. Reconnection may take up to 36 hours. Should you choose to pay the following payment options are available:

- Pay online at www.swwc.com/myaccount. Payments usually post to your account within one hour.
- By mail: P.O. Box 4657, Houston, TX 77210-4657. Please be advised this option may take several days.
- In person: Payments can be made at Customer walk-in service centers including Wal-Mart, FidelityExpress or Checkfree locations.

We value you as a customer and appreciate this opportunity to be of service. If you have any questions, please contact our Customer Care Center at 866-654-7992 between the hours of 8:30am and 5:00pm CST.

SouthWest Water Company

Accepted and Agreed:

This 19 day of Oct, 2018 [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Print Name

Signature

City Manager's Office
30360 Cougar Bend
Bulverde, Tx 78163
P:830-980-8832 F:830-438-4339
dbatts@bulverdetx.gov



10/12/2018

SWWC Utilities, Inc.
Attn: Managing Director
12535 Reed Rd.
Sugar Land, Texas 77478

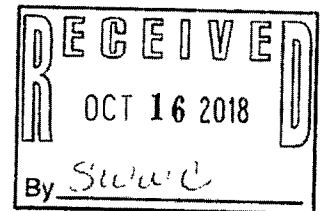
Via Certified Mail, Return Receipt Requested
CMRR# 7017-2400-0000-6869-9948

RE: Customer Complaint

Customer Account Number: [REDACTED]

Customer Name: Sue Wahl

Customer Address: [REDACTED]



Greetings:

The City of Bulverde (the "*City*") has received the enclosed complaint (the "*Complaint*") regarding the above utility customer (the "*Customer*") served by SWWC Utilities, Inc. (the "*Utility*"). Because the Customer's service address is within its municipal boundaries, the City has original jurisdiction over the Complaint pursuant to Texas Water Code § 13.042. The City requests the Utility to take the following actions:

1. Promptly conduct an investigation of the Complaint.
2. Submit an initial written response regarding the Complaint to the City and to the Customer within fifteen (15) days of receiving this correspondence.
3. Submit all further responses regarding the Complaint in writing to the City and to the Customer.
4. Continue service to the Customer during the resolution of the Complaint. If service to the Customer has been discontinued, then restore service to the Customer and continue service during the resolution of the Complaint.

Thank you for your cooperation in this matter.

Sincerely,

Danny Batts, City Manager

cc:
Customer

Enclosures:
Complaint

000015

Print

Water Utility Billing Complaint Form - Submission 834

Date Submitted: 10/10/2018

Customers of Water Utility Companies under City jurisdiction (operating within the City Limits) may file complaints with the City if they believe that they have been billed incorrectly. In order to file a complaint, the customer must complete this form and follow the City's Billing Dispute Resolution Process, outlined at the link below.

Please review the City's Billing Dispute Resolution Process at the following link.

[Billing Dispute Resolution Process](#)

Account Holder's Name

First Name*

City

City

Water

[Redacted]

Address

[Redacted]

Address

City

City

Water

[Redacted]

Address1

Address1

City

State

Zip

Address2

City

...with a... ..

... ..

... ..

... ..

Additional Document Upload

Choose File

Choose File No file chosen

If needed.

Proposal

Chambliss Plumbing Company

1875 E Borgfeld Dr
San Antonio, Texas 78260
(210) 490-7910
chamblissplumbing.com/

September 19, 2018

Reference # 5377-101
Due Date 9/19/2018

WAHL

[REDACTED]
Bulverde, TX 78163

Job Name [REDACTED]

WAHL
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

210-863-3056

210-863-3056

We Hereby Submit Specifications And Estimates For:

Proposal to install Chambliss provided meter to test water usage between meter and our meter to determine proper water usage. \$380.00

Pressure tested home and waterline for 30 mins, no leaks present at this time.

We propose hereby to furnish material and labor - complete in accordance with the above specifications, for the sum of: \$0.00

ACCEPTANCE OF PROPOSAL

The above prices, specifications and conditions are hereby accepted.
Person/Company signing this proposal is giving authorization to perform work Specified and will be responsible for payment.

Authorized
Signature _____

Acceptance
Signature _____

Date _____

000018

DeAnn Walker
Chairman

Arthur C. D'Andrea
Commissioner

Shelly L. Botkin
Commissioner

John Paul Urban
Executive Director



Greg Abbott
Governor

Public Utility Commission of Texas

Dear Utility Customer:

The Customer Protection Division (CPD) of the Public Utility Commission of Texas (PUC) received your complaint and has begun an investigation of your concerns. As required by PUC Substantive Rules, we have notified the company of your complaint and required a response within 21 days. CPD will review your complaint along with the company's response. We will then send you a letter explaining the details of our investigation. The letter may also outline further action necessary to address the issue.

If you have any additional information or documentation that supports your complaint, you may contact CPD at (888) 782-8477 or by email to customer@puc.texas.gov. Please contact us if you have any questions or concerns about the investigation.

Thank you,

Customer Protection Division
Public Utility Commission of Texas

DeAnn Walker
Chairman

Arthur C. D'Andrea
Commissioner

Shelly L. Botkin
Commissioner

John Paul Urban
Executive Director



Greg Abbott
Governor

Public Utility Commission of Texas

9/19/2018

Ms. Susan Wahl
4626 Evening Shadows Dr.
Bulverde, TX 78163

Dear Ms. Wahl,

The Customer Protection Division (CPD) of the Public Utility Commission of Texas (PUCT) received your complaint regarding the increase in your monthly water bill after Water Services Inc installed Smart Meters. Unfortunately, since your residence lies within the city limits of Bulverde, TX, the PUCT has no jurisdiction, as the water/sewer rates are set by the city of Bulverde, TX.

However, a copy of your complaint has been forwarded to Water Services Inc, with a request that they review and contact you directly regarding this issue. For further assistance regarding the accuracy of your water/sewer bill, you will need to contact your city council member, the office of the Mayor or the City Manager, through the following contact address:

City of Bulverde, TX

Mr. Bill Krawietz – Mayor
Mr. Gene Hartman - Mayor Pro-Tem
Mr. Danny Batts – City Manager
30360 Cougar Bend
Bulverde, TX 78163
Phone: 830-438-3612
Phone: 830-980-8832
Fax: 830-438-4339
Website: <http://bulverdetx.gov>

We trust that you will find the above contact information helpful.

Sincerely,

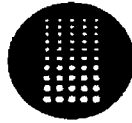
James R. Fraustro
Customer Protection Division
Public Utility Commission of Texas

cc: Water Services Inc.



Printed on recycled paper

An Equal Opportunity Employer



Water Services, Inc.

A SouthWest Water Company

Customer Service: 866-654-7992
Emergencies: 866-654-7992
Visit us online: www.swwc.com/texas

Account Number: [REDACTED]
Invoice Number: [REDACTED]
Billing Date: 09/17/2018
Total Amount Due By: 10/03/2018
Service Address: [REDACTED]

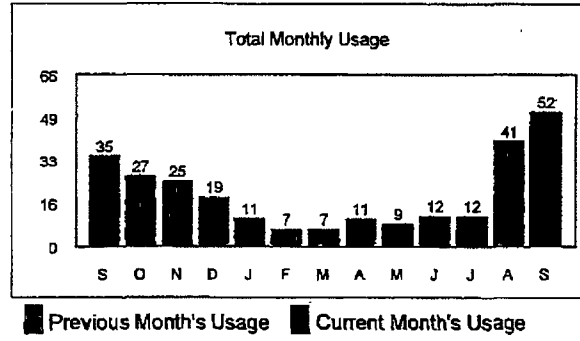


Current Reading Based on Actual

Rate Type	Meter Read Dates		Number Of Days	Meter Reading		Usage KGAL	Meter Number
	From	To		Previous	Current		
5/8" - R	08/10/18	09/09/18	31	86.0	138.0	52.0	7938646

*KGal (1000 Gallons) Average Consumption = 19.4

Water Usage History - 13 Month Usage in KGal*



Account Summary

Previous Bill Amount	\$341.83
Payment Received 09/05/18 - Thank You	-\$342.83
(Payments after 5:00pm will NOT reflect on this invoice.)	
Balance	-\$1.00
Current Billing and Other Basic Charges	
Water Base	\$47.28
Water Usage	\$392.70
TX. Comm Environ Quality	\$4.40
Total Current Charges	\$444.38
Total Amount Due By 10/03/18	\$444.38
Total Amount Due After 10/03/18	\$487.82

Message Center

If you are located within the City of Bulverde, please note effective March 13, 2018, new usage rates are in place per the rate agreement with the city. All other customer service charges will remain the same.

Stay informed of outages and provide us with your email address today!

Please detach and return the bottom portion with your payment, or pay online at www.swwc.com/mvaccount.

000021

Wahl, Susan S.

From: S Wahl <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Wednesday, October 3, 2018 11:18 AM
To: Wahl, Susan S.
Subject: [External] Re: Acct. No. [REDACTED]
Attachments: image001.jpg

On Wed, Sep 26, 2018, 6:27 PM TX Utilities - Customer Care <TXUtilities-CustomerCare@swwc.com> wrote:

Dear valued customer,

Thank you for contacting SouthWest Water Company with your comment, question or concern. We have received your email and we will respond to your inquiry as soon as possible. Our hours of operation are Monday – Friday 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Please allow up to two business days as we handle each email in the order received.

Thank you for allowing us the opportunity to serve you.

Sincerely,

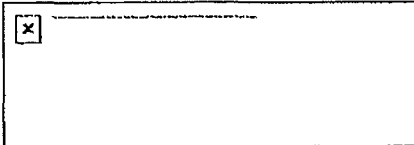
SouthWest Water Company

Customer Care

Visit us at www.swwc.com

Call us toll free at 866.654.7992

Hours of operation: Mon. – Fri. 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.



Navigation

CEP

Center for Electromog Prevention

a California nonprofit working to
protect public health

click here to learn about

THE SCIENCE BEHIND THE HARM

Smart meters overcharge – CPUC emails reveal coverup



Smart meter, above, identified by the digital display.

CPUC caught promoting inaccurate smart utility meters, falsely touting report as independent.

Smart meters, installed on every home by California's utilities, can malfunction and overcharge customers, according to a raft of insider emails recently released by the California Public Utility Commission (CPUC). CPUC engaged in a systematic coverup of smart meter accuracy problems while forcing them on California utility customers. The Structure Group, a widely-touted, so-called "independent" company from Texas, was charged by CPUC to investigate smart meter accuracy in 2010, and determined smart meters were accurate, even while customers reported skyrocketing bills that doubled, tripled, or even quadrupled, once the wireless

meters were installed.

As it turns out, the CPUC emails reveal that the Structure Group held lucrative contracts with PG&E, the utility whose smart meters were under fire, for the past five years. CPUC emails reveal behind-the-scenes maneuvering to keep that conflict of interest quiet. Previously hidden communications between top CPUC and utility staff disclose that smart meters were actually malfunctioning in several ways – resubmitting data multiple times that was read and billed as such, and providing inaccurate data when the temperatures were too cold or too hot for the inexpensive, flawed meters to function.

CPUC President Michael Peevey, recently resigned and under criminal investigation by the state attorney general's office, complained numerous times to PG&E by email that his own utility bills, at a vacation home rarely occupied, had doubled. As a result, he wanted it to be "smart meter-free". Simultaneously, Peevey (former CEO of Southern CA Edison) and the CPUC were helping utilities promote the accuracy of

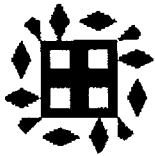
smart meters to the public, while forcing the lucrative, profitable devices on utility customers, statewide.

The flawed Structure Group Report, falsely claimed to be an independent investigation, is still used nationally to show smart meter accuracy. For more information in a detailed article by EMF Safety Network, quoting the revealing CPUC emails, click here.

Want to get rid of the smart meter on your home? Have your bills been higher since installation? A smart meter opt-out is available by calling SDG&E, or your other California utility. Live in another location? Increasingly, in response to consumer outcries, utilities across the nation are providing opt-outs – free (in VT) or for-fee. Having an accurate, electromechanical analog meter, the kind used for the past century without problems, will likely save you money, while preventing exposure to hazardous electrosmog pollution emitted by the wireless smart meters. According to a recent Decision at the CPUC, smart meter opt-out fees will be charged for the first three years of a customer opt-out, then the widely unpopular fees will be dropped.

Fill out a SDG&E form to request an opt-out from a smart meter.

Susan Brinchman, as Director of the Center for Electrosmog Prevention, a La Mesa, CA 501c3 nonprofit, has represented utility customers in CPUC legal proceedings concerning smart meters since May, 2012, working to obtain an opt-out, eliminate fees, remove banks of smart meters, and ban them altogether.



About CEP

[View all posts by CEP →](#)

◆ **CPUC, electromagnetic fields, high bills, inaccurate, over-billing, overbilling, overcharging, PG&E, SDG&E, smart meter, smart meter opt-out, smart meters, smartmeters, Southern CA Edison, Structure Group Report, Structure Report**

[← Smart Meter Opt-out at Risk: CEP Files Protest](#)

[LA Firefighters / Police Stop LA Federal Cell Tower Roll Out >](#)

Comments are closed.

Search



Follow us on Twitter



American Coalition Against Smart Meters Facebook Causes (ACASM)



Southern Californians Against Smart Meters Facebook Causes (SCASM)

Categories

- CA Smart Meter News
 - San Diego County Smart Meter News
 - Smart Meter Opt-Out News
- Cell Phone Safety Campaign
- CEP Legal Filings
- General Resources and Services
- International Electrosmog Prevention News
- Legal
- Public Health Alert
 - Health Alerts: Cell Phones
 - Health Alerts: Cell Towers
 - Health Alerts: Other Devices w/ RF
 - Health Alerts: Smart Meters
 - Health Alerts: Solar Panel Systems
 - Health Alerts: WIFI
- Smart Meter Opt-Out Videos
- Smart Meter Resources & Links
 - ADA Accommodations for RF/EMF
 - Smart Grid Law

U.S. +

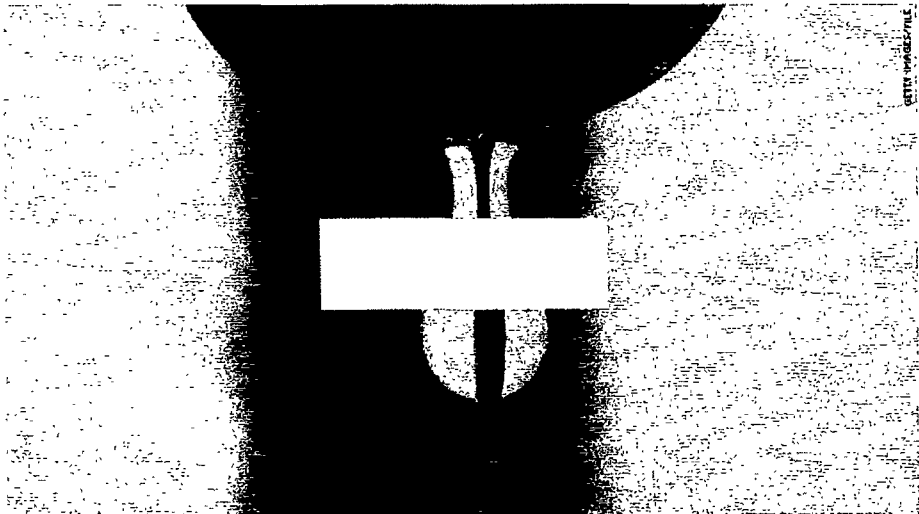
Part of complete coverage on
Building Up America

Skyrocketing water bills mystify, anger residents

See show times >

NEWSROOM

By Scott Zamost and Kyra Phillips, CNN Special Investigations Unit
March 2, 2011 9:42 a.m. EST



Water wars: Bills rise to the thousands

STORY HIGHLIGHTS

Atlanta woman reacts to her \$3,000 water bill: I'm "sinking in a hole of water"

City water officials received more than 22,000 calls in January

Many problems arise after installation of automated water meters

Similar water bill spikes reported in Ohio, Massachusetts, North Carolina and Florida

Editor's note: This report follows a four-month look into Atlanta water bill complaints conducted by CNN's Kyra Phillips and the CNN Special Investigations Unit. Follow CNN Senior Investigative Producer Scott Zamost on Twitter.

Atlanta (CNN) -- Imagine paying as much for water as you do for your mortgage.

Residents throughout Atlanta are outraged by hundreds, even thousands of dollars in monthly spikes in their water bills, and have questioned the legitimacy of the charges for years. Now, they're demanding answers.

"I thought we were sinking in a hole of water," said Debbi Scarborough. "It scared me to death. I thought we had a major leak when I got the bill."

Over two months last summer, her family's monthly water bill, shot up to \$1,805 in July and then \$1,084 in August, leaving a balance due of more than \$3,000. She said in the past her bill has averaged \$200 to \$250.

"I'm not paying a \$3,000 bill. And for those three months, we were pretty much out of town most of the time and there's no leaks," she said, showing CNN a copy of her plumber's report.

The city installed a device on her meter to track daily usage. In the meantime, Scarborough's bill remains unpaid while she disputes the charges.

She is not alone.

ADVERTISEMENT

Part of complete coverage on
Building Up America

Fact check: High speed rail

updated Wed April 13, 2011



Is high-speed rail a smart move -- or a waste of taxpayer dollars? Will it create jobs? Will it turn profits? Experts answer your questions.

High-speed rail funds cut

updated Thur April 14, 2011



President Obama's proposed high-speed rail network suffers a serious setback as lawmakers fight over the budget.

Should a degree = green cards?

updated Sat February 5, 2011



Amy Wilkinson: If immigrants earning science degrees got green cards, the U.S. could benefit from innovations by 70,000 people.

Where raucous culture rules



Which billion-dollar company is known for awesome employee perks and a raucous work culture? Heck, even business meetings are fun.

Struggling town bets on sunshine

updated Tue February 1, 2011



Boulder City, Nevada, is uniquely poised to cash in on a new energy boom.

New York pauses 'fracking'

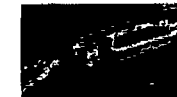
updated Mon December 13, 2010



New York has halted a controversial natural gas drilling process called hydraulic fracturing -- or "fracking" -- until July 1.

Engineers on Infrastructure: D minus

updated Tue June 22, 2010



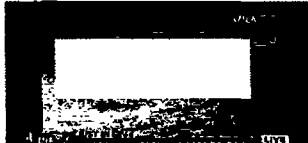
Five categories of U.S. infrastructure received a grade of D minus in 2009 from the American Society of Civil Engineers.

City	Year	Bill	No. of
Atlanta	2010	\$10.38	7
Atlanta	2011	\$11.78	14
Atlanta	2012	\$12.77	23
Atlanta	2013	\$13.76	32
Atlanta	2014	\$14.75	41
Atlanta	2015	\$15.74	50
Atlanta	2016	\$16.73	59
Atlanta	2017	\$17.72	68
Atlanta	2018	\$18.71	77

H2O bills: How does your city rank?



America's crumbling water infrastructure



Water main break flips car, causes floods

While similar complaints about huge water bill spikes have popped up in Cleveland, Ohio; Charlotte, North Carolina; Tampa, Florida; and Brockton, Massachusetts; it appears that the issue has lasted the longest in Atlanta.

See how top 50 cities rank

It's led to a class-action lawsuit, countless meetings with city officials and continuing complaints from fed-up residents.

Thousands of residents who have seen unusual spikes have appealed their high water bills. Just last year, the city issued credits totaling \$466,368 to customers.

Atlanta, with more than 500,000 residents, says it already has the highest water rates of any major city in the United States, due in part to federal consent decrees to overhaul the city's water supply infrastructure.

Many of the problems arose after the installation of new, automated water meters, which began nearly five years ago, and involved contracts for meter installations, the electronic meters and software equipment.

NewsPulse

Most popular stories right now

Univision fires anchor for racist Michelle Obama insult

'Star Wars Episode 8' to be released May 2017

Buffett's \$1 billion NCAA bet goes bust

Talking Barbie is too 'creepy' for some parents

Scammer tries to swindle top tax-crime fighter

Explore the news with NewsPulse

Water Leak Facts

- Yearly home leaks could exceed annual water amounts used by Los Angeles, Chicago and Miami combined -- or more than a trillion gallons
- 10% of homes have water leaks totaling at least 90 gallons a day
- A constantly running toilet wastes at least 200 gallons of water daily
- A leaky faucet with one drip per second wastes more than 3,000 gallons a year

Source: EPA.gov

The automated meter-reading technology eliminates the need for city workers to manually check every meter. Instead, they retrieve the data by driving by each property. The meter electronically transmits data showing the amount of water used.

From the beginning, there were problems.

In 2007, city auditors found they were "unable to verify electronic meter readings" because of "meter read errors, equipment failures or human errors."

Specifically, the audit said "about 9% of the meters could not be read due to broken or malfunctioning equipment."

Two years later, another audit concluded that a "high number of accounts" were not getting "actual meter readings" because of "meter read errors, equipment failures or human errors."

I thought we were sinking in a hole of water. It scared me to death. I thought we had a major leak when I got the bill.

--Debbi Scarborough, Atlanta residential water customer

CNN reviewed hundreds of complaints from Atlanta residents as well as city e-mails obtained through a public records request.

On August 26, 2010, Mitch Elliott, a sales executive of Neptune Technologies, which manufactured the meters, wrote to a city official: "It has been an industry experience that typically when a utility does an AMR (automatic meter reading) meter changeout and also switches software billing companies that generally high bill complaints are either due to new meter accuracy and/or a billing multiplier error."

Elliott would not comment, referring CNN to city officials.

Peter Aman, the city of Atlanta's chief operating officer, said in an interview that he realized at that time the situation was serious. He's been on the job since January 2010. Last September, he replaced senior management in the Atlanta Dept. of Watershed Management.

He said the city has sampled about 9,000 of the 132,954 residential meters and made a major discovery: About 1% of the meters' registers, which show how much water is being used, and the meter base underneath do not properly fit. That mismatch could result in a doubling of the water bill, Aman said.

RELATED TOPICS

- Atlanta
- Water Resource Issues

"These two components don't match and guess what? They're labeled. This one says three-quarter (inch) on it and this one has a "1" (inch) on it. Now, it's small print but it's big enough to see," Aman said.

That would explain a billing multiplier error, which leads to higher bills, he said.

He added that the problem was first "identified in the audit back in (2007) and [the city] put in place, or were supposed to put in place, a whole system of checks and balances as they went through the rest of the system upgrade, and clearly they failed because we're still finding these mismatches out there."

Experts: U.S. water infrastructure in trouble

Operators of Lenox Square Mall and Phipps Plaza, two large shopping malls, complained about water billings "nearly \$300,000 over last year for this same period of time," according to another e-mail.

"There appears to be serious errors in the water billings that are creating huge hardships for both centers," wrote Michael F. Romstead, regional vice president of Mid Atlantic Mall of Georgia. "We need the city's full attention to correct the problem."

The city responded by changing the meters' registers. Romstead did not return calls to check whether the bills had gone back to normal, but there are no follow-up complaints in the city records supplied to CNN.

Asked about problems with the rest of the meters, Aman said, "The majority of the people who complain about high water bills have some issue that is not associated with the meter. Many, many of them have either leaks, or increases in usage through irrigation or pool filling that they didn't fully understand the impact of, but that's not to minimize the fact that we do have some cases of meters that aren't functioning properly. And we're addressing those on a case-by-case basis and giving people their money back. To me, the story here is there has been a complete loss of trust between the city and its citizens and its customers."

The city has not found issues with meter manufacturer Neptune Technologies Inc. or Systems and Software Inc. which installed the billing software, Aman said. Executives at both companies declined interview requests. Two other contractors that installed meters at commercial locations did not return calls.

"We have not found a smoking gun, if you will, in terms of a system problem," Aman told CNN.

However, he said the company that installed the residential meters should be held accountable. KHAFRA, an Atlanta-based firm, joined a Pennsylvania company to carry out the \$40.3 million contract.

After months of calls, KHAFRA President Valentino Bates agreed to an interview, but only after CNN had spoken to Aman.

"When we ended the contract in December of 2009, we had a 90-day window to come in and address any concerns. No concerns were brought to us. So as of today sitting here with you, it is our understanding that the meters are functioning properly as they were supposed to when we installed them," Bates said.

He said the company had identified 968 meters that had the mismatching problem, and fixed all of them by last March. The project, he said, was "very successful" and he added that he had not been informed about additional meter issues.

Asked if his company would repair any other meters the city said were not correctly installed, Bates told CNN, "If it is our problem, we will do that."

Meanwhile, Atlanta residents continue to complain to the city, which received more than 22,000 calls to its Department of Watershed Management in January. And last year alone, there were a total of 12,291 water bill disputes, according to the city.

"Clearly, people are upset, and one of the things that we said to people is that we hear you and that we do believe we have problems in the water meter and billing system," Aman said.

That doesn't convince residents like Wilda Cobb, who is astounded at a water bill that now totals \$10,071.

Her bill spiked to more than \$1,200 in November, then skyrocketed to \$6,879 in December.

"I am furious, I am upset, I'm confused," Cobb said. "I can't get an answer from the city because they won't admit there is a problem."

A city official reviewed Cobb's bills, and said the unusually high usage for the two months would normally mean there was some kind of leak, possibly with the irrigation system. The city installed a data logger meter that tracks usage during each day.

Her latest bill is down to just \$34.

Ironically, Cobb knows something about water issues. She's an attorney for the Environmental Protection Agency.

"As I person, I know something's wrong here," Cobb said. "As an attorney, what can I do about it? But, I don't think it takes a law degree to say \$7,000 for a month's use of water by one person in a small home is just crazy without a leak."

Watch CNN Newsroom weekdays 9am to 3pm ET and weekends. For the latest from the CNN Newsroom click here.

FOLLOW THIS TOPIC 

Search CNN...



U.S.

World

Smart Grid Awareness

A Website by SkyVision Solutions,
Consumer Protection Advocate

When Water Gets Inside Smart Meters, "All Bets Are Off."

Posted on [July 28, 2015](#)

by *K.T. Weaver, SkyVision Solutions*

In June it was reported based upon a *Chicago Tribune* investigation that a [Chicago Suburb Claims Smart Water Meters Don't Overcharge. "They Misrecord."](#) The *Tribune* has continued to investigate this issue and has found problems with smart water meters in another Chicago suburb, this time in Aurora.



So far only nine meters have been discovered to malfunction: three spinning forward, three spinning backward and two whose patterns couldn't be determined. Another meter inexplicably bounced back-and-forth between display numbers. Aurora officials were concerned enough about the strange behavior that they asked the manufacturer, Sensus, to determine the problem. According to Sensus, water had gotten into the meters' electronics in ways the manufacturer hadn't before realized.

Tom Kelly, head of the industry's committee on meter standards, told the *Tribune* that water is a key danger to electronic meters: "Once you get water inside the electronics of these meters, all bets are off. It can do just about anything."

The fact that about anything can happen when water gets inside a smart meter was best exemplified in Saskatchewan when it was reported last October that moisture and contaminants getting inside Sensus smart *electric* meters were a major factor in catastrophic meter failures and ensuing fires.

As previously [reported](#) for the smart electric meters in Saskatchewan, Jack Ritenburg, an electrical engineer and head of Ritenburg & Associates concluded that moisture and contaminants inside the meters was the cause of the smart meter fires. He also concluded that "water intrusion due to holes in meter boxes, 'hot socket' conditions in the meter box and over voltage in the distribution system" or other "external factors" were **not** the cause of the fires as previously claimed by the manufacturer. As a review, here is the SkyVision Solutions video from last October:

In conclusion, among the many problems with so-called "smart meter technology" is that water and smart meters don't mix, whether it be due to causing inaccurate or inflated bills, or worse, causing fires in the case of smart electric meters.

Source Material for this Article

"Another suburb reports problems with digital water meters," at <http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/ct-aurora-water-meters-met-20150724-story.html>

"Smart Meter Failures a 'Catastrophe' in Saskatchewan," at <https://smartgridawareness.org/2014/10/28/catastrophic-smart-meter-failures-in-saskatchewan/>

Copyright Notice © SkyVision Solutions and Smart Grid Awareness, 2013 – 2015. Unauthorized use and/or duplication of original material from this site without express and written permission from this site's author and/or owner is strictly prohibited. Excerpts and links may be used, provided that full and clear credit is given to SkyVision Solutions and Smart Grid Awareness with appropriate and specific direction to the original content.

Share this:



Like

Be the first to like this.

Related

Domino Effect: More Smart Meters Being Replaced Due to Fires In "Smart Grid, Smart Meters, and RF Emissions"

'Smart' Water Meters Not Economically Justified for Use in Naperville, According to City Director In "Smart Grid, Smart Meters, and RF Emissions"

Security Risks and Technology Obsolescence Reduce Smart Meter Expected Lifetimes In "Smart Grid, Smart Meters, and RF Emissions"

**About SkyVision Solutions**

Raising public awareness and finding solutions for smart grid issues related to invasions of privacy, data security, cyber threats, health and societal impacts, as well as hazards related to radiofrequency (RF) radiation emissions from all wireless devices, including smart meters.

[View all posts by SkyVision Solutions →](#)

This entry was posted in [Smart Grid, Smart Meters, and RF Emissions](#) and tagged [fires](#), [Inaccurate Bills](#), [Smart Meters](#), [Smart Water Meters](#). Bookmark the [permalink](#).

One Response to *When Water Gets Inside Smart Meters, "All Bets Are Off."***Anon says:**

August 18, 2015 at 16:55

Are the smart meter components, both the meters and exterior transmitters properly insulated from potential EMR sources conducted via the copper water mains? Can the water smart meters for example, withstand 4 amps / 1.2 volts AC?

Have the following on copper / iron water mains ever been evaluated as a reason the meters register an increase in usage, or have anything to do with the meters malfunctioning [spinning forward/backward, etc]:

Voltage,

Current,

Frequencies [possibly from locating antennas on water towers, dirty electricity],

Other EMR sources: for example, per code, the ground wire connecting the service panel to the water main, -allows for both net current 'running' on the water main, and potential stray voltage originating from the utility neutral to create a 'circuit' that can result in subsequent vibrations. . .

And what of potential DC sources?

[Reply](#)

This site uses Akismet to reduce spam. [Learn how your comment data is processed.](#)

Suburb's smart water meters regularly overcharge residents

By Gregory Pratt, Lauren Zumbach and Joe Mahr

Chicago Tribune

SHARE THIS



Tribune investigation finds so-called smart water meters overbilling residents

JUNE 4, 2015, 5:02 AM

One of Chicago's largest suburbs uses a type of water meter that it knows has regularly overcharged residents — sometimes by hundreds of dollars a bill — while failing to give the public accurate information about the scope of the problem.

Tinley Park was one of the first towns to use so-called smart meters to record water usage in homes using electronic instead of mechanical parts. The village has pitched the brand of meters it uses as more accurate than mechanical models, but a Tribune investigation has found that the meters regularly overstate how much water has gone through them, resulting in overcharges to residents.

The village has known of the problem for years yet failed in key ways to ferret out bad meters. When the village found bad meters, it repeatedly did not fully refund residents. It has tried to explain away the problem in ways contradicted by its own records, including understating by at least half the number of overbilling meters it has documented. And those records lack details on how thousands more meters have failed — making it impossible to determine the true number of meters the village has discovered with the problem.

"This was a disaster from the first day," said Bob Soga, a retired Public Works employee.

What is happening in the suburb offers a cautionary tale of how consumers can lose money as utilities across the country move to meters that measure quantities electronically.

The danger to consumers can be particularly acute in Illinois, which does little to regulate publicly owned water utilities even as consumers face skyrocketing water rates. Sugar Grove, the only other suburb known to have used the brand, called SmartMeter, also has fielded complaints of overcharges, records show.

In a town that regularly boasts of being on national lists of best places to live, Tinley Park officials say the problem is isolated and relatively harmless. They say they catch almost all mistakes before they lead to overcharges.

TRY 3 FREE MONTHS!
Hurry, offer ends 10/2

FREE TRIAL >

hrough," said Public Works Director Dale

Village officials, he said, "don't just take the numbers and send out bills and then, you know, actually overcharge people."

But village records acknowledge \$90,000 in refunds or bill adjustments. And a Tribune review of a sample of cases suggests some residents were owed far more. It's unclear just how much more could be owed because the village said it was too hard to provide the Tribune the data needed for such an analysis.

Beyond the attempt to get a full refund, the cases reviewed by the Tribune show residents at times struggled to get the village to even acknowledge they were overcharged.

Robert Free said it took repeated complaints over 16 months to get his water meter replaced and a refund in early 2013. He felt so frustrated that he kept a spreadsheet logging showers, laundry cycles, dishwasher runs and toilet flushes to figure out why his bills were so high.

"I was overbilled," he said. "What I said to them was ... 'You took my money, and you shouldn't have had it. I want it back.' "

Bill and Cynthia Sifuentes said the village failed to alert them that the meters can overcharge — instead telling them to check for toilet leaks — before eventually acknowledging the meter was to blame for high bills.

"They hid it," Bill Sifuentes said.

National experts, including one cited by the village, have told the Tribune that the meters are so unreliable, the village should replace them.

The fact that such an overcharge problem exists troubled Tom Kelly, a Maryland water official who heads the industry's committee on meter standards. He said it "should never, ever, ever happen."

Consistent problem

The problem is known as "spinning," a term that refers to how the readings on a meter climb higher and faster than they should.

Imagine the figures on a gas pump rising faster than the amount of gas coming out of a hose. Water meters can over-record the same way, although the spinning can be tougher for residents to spot because meters don't display prices. Those costs come in bills every three months, compiled by village workers who take quarterly readings that are converted to dollar amounts owed.

To study the problem, the Tribune obtained from the village hundreds of paper and electronic records and, in an analysis, found 355 cases of meters the village diagnosed as spinning since 2007. That's more than double the 150 figure the village gave residents in an online article. It also doesn't count thousands more meter failures they broke.

TRY 3 FREE MONTHS!
Hurry, offer ends 10/2

FREE TRIAL >

they broke.

The Tribune also reviewed 38 specific cases of spinning meters and found failures in how the village discovered and handled the spinning. Reporters also pored over another set of records of 30 special tests done by the village on SmartMeters and uncovered more accuracy concerns.

Reporters also reviewed village announcements to residents about the meters and found officials gave residents inaccurate and incomplete information about the problem.

The village could not provide records on exactly how many meters spun since the first SmartMeters arrived in 2002.

Back then, the village had aging, traditional meters with mechanical parts. As those parts wore, the meters measured less and less of the water flowing through.

Rich Bennett, a salesman who used to work for Tinley Park, introduced the town to British firm Severn Trent and its new electronic SmartMeter, which promised "accuracy for life" with precision "at the rate of a drip."

The village, believing the meters would pay for themselves, according to documents, bought enough to cover a fifth of the town.

Problems soon emerged. Bennett recalled that some of the first batch of SmartMeters spun. Soga said meters kept spinning for as long as he worked at the village, through fall 2007.

"This was just an everyday occurrence," he said. "There were hundreds of them, just hundreds of them."

Red flags were seen by the Florida firm that has long sold meter supplies to Tinley Park. Floyd Salsler, an engineer who runs the firm, said he used to sell the Severn Trent meters but stopped because of widespread complaints of reliability.

Tinley Park chose a different path. According to documents, the town, still believing it could make more money through SmartMeters, bought enough for every home.

As problems with the meters continued, the village complained to Severn Trent, records show. In 2013, the village agreed to a nearly \$186,000 payout if it voided the warranties of the remaining Severn Trent meters. After that, anytime a SmartMeter had a problem, it was up to the village to fix it.

A spokesman for Severn Trent in the United States said it was no longer in the water meter business and no one at the company was available to comment.

Meter testing

In the midst of the Tribune investigation, village officials this year mailed a newsletter to all residents with an

1 a similar article online. But the articles included

TRY 3 FREE MONTHS!
Hurry, offer ends 10/2

FREE TRIAL >

- The village described the problem initially as meter "failures" but didn't acknowledge that residents could be overcharged.
- The village said its failure rate was normal, except for an "unusual spike" traced to a single batch of meters and dealt with years ago. But records show spinning in many batches throughout the years — with 2014 having the highest number of listed cases of any year.
- The village claimed it regularly, randomly tested meters, and all meters tested within national standards. Yet the Tribune found that Tinley Park had only recently begun testing SmartMeters, and, of 30 tests, 18 ended with a meter overstating a flow measurement that violated industry standards.

After the Tribune questioned the village in March about the inconsistencies, the village rewrote its online article, acknowledging that meters spun, removed the reference to a specific batch being failures and tweaked its language regarding the standards. It said the meters met industry standards "at the time of installation." For some meters in service, that was a decade ago.

Officials also initially assured residents that existing meters were "within" the industry standards for accuracy. Now, the village said the meters tested "close to" standards. When asked how close was close enough, the village declined to say.

Kelly, the industry's top official on accuracy, works for a Maryland utility. He reviewed village test results provided by the Tribune and said he would have flunked many of the meters that Tinley Park tested.

The online article also gave assurances to residents about practices the village used to hunt bad meters, but the Tribune found that the village's process missed case after case of spinning meters.

The village has touted software that it says easily pinpoints bad meters so they can be quickly fixed before residents are overcharged. In October, Schepers told the Tribune that "99.9 percent is, we get the reading, it looks out of whack, we do the investigation and, if need be, we make an adjustment."

But reviews of hundreds of pages of records show that, many times, the town didn't catch the mistakes. The special software often missed red flags. Sometimes the village tested suspicious meters and said they were fine, only to return months later and confirm they were spinning, according to records.

Even in cases triggered by software alerts, the village delayed testing. Instead, the village quizzed residents about their water use, such as whether they had additional house guests, watered new sod or filled pools — despite seeing signs of potential spinning.

Tinley Park residents Brian and Denise Miller got a \$710 water bill in July 2011. They said it typically costs them just \$100 to fill their modest pool with water every year.

TRY 3 FREE MONTHS!
Hurry, offer ends 10/2

FREE TRIAL >

ls of water be?' " Denise Miller recalled. Their
ved a refund of about \$650.

Residents complain

In cases reviewed by the Tribune, many residents got relief only if they spotted problems and complained, often repeatedly.

Most residents were first sent dye strips to put in their toilets to see if perhaps the bowl was leaking — such was the case for Bill Sifuentes. He said the village, knowing it has a problem, should immediately be checking suspect meters without making residents do the tests.

"What if you've got an elderly person and they don't even know how to use the strips?" he said.

Notes by village employees in village records help buttress Sifuentes' argument.

One woman — described as an elderly, physically disabled widow who lived alone — repeatedly complained since at least 2010 that her water bill was too high. She was repeatedly sent dye strips, according to documents. The village finally tested her meter more than four years after her first complaint. By then the meter's screen had gone blank, but the village worker wrote that he suspected it had been spinning.

Since the change, her new meter recorded an average of 25 percent less water per day than her old meter claimed, the Tribune found.

That woman's experience highlights the contradictions in the village's explanation of how meters spin — an explanation that can cost residents money. The village has told residents that when meters begin to spin, they spin so ferociously that they're easily spotted: "This spinning condition only lasts a brief time, and the recorded consumption is much too excessive to be mistaken for normal use," the village wrote in its latest online message to residents this year.

That's why, the village said, those with spinning meters typically deserve refunds for only the most recent bill.

A sample of cases confirmed that residents whose meters were spinning typically got just one bill reduced. Yet the Tribune, in its review of dozens of cases, found evidence that most of those meters were spinning for months, perhaps years, before the village acknowledged a problem. Robert Free said he tapped on his pipe and saw his meter readings jump — more than a year after he first complained and the village said his meter was OK.

The village initially cut only one of his bills, from \$136 to \$102. He said he had to argue that he was owed more, and the village agreed to refund him more money if his new meter proved he used less water. When his new meter proved it, the village refunded Free another \$167 to cover another 1 1/2 years of presumed overcharges.

Longtime residents Carl and Donna Gerlich had years of unexplained spikes, with no intervention from the village until they complained in 2011. The village cut their water bills by \$109. If the village did for Free, the Gerlichs would be owed

TRY 3 FREE MONTHS!
Hurry, offer ends 10/2

FREE TRIAL >

"We pay our taxes. We pay a lot of taxes ... and the least you expect is for the village that you live in not to cheat you," Donna Gerlich said. "That bothers me greatly."

Village officials say they have never knowingly overcharged residents. Yet they acknowledge they've done no tests to better gauge how meters spin. To defend their rationale on how meters spin, they cited conversations with Salser, who helps set industry standards and whose firm specializes in meter testing equipment.

Salser told the Tribune that his firm years ago found that that type of meter seemed to spin in obvious ways. But, when told of the cases uncovered in Tinley Park, Salser said that it also "makes perfect sense" that meters could be spinning in ways not easily detected until a big failure.

The future

Salser said he was surprised the village still was using 19,500 SmartMeters, a model he said that has "absolutely the worst performance" of any he's known. He suggested the village consider taking them out and charging residents a flat water fee — similar to what's done in most of Chicago — until it can install more reliable meters.

"They're not going to get better," he said. "It's time to pull the plug and fix it."

The village can keep using the meters as long as it wants — regardless of accuracy. In Illinois, only water utilities run by private firms are required to ensure tested meters meet industry standards. And without thorough testing, Kelly said there's no way to know for sure how many meters in Tinley Park may be overcharging.

Tinley Park said it spent \$1.8 million to buy all the meters and it would cost too much to test all the meters or replace them.

In 2013, the village started replacing failing meters, first with a mix of meters using mechanical parts, then a different type of electronic technology. But nearly 90 percent of homes continue to have SmartMeters.

One house that has a SmartMeter is Soga's. The retired village employee knows to regularly check it for wild readings. He hopes others learn to do the same.

"I know there's some spinning meters out there right now, and people don't know," he said, "and they're paying the bill."

gpratt@tribpub.com

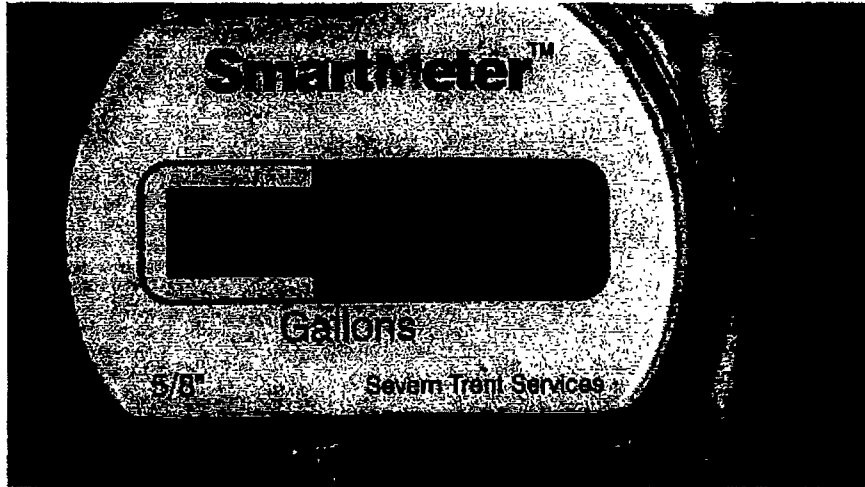
lzumbach@tribpub.com

jmahr@tribpub.com

TRY 3 FREE MONTHS!
Hurry, offer ends 10/2

FREE TRIAL >

Another suburb reports problems with digital water meters



A smart meter in the Tinley Park home of Bob Soga, a former Tinley Park employee. (Zbigniew Bzdak, Chicago Tribune)

By **Joe Mahr, Lauren Zumbach and Gregory Pratt**
Chicago Tribune

SHARE THIS



'Smart' water meters show problems in another suburb

JULY 25, 2015, 5:39 AM

As one Chicago suburb struggles to cope with chronic overcharging by its "smart" digital water meters, another is ramping up random testing after finding that some of its meters claimed usage when not even hooked up.

The revelations in west suburban Aurora open a new front in questions over the accuracy of next-generation water meters at a time when they're gaining popularity across Chicagoland and the country, and in a state that does little to ensure most water meters installed in homes are accurate.

Aurora officials stressed that the problems were tied to fewer than 10 meters out of thousands, and the manufacturer has reported fixing the problem in newer meters. But the suburb said it was concerned enough to boost random testing of the digital meters while also preparing to ask the manufacturer to either replace a suspect batch of digital meters or provide equipment to more closely monitor their readings.

A Tribune investigation, published in June, uncovered widespread problems in the southwest suburb of Tinley Park, where a different brand of digital meter had hundreds of cases of overbilling, with thousands more meter failures unexplained. The suburb's Public Works director has resigned amid questions over his handling of the issue, and its elected leaders are seeking an outside review.

The problems come as water departments across the country move to meters that use electronics. The older meters use mechanical parts that wear down over time and can undercharge residents, while the digital meters are touted as being accurate for life — allowing cash-strapped localities to bill for every drop of water used.

Aurora has installed 9,000 digital meters since 2014, covering about a fifth of the suburb. About a third of the digital meters belong to a batch that produced almost all the problem meters.

The problems began in February, when workers began noticing strange fluctuations in readings by meters that had been pulled from homes. Ray Hull, the suburb's water superintendent, placed an unhooked meter on his desk for days and, every morning, saw its readings had moved, according to emails provided to the Tribune under the state's open records law.

TRY 3 FREE MONTHS!
Hurry, offer ends 10/2

FREE TRIAL >

Other digital meters in the office had readings that also kept changing — even though they too were not hooked up to any water.

"They were on a shelf ... until Friday. On Friday, they were put into a box and left there until (Monday)," he wrote to a colleague.

They were among eight unhooked meters showing strange readings: three spinning forward, three spinning backward and two whose patterns couldn't be determined. Two months later, village workers found another meter, hooked up in a home, that inexplicably bounced back-and-forth between display numbers.

Officials said the first eight meters had been pulled from homes for issues unrelated to potential overbilling, and they checked the usage data reported by the meters to ensure they hadn't overbilled. But they said they were so concerned about the meters' strange behavior that they asked the manufacturer, Sensus, what went wrong. Records show that Sensus determined water had gotten into the meters' electronics in ways the manufacturer hadn't before realized.

A national industry expert, Tom Kelly, told the Tribune that that's the key danger to electronic meters: "Once you get water inside the electronics of these meters, all bets are off. It can do just about anything."

Sensus, based in North Carolina, declined to elaborate on the problem with the Tribune. It told the suburb that it had beefed up waterproofing in newer batches — 6,000 of which went to Aurora, records show. City officials said the ninth suspect meter came from that batch, and it's still being tested to determine what went wrong.

Kelly, who heads the industry's committee on meter standards, said the small number of suspect meters in Aurora doesn't signal a major problem there, although he said it should prompt greater oversight of the meters.

Aurora has begun a testing program to measure the accuracy of 2 percent of new meters before they're installed and an additional 300 meters taken out of service every year. Officials said they're considering increasing that rate even more in light of the problems discovered. Of 18 recent tests provided to the Tribune, no meter failed national standards, although roughly a quarter of them showed that the meter at times overbilled by 1.5 percent — the maximum allowed under the standards.

"The goal is that Aurora residents would have confidence that the water they're bringing in would be charged appropriately. So any variation to that causes concern," said the city's chief management officer, Carrie Anne Ergo.

The city is not required by law to test the meters because it is a government body. Illinois regulators require only privately run utilities to test water meters, typically testing each meter once every 10 years. ComEd is also required to test its digital electric meters periodically.

A Tribune survey of other suburbs using digital meters found that the brand used by Aurora — called iPerl — is the most popular and is deployed in varying degrees in Berwyn, Burr Ridge, Des Plaines, Glenview, Hinsdale and Lisle. None of those suburbs reported doing independent random tests to ensure the meters are accurate, instead citing manufacturer testing that Kelly said isn't robust enough for his Maryland utility to rely upon.

"The only way for you to know how your meters are working is for you to test them," Kelly said.

gpratt@tribpub.com

lzumbach@tribpub.com

jmahr@tribpub.com

Twitter @royalpratt

Twitter @laurenzumbach

Twitter @JoeMahr1

An earlier online version of this story was accompanied by a photograph depicting a smart electricity meter, not a smart water meter.

Copyright © 2018, Chicago Tribune

This 'attr(data-c-typename)' is related to: Aurora

TRY 3 FREE MONTHS!
Hurry, offer ends 10/2

FREE TRIAL >



**Water
Services, Inc.**

A SouthWest Water Company

Customer Service
866.654.SWWC (7992)

October 18, 2018

Dear Mr. Batts,

Thank you for bringing this concern to our attention, so we may discuss with you the findings that were sent to the customer, Sue Wahl.

We received your letter and wanted to promptly address the actions taken for Ms. Wahl's concerns.

1. We immediately began our investigation after notification of the issue by the Public Utility Commission.
2. We provided our response on October 5.
3. Within this letter, you will also find the response and supporting documentation for your reference.
4. We also want to confirm that Ms. Wahl is currently receiving water service and was in service during time of investigation.

After thorough review, the results of this investigation are as follows:

- Both reads of 41,000 and 52,000 are correct as displayed by consistent meter reads.
- We did not detect any leaks that would affect the customer's usage.
- The data log shows the usage was accurately calculated. We do see consistent, 3,000 gallon spikes within the usage which can typically indicate the use of irrigation.
- The meter accuracy test concluded the meter is accurately reading the usage. Three flow test utilizing 10 gallons each which, as indicated in the pictures provided of the meter, supported the change in read from 146.09 to 146.12.

To further address Ms. Wahl's concerns about the meter reading device, the meter is the same as before, which has been accurately reading the water usage at the home for many years. We did upgrade the register of the meter. This is the electrical component of the meter that sends signals to our technician of the read each month and helps provide detailed information of usage.

Ms. Wahl is generally a high water user with an average close to 20,000 gallons and spikes up to 35,000 gallons in the summer. However, although the usage is valid, we do understand the bill in questions is an abnormal spike and so we do offer the ability for a payment arrangement. It should be noted Ms. Wahl has recently entered into a payment arrangement with us for the remaining balance owed.

We feel we have fully addressed this matter and hopefully provided Ms. Wahl with as much information needed so she can be confident in knowing she is receiving quality, accurate service. We truly appreciate her as a customer. If she ever has any other questions or concerns, we encourage her to call Customer Care at 866.654.7992 or by email at TXCustomerCare@swwc.com.

Sincerely,

Charles W. Profilet, Jr., P.E.
Managing Director, Texas Utilities

000043

City Manager's Office
30360 Cougar Bend
Bulverde, Tx 78163
P:830-980-8832 F:830-438-4339
dbatts@bulverdetx.gov



12/03/2018

SWWC Utilities, Inc.
Attn: Managing Director
12535 Reed Rd.
Sugar Land, Texas 77478

Via U.S. Mail, First Class, Postage Prepaid
Certified Mail No. 7018 0360 0001 1993 0066

Sue Wahl
4626 Evening Shadows Dr.
Bulverde TX 78163

Via email: [REDACTED]

RE: Customer Complaint
Customer Account Number: [REDACTED]
Customer Name: Sue Wahl
Customer Address: [REDACTED]

Greetings:

The City of Bulverde (the "*City*") has received the enclosed complaint (the "*Complain*") regarding the above utility customer (the "*Customer*") served by SWWC Utilities, Inc. (the "*Utility*"). Because the Customer's service address is within its municipal boundaries, the City has original jurisdiction over the Complaint pursuant to Texas Water Code § 13.042.

Pursuant to Article 13.08, Code of Ordinances of the City of Bulverde, Texas ("*Article 13.08*"), the City hereby notifies the Customer and the Utility as follows (as indicated by a mark next to the option selected):

- The City will not consider the Complaint. No further action will be taken or is necessary under Article 13.08. The Customer may file the Complaint with the Public Utility Commission of Texas pursuant to 16 Tex. Admin. Code § 22.242(e)(1)(A)(i).
- The City will consider the Complaint. Pursuant to Article 13.08, the Utility must submit a response to the City within thirty (30) days of the date of this correspondence. Such response may request a hearing and must include all evidence that the respondent wants the City Council to consider in resolving the complaint. If the response is not filed within the 30-day time limit, then the City Council will decide the complaint based on the contents of the complaint and the recommendation of City staff only. If respondent does not request a hearing, then the City Council will decide the complaint based on the information on file and the recommendation of City staff without a hearing. Any hearing regarding the

ARTICLE 13.08
WATER AND WASTEWATER UTILITY COMPLAINT PROCEDURES

13.08.001 **Applicability**

The procedures set forth in this Article apply to all complaints regarding water and wastewater utilities within the city limits of the City of Bulverde, Texas that are subject to the jurisdiction of the City pursuant to Texas Water Code § 13.042.

13.08.002 **Definitions**

In this Article, the following terms have the meaning ascribed to them below:

Affected person. Any person or entity whose utility service or rates are affected by any proceeding before the City under these Procedures.

City Council. The city council of the City of Bulverde, Texas.

Commission. The Public Utility Commission of Texas.

Commission rules. The rules and regulations adopted by the Commission and the provisions of the Texas Water Code pertaining to the Commission.

Complainant. A person that files a complaint with the City under these Procedures.

Complaint. An informal or formal complaint filed under these Procedures.

Person. Natural persons, organizations, government or governmental subdivision or agency, business trust, estate, trust, partnership, association, utility, and any other legal entity.

Procedures. The procedures and terms of this Article.

Respondent. The person against which a complaint is filed under these Procedures.

TAC. The Texas Administrative Code.

(c) Informal Complaints.

(1) *Required; Exceptions.* All complaints must be submitted to the City for informal resolution by City staff before presenting a formal complaint to the City with the following exceptions:

- (A) the complainant is City staff or a governmental entity;
- (B) the complainant alleges that a water or sewer utility has abandoned the service of the utility;
- (C) the complainant alleges that a wholesale water or sewer provider has discontinued, reduced or impaired its wholesale water or sewer service to its customers for reasons other than those specified in 16 TAC § 24.88.
- (D) the complainant has requested and been granted a waiver of informal resolution by City staff. Such waiver request shall clearly state the reasons that informal resolution is not appropriate. City staff may only grant a waiver request for good cause.

(2) *Termination.* City staff shall attempt to informally resolve all complaints within 35 days of the date of receipt of the informal complaint. City staff shall notify, in writing, the complainant and respondent of the status of the dispute at or before the end of the 35-day period. Such notification shall include a copy of these Procedures or a link to a City website containing these procedures. If the complaint has not been resolved to the satisfaction of the complainant within the 35-day period, then the complainant may submit a formal complaint to the City Council.

(d) Formal Complaints. If an attempt at informal resolution fails, or is not required, the complainant may present a formal complaint to the City Council. If an informal complaint is required, a formal complaint must be filed within 10 days of receiving the notification required by subsection (c)(2) of this Section 13.08.003, above. If the formal complaint is not filed within the 10-day period required by this paragraph, the City Council will not consider the formal complaint and complainant may submit the complaint to the Commission pursuant to 16 TAC § 22.242(e)(1)(A)(i).

inspection or production of documents or things, requests for admissions, and depositions by oral examination. The parties must respond to requests for information within 20 days of receiving same.

- (3) *Rebuttal Testimony.* The parties may submit written testimony rebutting the written testimony of the other party no later than the tenth (10th) day prior to the hearing date.
- (4) *Exclusion of Evidence.* Evidence that was not submitted in writing to the City or provided to any other party as required is not admissible at the hearing. Evidence responsive to a discovery request but that was not provided in response to a discovery request is not admissible at the hearing.
- (5) *Conduct and Nature of Hearings.* All hearings shall be conducted before the City Council in the place and at the time specified in the notice. Hearings shall be conducted by a presiding officer. Unless specified otherwise, the Mayor of the City of Bulverde, Texas shall be the presiding officer. The presiding officer has broad discretion in conducting the course, conduct, and scope of the hearing, including the ability to call and examine witnesses, recess any hearing from time to time, abate any proceeding, or take any other action not prohibited by law or Commission rule that is necessary for an efficient and fair hearing. The presiding officer shall conduct the hearing in such a manner to secure fairness in administration and eliminate unjustifiable delay. The presiding officer shall endeavor to limit the presentation of evidence that creates an unfair prejudice, confuses the issues, or causes undue delay or needless presentation of cumulative evidence. To that end, the presiding officer may set reasonable times for parties to present evidence and cross-examine other parties' witnesses, establish the order in which the parties will present evidence and conduct cross-examination, and limit the number of witnesses. All matters within the power of the presiding officer pertaining to the conduct of the hearing may be reduced to writing and provided to the parties prior to the hearing.
- (6) *Order.* After the conclusion of the hearing, the City Council will issue a written order setting out the City Council's decision pertaining to the complaint. Such written order shall constitute the final decision of the City Council pertaining to the complaint and is appealable to the Commission in accordance with 16 TAC § 22.242(e)(1)(A)(ii).

From: noreply@civicplus.com
To: [Danny Batts](#)
Subject: Online Form Submittal: Formal Water Utility Billing Complaint Form
Date: Monday, November 19, 2018 1:42:01 PM

Formal Water Utility Billing Complaint Form

****Note:** State Law requires that a complainant file and process an "Informal Complaint" before the "Formal Complaint" process can be used. Initial complaints submitted using this form will be processed as "Informal Complaints" in accordance with these requirements. ** Customers of Water Utility Companies under City jurisdiction (operating within the City Limits) may file complaints with the City if they believe that they have been billed incorrectly. In order to file a complaint, the customer must file the appropriate form and follow the City's Billing Dispute Resolution Process.

Please review the [Billing Dispute Resolution Process](#)
City's Billing Dispute
Resolution Process at
the following link.

Account Holder's Name

First Name Sue

Last Name Wahl

Account Holder's e-mail address [REDACTED]

Account Holder's Telephone Number [REDACTED]

Service Address

Address1 [REDACTED]

Address2 *Field not completed.*

City [REDACTED]

State [REDACTED]

Zip [REDACTED]

Alternate Contact Address (If different from Service Address)

Address1 *Field not completed.*

Address2 *Field not completed.*



**Water
Services, Inc.**

A SouthWest Water Company

October 5, 2018

Susan Wahl
4626 Evening Shadows Dr.
Bulverde, Texas 78163

Dear Ms. Wahl:

We are in receipt of your inquiry to the Public Utilities Commission (PUC) regarding rates and charges. Providing each customer with an excellent customer service experience is important to us and thank you for allowing us the opportunity to respond.

Per the PUC inquiry, you are disputing the usage due to being billed excessively since the meter changed to a "Smart Meter." Our records indicate that we replaced the meter register on March 4, 2018. The meter is the same, however, just the register portion of the meter was upgraded as per the notice which accompanied the monthly invoices for March, April, and May that provided Notice of Upcoming Routine Maintenance/Register Upgrades.

The register of the meter installed at your address is an Automatic Meter Reader (AMR) register. These registers send an electronic signal to meter reading software each month allowing for the meters to be read without the need for human intervention. This saves not only time and resources but also inhibits the human element of someone incorrectly keying in a read. Please note that your meter is read every month utilizing this procedure. This is a real read and it is what we use for billing.

Our records further indicate that your account was established on May 18, 2007, for water service, within the Oak Village North area. The monthly meter reads occur on/about the 9th of each month. The invoices in question are for the months of August billed for 41 kgals usage, and September billed for 52 kgals usage.

Based on our records, below are our findings and actions taken on this account:

- August 15th - Billing verified the monthly read of 86, prior to releasing the August bill. No dispute of the 41 kgals was received. We thank you for your payment of \$342.83 on September 5, 2018.
- September 17th - records indicate that a "High Bill Dispute" was received due to usage of 52 kgals billed at \$443.38. We also received your call requesting a payment arrangement, and we did inform that we needed a payment for \$221.69, and then we would assist with setting up the arrangement. Also, we checked for a leak at your property as requested, we recorded the read at 145, and there was no leak detected.
- September 18th - we received this inquiry.
- September 19th - we reread the meter, checked for leaks, and the read was 145, with no leaks detected at the location. Again, the reads were progressing and appeared to be in-line with previous reads and usage recorded and billed.
- October 2, 2018 - we received your payment of \$221.00, and we thank you. The current balance due on your account is \$222.38, which is now past due.
- October 4, 2018 - we received the data log which shows that water went through the meter. Also, we included pictures of before and after the meter accuracy test. The test results revealed the meter is performing accurately and meets the American Water Works Association standards. The read captured was 146, and there was no indication of a leak.

000049

**CUSTOMER PROTECTION DIVISION
ON-LINE COMPLAINT FORM**

Complaint

Normal

Tuesday, September 18, 2018

Investigator: ., Unknown
Date Pending:
Complaint No: **CP2018090639**
Company: **WATER SERVICES INC.**
Complaint: **Rates & Charges**
Service No:

Customer:
Last Name: **Wahl**
First Name: **Susan**
Business:
Date Closed:
Date Received: **9/17/2018**
Account No: [REDACTED]
Spanish: No

Service Address:

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Alt Last:
Alt First:

Mail Address:

4626 Evening Shadows Dr

Bulverde TX 78163

Day: [REDACTED]

Alt: [REDACTED]

Email: [REDACTED]

Complaint Note:

CCN 11106 : The water company replaced our meters with "Smart Meters" and ever since this has happend I have been billed in excessive amounts 5 different times. The bill I received on Saturday is in the amount of \$444.38 and I am being charged with using 52,000 gallons of water - last month (August) they charged me for 41,000 gallons of water usage! I am at work all day long and have lived in this home for 20+ years and have never had water bills like this - it is ridiculous. When I call them to speak with them they say it must be paid or my water will be turned off. I called them today (9/17) and spoke with them again and she said I have to pay 1/2 which they must have in their hands and they will put me on a payment plan - seriously I did not use 52,000 gallons of water!! There was a water leak in the front

Entered: **9/17/2018 3:45:00 PM**

Entered By: ., Unknown



MasterLink Data Collection System

10/4/2018 11:31 am

Data Log Report

Page 1 of 7

From: 4/17/2018 (11:03) To: 10/4/2018 (11:03)

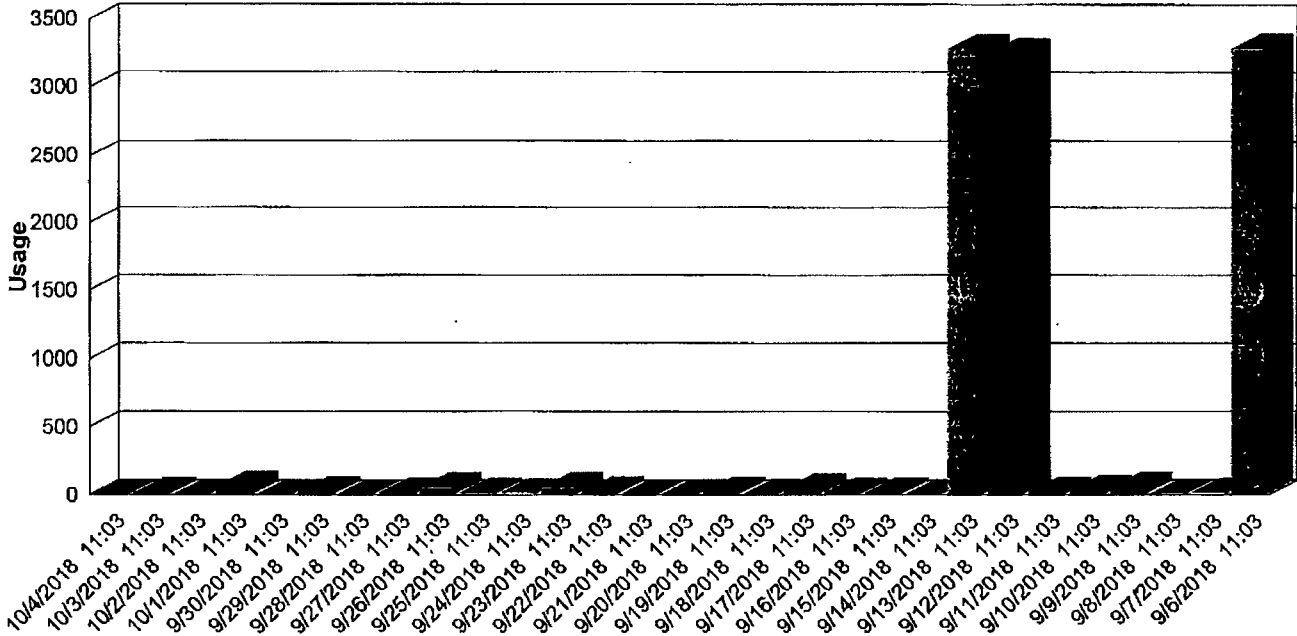
Data Log Event: 2583409:

Address: [REDACTED]

Customer: SUSAN WAHL

MeterSN: 7938646 Electronic ID: 16766180

Peak Consumption: 3820 Occurred 7/22/2018 (11:03)



<u>Date & Time</u>	<u>Reading</u>	<u>Usage</u>
10/4/2018 11:03	146080	10
10/3/2018 11:03	146070	20
10/2/2018 11:03	146050	10
10/1/2018 11:03	146040	70
9/30/2018 11:03	145970	10
9/29/2018 11:03	145960	30
9/28/2018 11:03	145930	10
9/27/2018 11:03	145920	20
9/26/2018 11:03	145900	60
9/25/2018 11:03	145840	20
9/24/2018 11:03	145820	20
9/23/2018 11:03	145800	60
9/22/2018 11:03	145740	30
9/21/2018 11:03	145710	10
9/20/2018 11:03	145700	10
9/19/2018 11:03	145690	30
9/18/2018 11:03	145660	10
9/17/2018 11:03	145650	50
9/16/2018 11:03	145600	20
9/15/2018 11:03	145580	20
9/14/2018 11:03	145560	10
9/13/2018 11:03	145550	3280
9/12/2018 11:03	142270	3250
9/11/2018 11:03	139020	30
9/10/2018 11:03	138990	40
9/9/2018 11:03	138950	60
9/8/2018 11:03	138890	10
9/7/2018 11:03	138880	20
9/6/2018 11:03	138860	3290



MasterLink Data Collection System

10/4/2018 11:31 am

Data Log Report

Page 3 of 7

From: 4/17/2018 (11:03) To: 10/4/2018 (11:03)

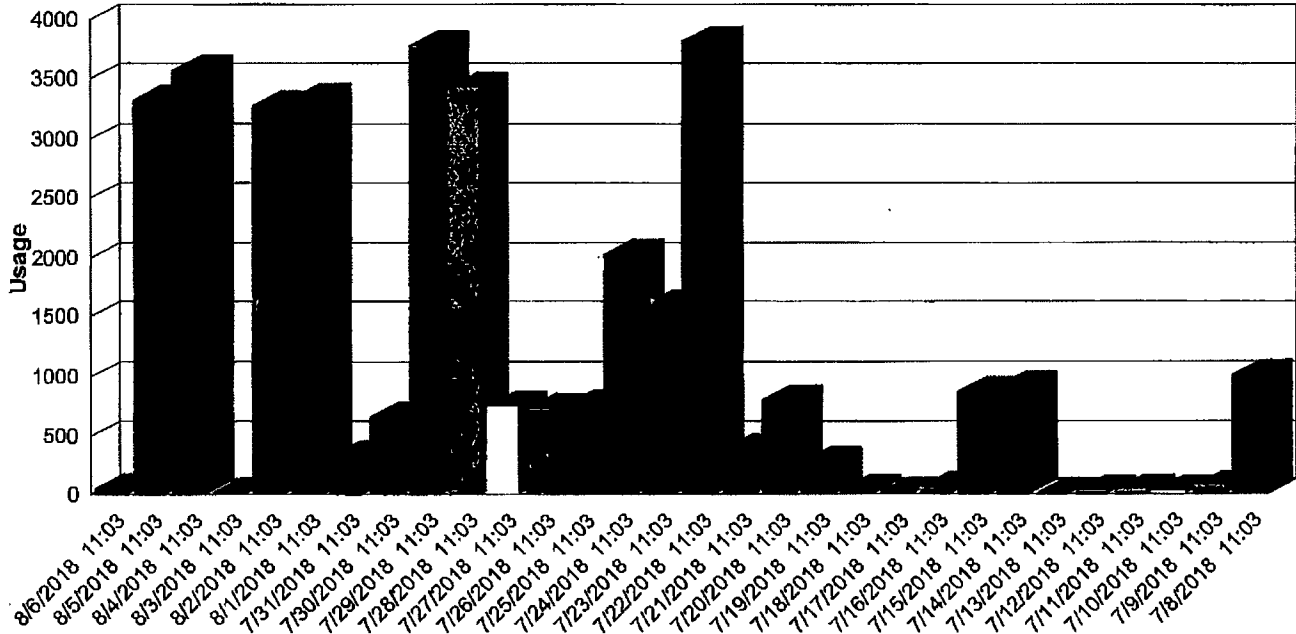
Data Log Event: 2583409:

Address: [REDACTED]

Customer: SUSAN WAHL

MeterSN: 7938646 Electronic ID: 16766180

Peak Consumption: 3820 Occurred 7/22/2018 (11:03)



<u>Date & Time</u>	<u>Reading</u>	<u>Usage</u>
8/6/2018 11:03	79970	50
8/5/2018 11:03	79920	3330
8/4/2018 11:03	76590	3570
8/3/2018 11:03	73020	20
8/2/2018 11:03	73000	3280
8/1/2018 11:03	69720	3340
7/31/2018 11:03	66380	330
7/30/2018 11:03	66050	660
7/29/2018 11:03	65390	3780
7/28/2018 11:03	61610	3430
7/27/2018 11:03	58180	750
7/26/2018 11:03	57430	730
7/25/2018 11:03	56700	760
7/24/2018 11:03	55940	2030
7/23/2018 11:03	53910	1600
7/22/2018 11:03	52310	3820
7/21/2018 11:03	48490	390
7/20/2018 11:03	48100	800
7/19/2018 11:03	47300	280
7/18/2018 11:03	47020	40
7/17/2018 11:03	46980	20
7/16/2018 11:03	46960	60
7/15/2018 11:03	46900	870
7/14/2018 11:03	46030	920
7/13/2018 11:03	45110	10
7/12/2018 11:03	45100	30
7/11/2018 11:03	45070	40
7/10/2018 11:03	45030	30
7/9/2018 11:03	45000	70
7/8/2018 11:03	44930	1020



MasterLink Data Collection System

10/4/2018 11:31 am

Data Log Report

Page 5 of 7

From: 4/17/2018 (11:03) To: 10/4/2018 (11:03)

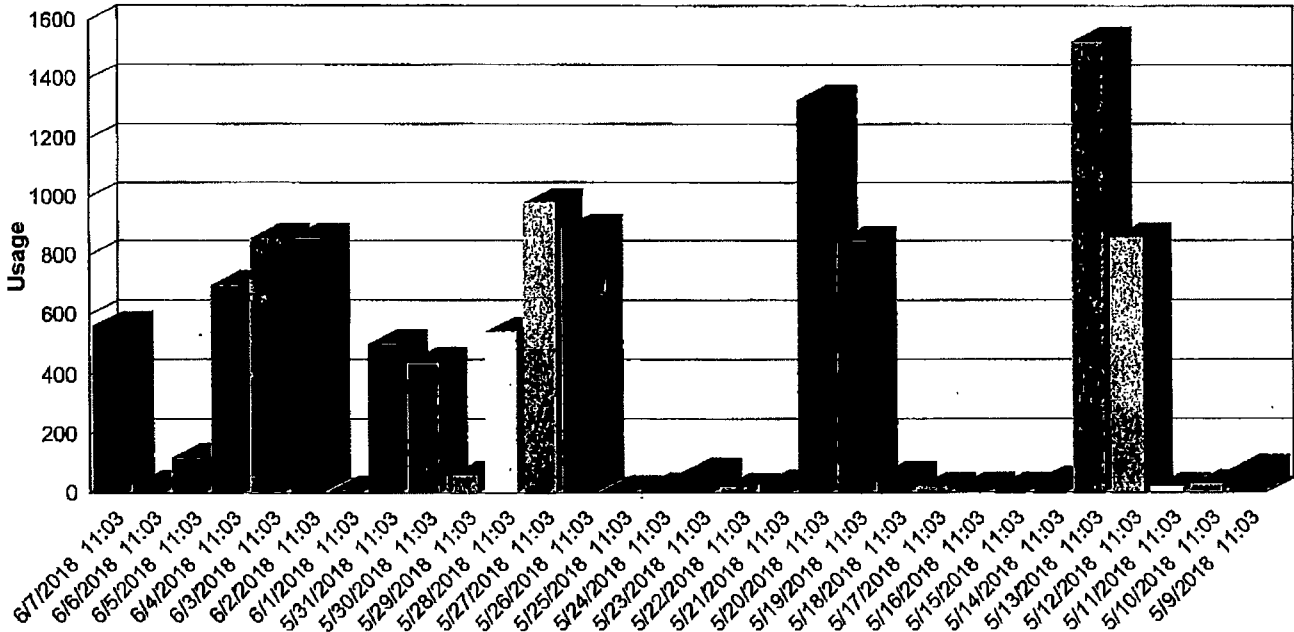
Data Log Event: 2583409:

Address: [REDACTED]

Customer: SUSAN WAHL

MeterSN: 7938646 Electronic ID: 16766180

Peak Consumption: 3820 Occurred 7/22/2018 (11:03)



Date & Time	Reading	Usage
6/7/2018 11:03	33040	560
6/6/2018 11:03	32480	30
6/5/2018 11:03	32450	120
6/4/2018 11:03	32330	700
6/3/2018 11:03	31630	860
6/2/2018 11:03	30770	860
6/1/2018 11:03	29910	10
5/31/2018 11:03	29900	500
5/30/2018 11:03	29400	440
5/29/2018 11:03	28960	60
5/28/2018 11:03	28900	540
5/27/2018 11:03	28360	980
5/26/2018 11:03	27380	890
5/25/2018 11:03	26490	10
5/24/2018 11:03	26480	20
5/23/2018 11:03	26460	70
5/22/2018 11:03	26390	20
5/21/2018 11:03	26370	30
5/20/2018 11:03	26340	1330
5/19/2018 11:03	25010	850
5/18/2018 11:03	24160	60
5/17/2018 11:03	24100	20
5/16/2018 11:03	24080	20
5/15/2018 11:03	24060	20
5/14/2018 11:03	24040	40
5/13/2018 11:03	24000	1530
5/12/2018 11:03	22470	860
5/11/2018 11:03	21610	20
5/10/2018 11:03	21590	30
5/9/2018 11:03	21560	80



10/4/2018 11:31 am

Data Log Event: 2583409:

MasterLink Data Collection System

Data Log Report

From: 4/17/2018 (11:03) To: 10/4/2018 (11:03)

Address: [REDACTED]

Customer: SUSAN WAHL

MeterSN: 7938646 Electronic ID: 16766180

Peak Consumption: 3820 Occurred 7/22/2018 (11:03)

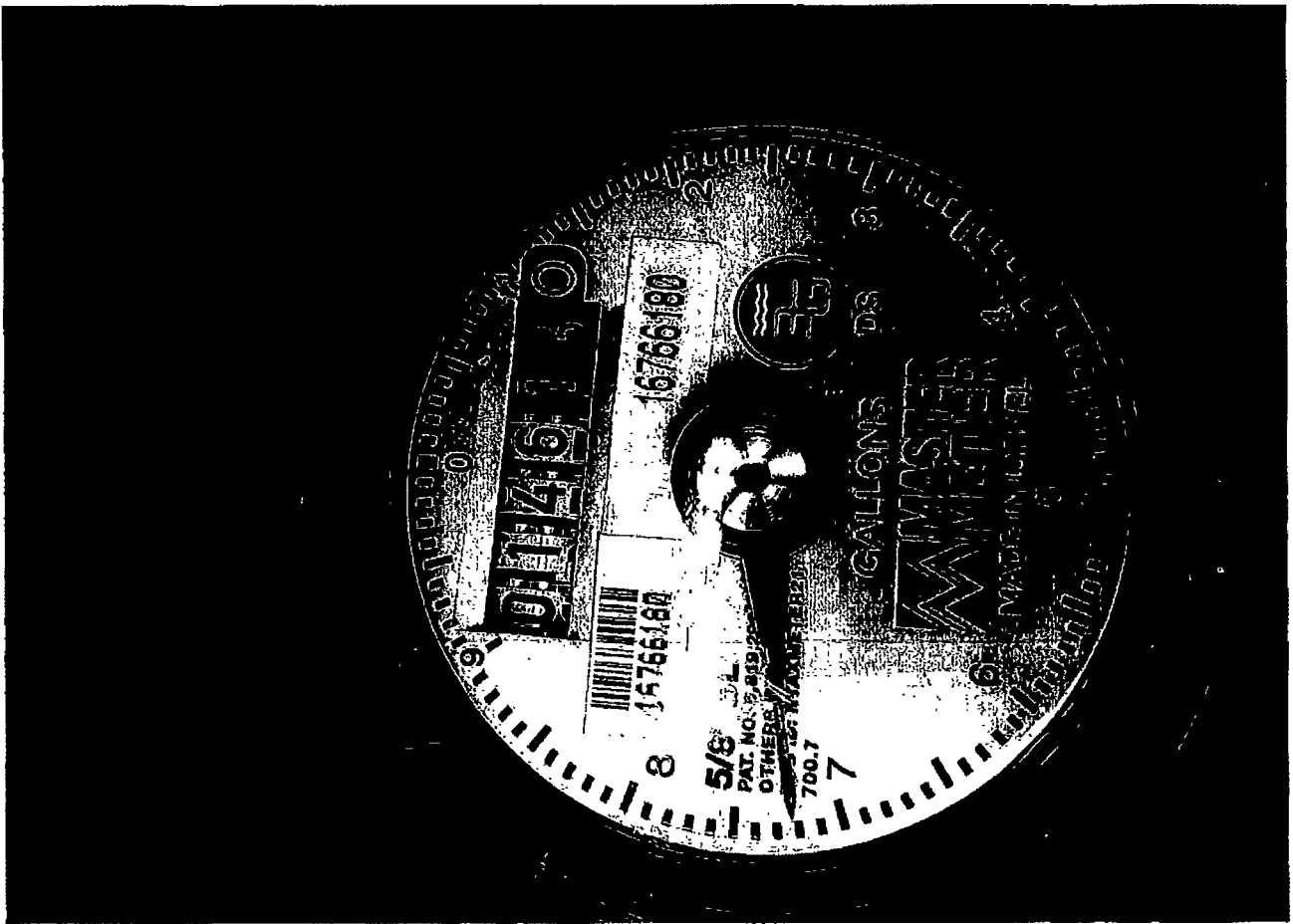
Page 7 of 7

Number of Readings For This Data Log: 171

Average Usage For This Data Log: 770

Total Usage For This Data Log: 131640

rev 2/2/2011





Water Services, Inc.

A SouthWest Water Company

Customer Service: 866-654-7992
Emergencies: 866-654-7992
Visit us online: www.swwc.com/texas

Account Number: [REDACTED]
Invoice Number: [REDACTED]



Billing Date: 10/16/2018
Total Amount Due By: 11/01/2018

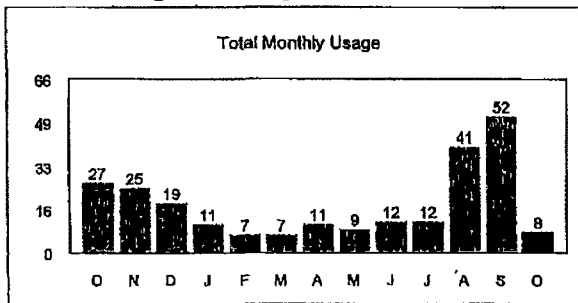
Service Address: [REDACTED]

Current Reading Based on Actual

Rate Type	Meter Read Dates		Number Of Days	Meter Reading		Usage KGAL	Meter Number
	From	To		Previous	Current		
5/8" - R	09/10/18	10/09/18	30	138.0	146.0	8.0	7938646

*KGal (1000 Gallons) Average Consumption = 17.8

Water Usage History - 13 Month Usage in KGal*



Legend: Previous Month's Usage Current Month's Usage

Account Summary

Previous Bill Amount	\$443.38
Payment Received 10/02/18 - Thank You	-\$221.00
(Payments after 5:00pm will NOT reflect on this invoice.)	
Balance	\$222.38
Current Billing and Other Basic Charges	
Water Base	\$47.28
Water Usage	\$31.10
TX. Comm Environ Quality	\$0.78
Total Current Charges	\$79.16
Total Amount Due By 11/01/18	\$301.54
Total Amount Due After 11/01/18	\$309.46

The "Due Date" listed on this bill applies to current charges only. Past due accounts are subject to service termination and will be sent to collections.

Message Center

Project Wishbone registration is underway for registered H2O customers. See enclosed insert for additional information.

Need assistance paying your water bill? Register for Help2Others today.

Please detach and return the bottom portion with your payment, or pay online at www.swwc.com/myaccount.

WATER SERVICES

SOUTHWEST WATER COMPANY
P.O. Box 4657
Houston, TX 77210-4657

Account Number: [REDACTED]
Total Amount Due By 11/01/18: \$301.54
Total Amount Due After 11/01/18: \$309.46

Please make check payable to:
WATER SERVICES

Please check here and see reverse for address and phone corrections.

Amount Enclosed



SUSAN WAHL
4626 EVENING SHADOWS DR
BULVERDE TX 78163-2706

WATER SERVICES
P.O. Box 4657
Houston, TX 77210-4657



Water Services, Inc.

A SouthWest Water Company

October 10, 2018



SUSAN WAHL
4626 EVENING SHADOWS DR
BULVERDE TX 78163-2706

Re: Installment Plan on Account # 001000031673

Dear SUSAN WAHL,

Thank you for contacting SouthWest Water Company to establish a payment arrangement to satisfy the outstanding balance currently due on your account. This letter details the terms and conditions of the agreement discussed between you and Southwest Water Company.

As of the date written above, the balance due on your account is \$222.38
This amount includes your past due balance of \$222.38

You have agreed to make payments each month for 06 months for the total balance owed on your account. As of the writing of this letter this equates to approximately \$37.00 or each month in addition to your normal bill. Please note, if a new invoice is generated during the 14 day waiting period, it will automatically be incorporated into the new amount due into the payment plan thereby changing the total above.

Installment payments are due on or before the due date indicated on each month's statement, in addition to the current amount due on your monthly bill. IF YOU MISS A PAYMENT, AND/OR DO NOT PAY THE FULL (INSTALLMENT & CURRENT) AMOUNT DUE, BY THE DUE DATE YOUR SERVICE IS SUBJECT TO DISCONNECTION. If you are unable to make your installment payment as agreed, or unable to pay your current month's billing, please contact us immediately before the due date of the installment at (866) 654-7992 to discuss further options.

****IMPORTANT** - THE PAYMENT ARRANGEMENT WILL NOT BEGIN UNTIL THIS FORM IS RETURNED. FAILURE TO SIGN AND RETURN THIS AGREEMENT TO US BY October 30, 2018 DISSOLVES ANY VERBAL AGREEMENT MADE.**

Please date, sign and return a copy of the agreement to us. For your convenience you may fax: (832) 209-5395, email: txcustomer@swwc.com or mail: SouthWest Water Company, c/o Customer Service Department, 12535 Reed Rd, Sugar Land, TX 77478. Failure to complete and return this form does not relieve payment obligation.

TERMINATION NOTICE:

We must receive the signed payment arrangement and/or your full payment of your past due balance of \$222.38 by or before 5:00 pm on October 30, 2018 in order to avoid disconnection.

If your service is disconnected, you will be required to pay a reconnection fee of \$25.00. If no deposit is on file, a deposit per service (water/sewer) will be required. All outstanding fees and account balances must be paid BEFORE service is restored. Reconnection may take up to 36 hours. Should you choose to pay the following payment options are available:

- Pay online at www.swwc.com/myaccount. Payments usually post to your account within one hour.
- By mail: P.O. Box 4657, Houston, TX 77210-4657. Please be advised this option may take several days.
- In person: Payments can be made at Customer walk-in service centers including Wal-Mart, FidelityExpress or Checkfree locations.

We value you as a customer and appreciate this opportunity to be of service. If you have any questions, please contact our Customer Care Center at 866-654-7992 between the hours of 8:30am and 5:00pm CST.

SouthWest Water Company

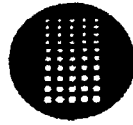
Accepted and Agreed:

This 10 day of Oct 2018

Print Name

Signature

000057



Water Services, Inc.

A SouthWest Water Company

Customer Service: 866-654-7992
Emergencies: 866-654-7992
Visit us online: www.swwc.com/texas

Account Number: [REDACTED]
Invoice Number: [REDACTED]
Billing Date: 09/17/2018
Total Amount Due By: 10/03/2018

Service Address: [REDACTED]



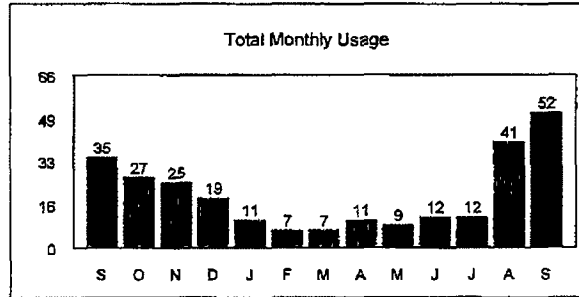
Current Reading Based on Actual

Page 1 of 1

Rate Type	Meter Read Dates		Number Of Days	Meter Reading		Usage KGAL	Meter Number
	From	To		Previous	Current		
5/8" - R	08/10/18	09/09/18	31	86.0	138.0	52.0	7938646

*KGal (1000 Gallons) Average Consumption = 19.4

Water Usage History - 13 Month Usage in KGal*



■ Previous Month's Usage ■ Current Month's Usage

Account Summary

Previous Bill Amount	\$341.83
Payment Received 09/05/18 - Thank You	-\$342.83
(Payments after 5:00pm will NOT reflect on this invoice.)	
Balance	-\$1.00
Current Billing and Other Basic Charges	
Water Base	\$47.28
Water Usage	\$392.70
TX. Comm Environ Quality	\$4.40
Total Current Charges	\$444.38
Total Amount Due By 10/03/18	\$444.38
Total Amount Due After 10/03/18	\$487.82

Message Center

If you are located within the City of Bulverde, please note effective March 13, 2018, new usage rates are in place per the rate agreement with the city. All other customer service charges will remain the same.

Stay informed of outages and provide us with your email address today!

Please detach and return the bottom portion with your payment, or pay online at www.swwc.com/myaccount

000058

FMS

FLUID METER SERVICE, CORP.

SALES • REPAIR • TESTING • CALIBRATION
METERS • CONTROL VALVES • BACKFLOW PREVENTERS

FMS (800) 944-4472
(512) 258-3594 Tel.
(512) 258-4386 Fax

Gary Faber - C.E.O.
512-426-4035 Mobile
Email fluidmeter1@aol.com

P.O. Box 340215
Austin, TX 78734-0215

7304 McNeil Dr., #604
Austin, TX 78729

TO: Southwest Water Company
Oaks Village North

DATE: 12-17-2018

SIZE: 5/8 x 3/4" MAKE: Master TYPE: C-708

[REDACTED]

METER LOCATION

METER# 16766190 / 7938646

Read: 014806°
BEFORE: 014806°

P.O.# _____ W.O.# _____ FMS ORDER # _____

QUANTITY	DESCRIPTION	PRICE
1	AWWA Standard Shop test	
note	meter meets AWWA standards <u>Yes</u> <u>NO</u>	

CERTIFICATE OF CALIBRATION

This is to certify that the physical standards described below were on this day compared to the standards of the state of Texas which are directly traceable to standards of the National Bureau of Standards [NBS Test-No.'s 39569,40093,179355,225713] A.W.W.A Test.

DETAILS OF TEST

LINE NO.	CUFF GALS.	RATE OF FLOW G.P.M.	TOTAL CUFF GALS.	% OF ACCURACY	CORRECTED % OF ACCURACY
1	10	1/4	9.8	98.0 %	
2	10	1	10.1	101.0 %	
3	100	1.5	102.0	102.0 %	

SIGNATURE: _____



000059



Shipment Receipt

Address Information**Ship to:**

Mr. Danny Batts
City of Bulverde
30360 Cougar Bend
City Manager
BULVERDE, TX
78163
US
8309808832

Ship from:

Marleni Alvarez-Sigaran
SouthWest Water Company
12535 Reed Road
SUGAR LAND, TX
77478
US
8322095131

Shipment Information:

Tracking no.: 774038122220
Ship date: 12/20/2018
Estimated shipping charges: 24.44 USD

Package Information

Pricing option: FedEx Standard Rate
Service type: Priority Overnight
Package type: FedEx Envelope
Number of packages: 1
Total weight: 0.50 LBS
Declared Value: 1.00 USD
Special Services:
Pickup/Drop-off: Use an already scheduled pickup at my location

Billing Information:

Bill transportation to: MyAccount-648
Your reference: TXU_20000033
P.O. no.:
Invoice no.:
Department no.:

Thank you for shipping online with FedEx ShipManager at fedex.com.

Please Note

FedEx will not be responsible for any claim in excess of \$100 per package, whether the result of loss, damage, delay, non-delivery, misdelivery, or misinformation, unless you declare a higher value, pay an additional charge, document your actual loss and file a timely claim. Limitations found in the current FedEx Service Guide apply. Your right to recover from FedEx for any loss, including intrinsic value of the package, loss of sales, income interest, profit, attorney's fees, costs, and other forms of damage whether direct, incidental, consequential, or special is limited to the greater of \$100 or the authorized declared value. Recovery cannot exceed actual documented loss. Maximum for items of extraordinary value is \$1000, e.g., jewelry, precious metals, negotiable instruments and other items listed in our Service Guide. Written claims must be filed within strict time limits; Consult the applicable FedEx Service Guide for details. The estimated shipping charge may be different than the actual charges for your shipment. Differences may occur based on actual weight, dimensions, and other factors. Consult the applicable [FedEx Service Guide](#) or the FedEx Rate Sheets for details on how shipping charges are calculated.

000060



**Water
Services, Inc.**

A SouthWest Water Company

Customer Service
866.654.SWWC (7992)

December 19, 2018

City of Bulverde
30360 Cougar Bend
Bulverde, Texas 78163

Dear Honorable City Council:

We have received the formal complaint and wanted to promptly address the matter as it pertains to Ms. Susan Wahl, a Water Services, Inc. utility customer. Per our investigation we have found:

1. The usage at her property in August and September 2018 is similar to that of a year ago. Please see the attached June 2018 bill which shows usage for the prior 13 months and shows usage between 22,000 – 37,000 gallons.
2. The data log shows the usage was accurately calculated. We see consistent, 3,000 gallon spikes within the usage which typically indicates irrigation.
3. We also want to confirm that Ms. Wahl is currently receiving water service during the time of investigation.
4. The meter accuracy test concluded the meter is accurately reading the usage. Three flow tests utilizing 10 gallons each, which is as indicated in the pictures provided of the meter, supported the change in read from 146.09 to 146.12.
5. The meter was tested on December 17, 2018 by an independent third party vendor. The test results reveal that the meter is performing in accordance with the American Water Works Association (AWWA) standards.

After thorough review, the results of this investigation are as follows:

- Both reads of 41,000 in August and 52,000 in September are correct as displayed by consistent meter reads.
- We did not detect any leaks that would affect the customer's usage.

Ms. Wahl is generally a high water user with an average close to 20,000 gallons and spikes up to 52,000 gallons in the summer. The usage is valid and she recently entered into a payment arrangement with us for the remaining balance owed.

We feel that we have fully addressed this matter and will continue to provide quality and accurate service to Ms. Wahl. We truly appreciate her as a customer. If she ever has any other questions or concerns, we encourage her to call Customer Care at 866.654.7992 or by email at TXCustomerCare@swwc.com.

Sincerely,

Charles W. Profilet, Jr., P.E.
Managing Director, Texas Utilities

000061



Water Services, Inc.

A SouthWest Water Company

Customer Service: 866-654-7992
Emergencies: 866-654-7992
Visit us online: www.swwc.com/texas

Account Number: [REDACTED]
Invoice Number: [REDACTED]
Billing Date: 06/15/2018
Total Amount Due By: 07/01/2018



Service Address: [REDACTED]

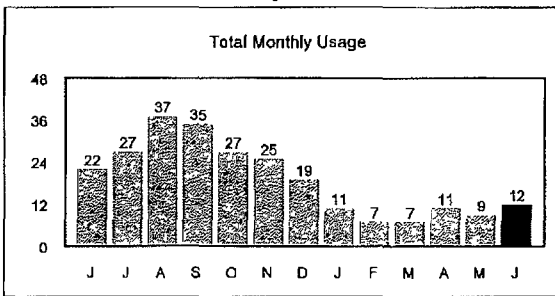
Current Reading Based on Actual

Page 1 of 1

Rate Type	Meter Read Dates		Number Of Days	Meter Reading		Usage KGAL	Meter Number
	From	To		Previous	Current		
5/8" - R	05/10/18	06/09/18	31	21.0	33.0	12.0	7938646

*KGal (1000 Gallons) Average Consumption = 18.9

Water Usage History - 13 Month Usage in KGal*



Previous Month's Usage (light bar) Current Month's Usage (dark bar)

Account Summary

Previous Bill Amount	\$75.33
Payment Received 05/30/18 - Thank You	-\$75.33
(Payments after 5:00pm will NOT reflect on this invoice.)	
Balance	\$0.00
Current Billing and Other Basic Charges	
Water Base	\$47.28
Water Usage	\$51.10
TX. Comm Environ Quality	\$0.98
Total Current Charges	\$99.36
Total Amount Due By 07/01/18	\$99.36
Total Amount Due After 07/01/18	\$109.30

Message Center

If you are located within the City of Bulverde, please note effective March 13, 2018, new usage rates are in place per the rate agreement with the city. All other customer service charges will remain the same.

We updated our drought plan - visit www.swwc.com/texas/drought for more.

Please detach and return the bottom portion with your payment, or pay online at www.swwc.com/myaccount.

WATER SERVICES

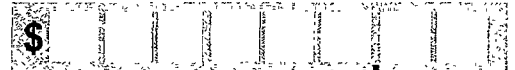
SOUTHWEST WATER COMPANY
P.O. Box 4657
Houston, TX 77210-4657

Account Number: [REDACTED]
Total Amount Due By 07/01/18: \$99.36
Total Amount Due After 07/01/18: \$109.30

Please make check payable to:
WATER SERVICES

Please check here and see reverse for address and phone corrections.

Amount Enclosed



SUSAN WAHL
4626 EVENING SHADOWS DR
BULVERDE TX 78163-2706

WATER SERVICES
P.O. Box 4657
Houston, TX 77210-4657

000000000000 03 00637 00001000031673 9 00 00009936 00010930 3 000062



Water Services, Inc.

A SouthWest Water Company

Customer Service: 866-654-7992
Emergencies: 866-654-7992
Visit us online: www.swwc.com/texas

Account Number: [REDACTED]
Invoice Number: [REDACTED]
Billing Date: 08/20/2018
Total Amount Due By: 09/05/2018



Service Address: [REDACTED]

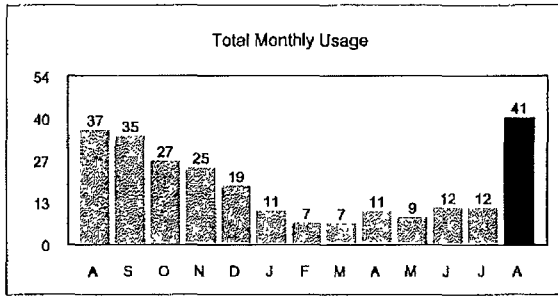
Current Reading Based on Actual

Page 1 of 1

Rate Type	Meter Read Dates		Number Of Days	Meter Reading		Usage KGAL	Meter Number
	From	To		Previous	Current		
5/8" - R	07/10/18	08/09/18	31	45.0	86.0	41.0	7938646

*KGal (1000 Gallons) Average Consumption = 18.0

Water Usage History - 13 Month Usage in KGal*



Legend: Previous Month's Usage Current Month's Usage

Account Summary

Previous Bill Amount	\$99.36
Payment Received 08/03/18 - Thank You	-\$99.36
(Payments after 5:00pm will NOT reflect on this invoice.)	
Balance	\$0.00
Current Billing and Other Basic Charges	
Water Base	\$47.28
Water Usage	\$291.17
TX. Comm Environ Quality	\$3.38
Total Current Charges	\$341.83
Total Amount Due By 09/05/18	\$341.83
Total Amount Due After 09/05/18	\$376.01

Message Center

If you are located within the City of Bulverde, please note effective March 13, 2018, new usage rates are in place per the rate agreement with the city. All other customer service charges will remain the same.

We updated our drought plan - visit www.swwc.com/texas/drought for more.

Please detach and return the bottom portion with your payment, or pay online at www.swwc.com/myaccount.

WATER SERVICES

SOUTHWEST WATER COMPANY
P.O. Box 4657
Houston, TX 77210-4657

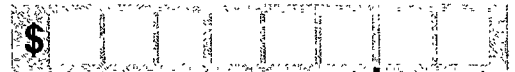
Account Number:

Total Amount Due By 09/05/18: \$341.83
Total Amount Due After 09/05/18: \$376.01

Please make check payable to:
WATER SERVICES

Please check here and see reverse for address and phone corrections.

Amount Enclosed



SUSAN WAHL
4626 EVENING SHADOWS DR
BULVERDE TX 78163-2706

WATER SERVICES
P.O. Box 4657
Houston, TX 77210-4657

000000000000 03 00637 00001000031673 9 00 00034183 000376010083



Water Services, Inc.

A SouthWest Water Company

Customer Service: 866-654-7992
Emergencies: 866-654-7992
Visit us online: www.swwc.com/texas

Account Number: [REDACTED]
Invoice Number: [REDACTED]
Billing Date: 09/17/2018
Total Amount Due By: 10/03/2018



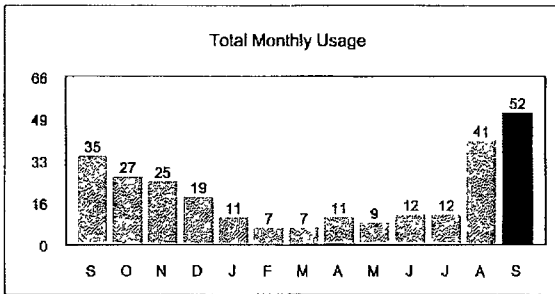
Service Address: [REDACTED]

Current Reading Based on Actual

Rate Type	Meter Read Dates		Number Of Days	Meter Reading		Usage KGAL	Meter Number
	From	To		Previous	Current		
5/8* - R	08/10/18	09/09/18	31	86.0	138.0	52.0	7938646

*KGal (1000 Gallons) Average Consumption = 19.4

Water Usage History - 13 Month Usage in KGal*



Previous Month's Usage (hatched bar) Current Month's Usage (solid black bar)

Account Summary

Previous Bill Amount	\$341.83
Payment Received 09/05/18 - Thank You	-\$342.83
(Payments after 5:00pm will NOT reflect on this invoice.)	
Balance	-\$1.00
Current Billing and Other Basic Charges	
Water Base	\$47.28
Water Usage	\$392.70
TX. Comm Environ Quality	\$4.40
Total Current Charges	\$444.38
Total Amount Due By 10/03/18	\$443.38
Total Amount Due After 10/03/18	\$487.82

Message Center

If you are located within the City of Bulverde, please note effective March 13, 2018, new usage rates are in place per the rate agreement with the city. All other customer service charges will remain the same.

Stay informed of outages and provide us with your email address today!

Please detach and return the bottom portion with your payment, or pay online at www.swwc.com/myaccount.

WATER SERVICES

SOUTHWEST WATER COMPANY
P.O. Box 4657
Houston, TX 77210-4657

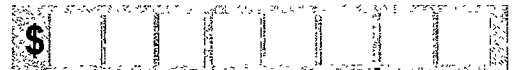
Account Number:

Total Amount Due By 10/03/18: \$443.38
Total Amount Due After 10/03/18: \$487.82

Please make check payable to:
WATER SERVICES

Please check here and see reverse for address and phone corrections.

Amount Enclosed



SUSAN WAHL
4626 EVENING SHADOWS DR
BULVERDE TX 78163-2706

WATER SERVICES
P.O. Box 4657
Houston, TX 77210-4657



Water Services, Inc.

A SouthWest Water Company

Customer Service: 866-654-7992
Emergencies: 866-654-7992
Visit us online: www.swwc.com/texas

Account Number: [REDACTED]
Invoice Number: [REDACTED]
Billing Date: 10/16/2018
Total Amount Due By: 11/01/2018

Service Address: [REDACTED]



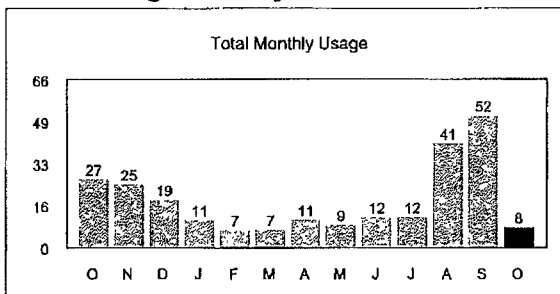
Current Reading Based on Actual

Page 1 of 1

Rate Type	Meter Read Dates		Number Of Days	Meter Reading		Usage KGAL	Meter Number
	From	To		Previous	Current		
5/8" - R	09/10/18	10/09/18	30	138.0	146.0	8.0	7938646

*KGal (1000 Gallons) Average Consumption = 17.8

Water Usage History - 13 Month Usage in KGal*



Legend: Previous Month's Usage Current Month's Usage

Account Summary

Previous Bill Amount	\$443.38
Payment Received 10/02/18 - Thank You	-\$221.00
(Payments after 5:00pm will NOT reflect on this invoice.)	
Balance	\$222.38
Current Billing and Other Basic Charges	
Water Base	\$47.28
Water Usage	\$31.10
TX. Comm Environ Quality	\$0.78
Total Current Charges	\$79.16
Total Amount Due By 11/01/18	\$301.54
Total Amount Due After 11/01/18	\$309.46

Message Center

Project Wishbone registration is underway for registered H2O customers. See enclosed insert for additional information.

The "Due Date" listed on this bill applies to current charges only. Past due accounts are subject to service termination and will be sent to collections.

Need assistance paying your water bill? Register for Help2Others today.

Please detach and return the bottom portion with your payment, or pay online at www.swwc.com/myaccount.

WATER SERVICES

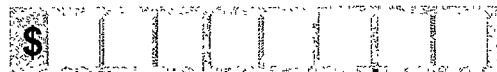
SOUTHWEST WATER COMPANY
P.O. Box 4657
Houston, TX 77210-4657

Account Number: [REDACTED]
Total Amount Due By 11/01/18: \$301.54
Total Amount Due After 11/01/18: \$309.46

Please make check payable to:
WATER SERVICES

Please check here and see reverse for address and phone corrections.

Amount Enclosed



SUSAN WAHL
4626 EVENING SHADOWS DR
BULVERDE TX 78163-2706

WATER SERVICES
P.O. Box 4657
Houston, TX 77210-4657

000000000000 03 00637 00001000031673 9 00 00030154 000309460085



Water Services, Inc.

A SouthWest Water Company

October 10, 2018



SUSAN WAHL
4626 EVENING SHADOWS DR
BULVERDE TX 78163-2706

Re: Installment Plan on Account [REDACTED]

Dear SUSAN WAHL,

Thank you for contacting SouthWest Water Company to establish a payment arrangement to satisfy the outstanding balance currently due on your account. This letter details the terms and conditions of the agreement discussed between you and Southwest Water Company.

As of the date written above, the balance due on your account is \$222.38
This amount includes your past due balance of \$222.38

You have agreed to make payments each month for 06 months for the total balance owed on your account. As of the writing of this letter this equates to approximately \$37.00 or each month in addition to your normal bill. Please note, if a new invoice is generated during the 14 day waiting period, it will automatically be incorporated into the new amount due into the payment plan thereby changing the total above.

Installment payments are due on or before the due date indicated on each month's statement, in addition to the current amount due on your monthly bill. IF YOU MISS A PAYMENT, AND/OR DO NOT PAY THE FULL (INSTALLMENT & CURRENT) AMOUNT DUE, BY THE DUE DATE YOUR SERVICE IS SUBJECT TO DISCONNECTION. If you are unable to make your installment payment as agreed, or unable to pay your current month's billing, please contact us immediately before the due date of the installment at (866) 654-7992 to discuss further options.

****IMPORTANT** - THE PAYMENT ARRANGEMENT WILL NOT BEGIN UNTIL THIS FORM IS RETURNED. FAILURE TO SIGN AND RETURN THIS AGREEMENT TO US BY October 30, 2018 DISSOLVES ANY VERBAL AGREEMENT MADE.**

Please date, sign and return a copy of the agreement to us. For your convenience you may fax: (832) 209-5395, email: txcustomer@swwc.com or mail: SouthWest Water Company, c/o Customer Service Department, 12535 Reed Rd, Sugar Land, TX 77478. Failure to complete and return this form does not relieve payment obligation.

TERMINATION NOTICE:

We must receive the signed payment arrangement and/or your full payment of your past due balance of \$222.38 by or before 5:00 pm on October 30, 2018 in order to avoid disconnection.

If your service is disconnected, you will be required to pay a reconnection fee of \$25.00. If no deposit is on file, a deposit per service (water/sewer) will be required. All outstanding fees and account balances must be paid BEFORE service is restored. Reconnection may take up to 36 hours. Should you choose to pay the following payment options are available:

- Pay online at www.swwc.com/myaccount. Payments usually post to your account within one hour.
- By mail: P.O. Box 4657, Houston, TX 77210-4657. Please be advised this option may take several days.
- In person: Payments can be made at Customer walk-in service centers including Wal-Mart, FidelityExpress or Checkfree locations.

We value you as a customer and appreciate this opportunity to be of service. If you have any questions, please contact our Customer Care Center at 866-654-7992 between the hours of 8:30am and 5:00pm CST.

SouthWest Water Company

Accepted and Agreed:
This 19 day of Oct 20 18

[REDACTED]

Print Name

Signature

FMS

FLUID METER SERVICE, CORP.

FMS (800) 944-4472
(512) 258-3594 Tel.
(512) 258-4386 Fax

Gary Faber - C.E.O.
512-426-4035 Mobile
Email fluidmeter1@aol.com

SALES • REPAIR • TESTING • CALIBRATION
METERS • CONTROL VALVES • BACKFLOW PREVENTERS

P.O. Box 340215
Austin, TX 78734-0215

7304 McNeill Dr., #604
Austin, TX 78729

TO: Southwest Water Company
Oaks Village North
4626 Evening Shadow
METER LOCATION

DATE: 12-17-2018
SIZE: 5/8x3/4" MAKE: Master TYPE: C-708
METER# 16766190 / 7938646
Read: 014806°
BEFORE:

P.O.# _____ W.O.# _____ FMS ORDER # _____

QUANTITY	DESCRIPTION	PRICE
1	AWWA Standard Shop test	
note: meter meets AWWA standards <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO		

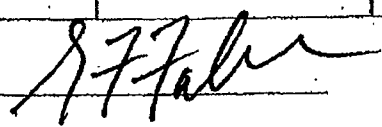
CERTIFICATE OF CALIBRATION

This is to certify that the physical standards described below were on this day compared to the standards of the state of Texas which are directly traceable to standards of the National Bureau of Standards [NBS Test-No. 39569, 40093, 179355, 225713] A.W.W.A Test.

DETAILS OF TEST

LINE NO.	CUFF GALS.	RATE OF FLOW G.P.M.	TOTAL CUFF GALS.	% OF ACCURACY	CORRECTED % OF ACCURACY
1	10	1/4	9.8	98.0 %	
2	10	1	10.1	101.0 %	
3	100	1.5	102.0	102.0 %	

SIGNATURE: _____



000067



MasterLink Data Collection System

10/4/2018 11:31 am

Data Log Report

Page 1 of 7

From: 4/17/2018 (11:03) To: 10/4/2018 (11:03)

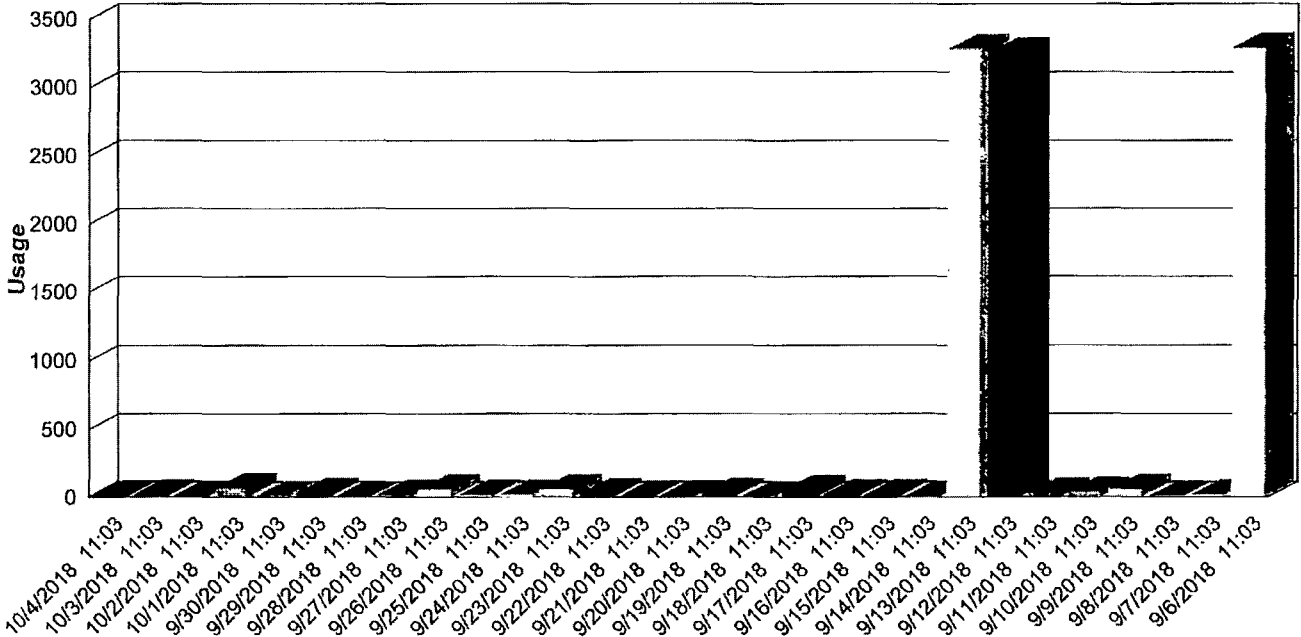
Data Log Event: 2583409:

Address: [REDACTED]

Customer: SUSAN WAHL

MeterSN: 7938646 Electronic ID: 16766180

Peak Consumption: 3820 Occurred 7/22/2018 (11:03)



<u>Date & Time</u>	<u>Reading</u>	<u>Usage</u>
10/4/2018 11:03	146080	10
10/3/2018 11:03	146070	20
10/2/2018 11:03	146050	10
10/1/2018 11:03	146040	70
9/30/2018 11:03	145970	10
9/29/2018 11:03	145960	30
9/28/2018 11:03	145930	10
9/27/2018 11:03	145920	20
9/26/2018 11:03	145900	60
9/25/2018 11:03	145840	20
9/24/2018 11:03	145820	20
9/23/2018 11:03	145800	60
9/22/2018 11:03	145740	30
9/21/2018 11:03	145710	10
9/20/2018 11:03	145700	10
9/19/2018 11:03	145690	30
9/18/2018 11:03	145660	10
9/17/2018 11:03	145650	50
9/16/2018 11:03	145600	20
9/15/2018 11:03	145580	20
9/14/2018 11:03	145560	10
9/13/2018 11:03	145550	3280
9/12/2018 11:03	142270	3250
9/11/2018 11:03	139020	30
9/10/2018 11:03	138990	40
9/9/2018 11:03	138950	60
9/8/2018 11:03	138890	10
9/7/2018 11:03	138880	20
9/6/2018 11:03	138860	3290



MasterLink Data Collection System

10/4/2018 11:31 am

Data Log Report

Page 2 of 7

From: 4/17/2018 (11:03) To: 10/4/2018 (11:03)

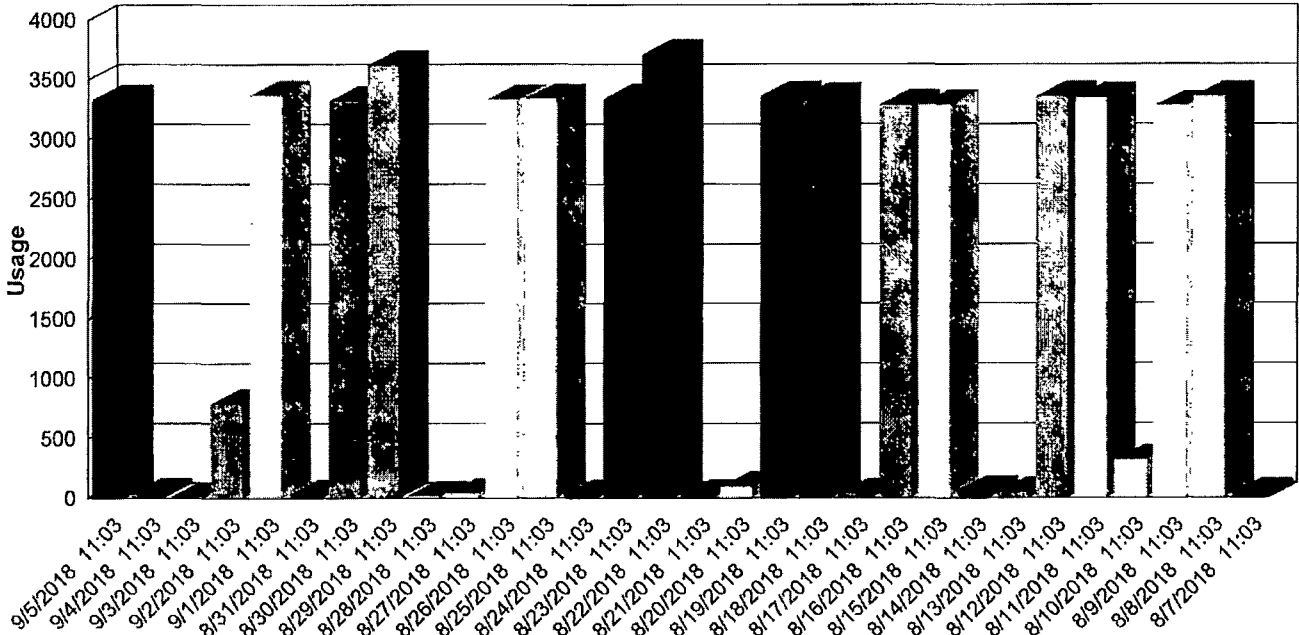
Data Log Event: 2583409:

Address: [REDACTED]

Customer: SUSAN WAHL

MeterSN: 7938646 Electronic ID: 16766180

Peak Consumption: 3820 Occurred 7/22/2018 (11:03)



<u>Date & Time</u>	<u>Reading</u>	<u>Usage</u>
9/5/2018 11:03	135570	3330
9/4/2018 11:03	132240	40
9/3/2018 11:03	132200	10
9/2/2018 11:03	132190	790
9/1/2018 11:03	131400	3370
8/31/2018 11:03	128030	30
8/30/2018 11:03	128000	3320
8/29/2018 11:03	124680	3620
8/28/2018 11:03	121060	20
8/27/2018 11:03	121040	40
8/26/2018 11:03	121000	3330
8/25/2018 11:03	117670	3340
8/24/2018 11:03	114330	30
8/23/2018 11:03	114300	3340
8/22/2018 11:03	110960	3710
8/21/2018 11:03	107250	30
8/20/2018 11:03	107220	100
8/19/2018 11:03	107120	3360
8/18/2018 11:03	103760	3350
8/17/2018 11:03	100410	40
8/16/2018 11:03	100370	3290
8/15/2018 11:03	97080	3290
8/14/2018 11:03	93790	60
8/13/2018 11:03	93730	50
8/12/2018 11:03	93680	3360
8/11/2018 11:03	90320	3350
8/10/2018 11:03	86970	320
8/9/2018 11:03	86650	3280
8/8/2018 11:03	83370	3360
8/7/2018 11:03	80010	40



MasterLink Data Collection System

10/4/2018 11:31 am

Data Log Report

Page 3 of 7

From: 4/17/2018 (11:03) To: 10/4/2018 (11:03)

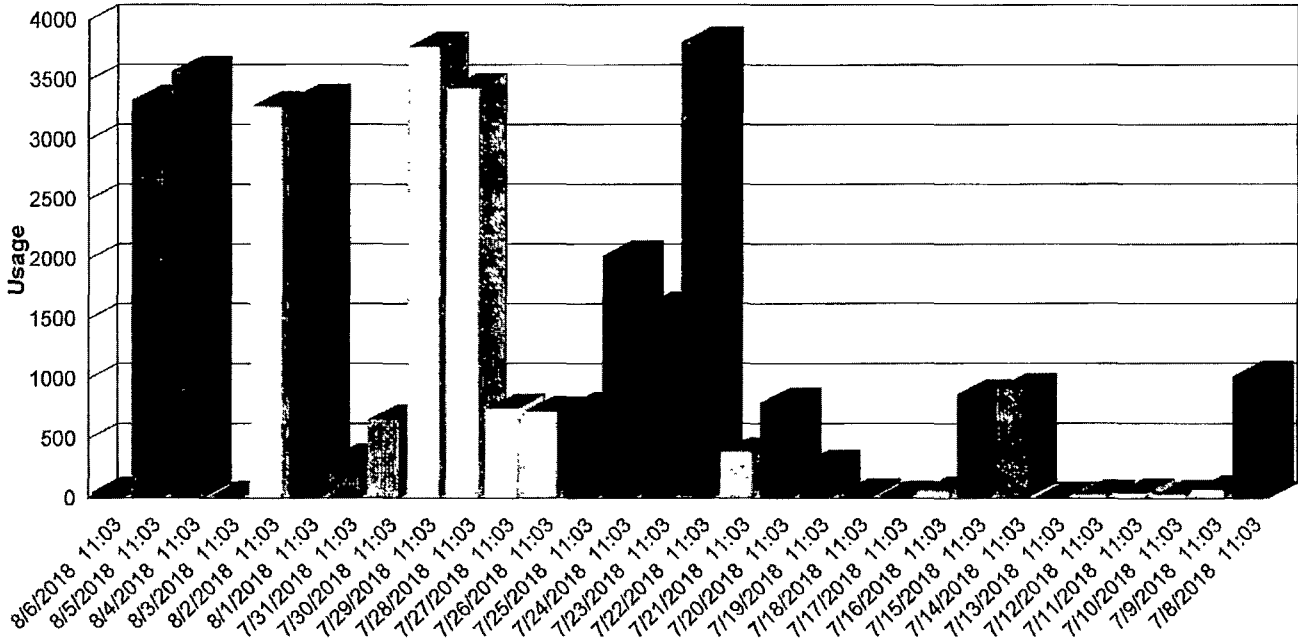
Data Log Event: 2583409:

Address: [REDACTED]

Customer: SUSAN WAHL

MeterSN: 7938646 Electronic ID: 16766180

Peak Consumption: 3820 Occurred 7/22/2018 (11:03)



Date & Time	Reading	Usage
8/6/2018 11:03	79970	50
8/5/2018 11:03	79920	3330
8/4/2018 11:03	76590	3570
8/3/2018 11:03	73020	20
8/2/2018 11:03	73000	3280
8/1/2018 11:03	69720	3340
7/31/2018 11:03	66380	330
7/30/2018 11:03	66050	660
7/29/2018 11:03	65390	3780
7/28/2018 11:03	61610	3430
7/27/2018 11:03	58180	750
7/26/2018 11:03	57430	730
7/25/2018 11:03	56700	760
7/24/2018 11:03	55940	2030
7/23/2018 11:03	53910	1600
7/22/2018 11:03	52310	3820
7/21/2018 11:03	48490	390
7/20/2018 11:03	48100	800
7/19/2018 11:03	47300	280
7/18/2018 11:03	47020	40
7/17/2018 11:03	46980	20
7/16/2018 11:03	46960	60
7/15/2018 11:03	46900	870
7/14/2018 11:03	46030	920
7/13/2018 11:03	45110	10
7/12/2018 11:03	45100	30
7/11/2018 11:03	45070	40
7/10/2018 11:03	45030	30
7/9/2018 11:03	45000	70
7/8/2018 11:03	44930	1020



MasterLink Data Collection System

10/4/2018 11:31 am

Data Log Report

Page 4 of 7

From: 4/17/2018 (11:03) To: 10/4/2018 (11:03)

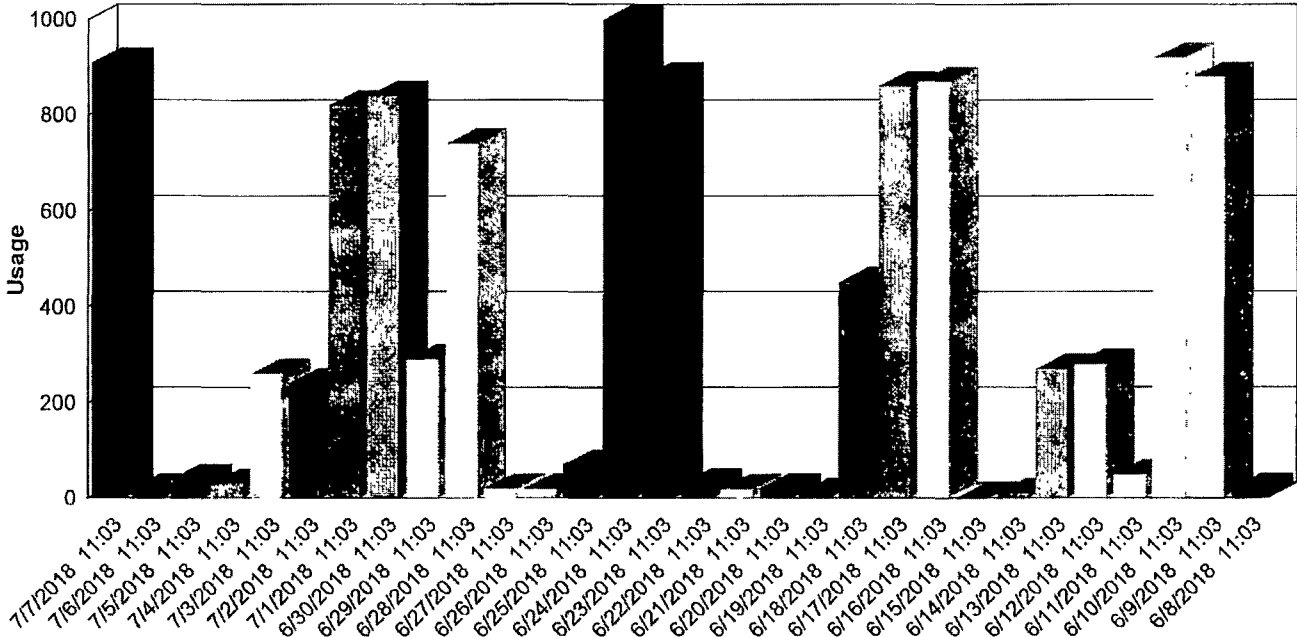
Data Log Event: 2583409:

Address: [REDACTED]

Customer: SUSAN WAHL

MeterSN: 7938646 Electronic ID: 16766180

Peak Consumption: 3820 Occurred 7/22/2018 (11:03)



<u>Date & Time</u>	<u>Reading</u>	<u>Usage</u>
7/7/2018 11:03	43910	910
7/6/2018 11:03	43000	20
7/5/2018 11:03	42980	40
7/4/2018 11:03	42940	30
7/3/2018 11:03	42910	260
7/2/2018 11:03	42650	240
7/1/2018 11:03	42410	820
6/30/2018 11:03	41590	840
6/29/2018 11:03	40750	290
6/28/2018 11:03	40460	740
6/27/2018 11:03	39720	20
6/26/2018 11:03	39700	20
6/25/2018 11:03	39680	70
6/24/2018 11:03	39610	1000
6/23/2018 11:03	38610	880
6/22/2018 11:03	37730	30
6/21/2018 11:03	37700	20
6/20/2018 11:03	37680	20
6/19/2018 11:03	37660	10
6/18/2018 11:03	37650	450
6/17/2018 11:03	37200	860
6/16/2018 11:03	36340	870
6/15/2018 11:03	35470	0
6/14/2018 11:03	35470	10
6/13/2018 11:03	35460	270
6/12/2018 11:03	35190	280
6/11/2018 11:03	34910	50
6/10/2018 11:03	34860	920
6/9/2018 11:03	33940	880
6/8/2018 11:03	33060	20



MasterLink Data Collection System

10/4/2018 11:31 am

Data Log Report

Page 5 of 7

From: 4/17/2018 (11:03) To: 10/4/2018 (11:03)

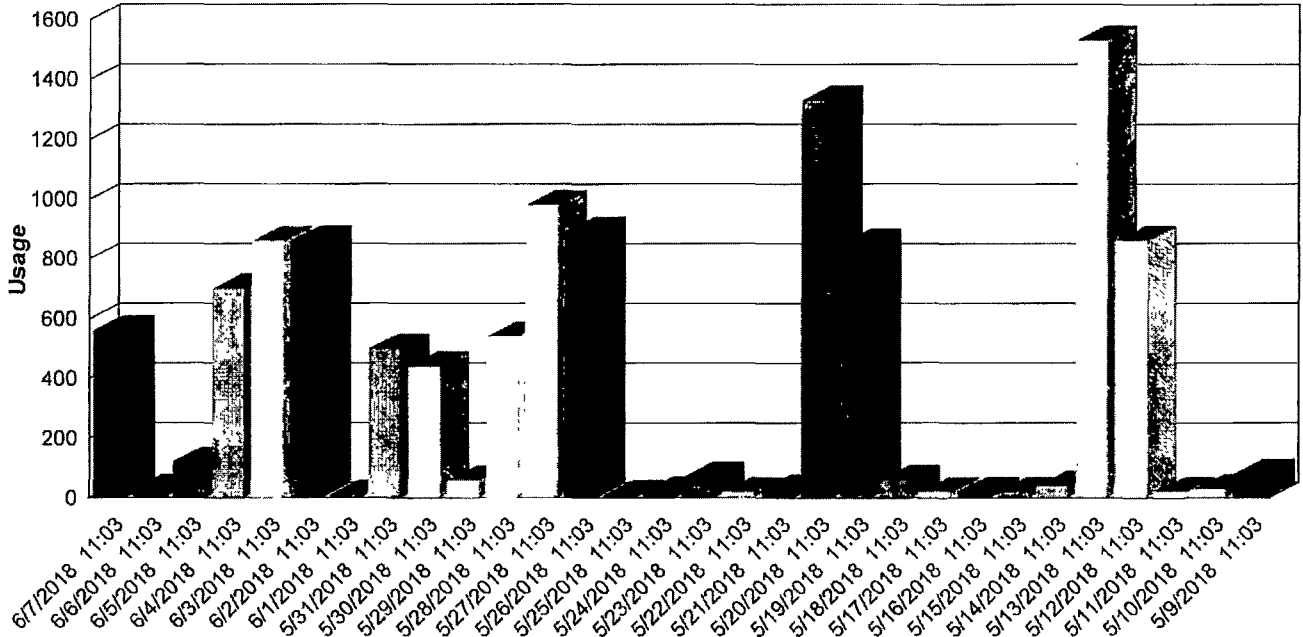
Data Log Event: 2583409:

Address: [REDACTED]

Customer: SUSAN WAHL

MeterSN: 7938646 Electronic ID: 16766180

Peak Consumption: 3820 Occurred 7/22/2018 (11:03)



<u>Date & Time</u>	<u>Reading</u>	<u>Usage</u>
6/7/2018 11:03	33040	560
6/6/2018 11:03	32480	30
6/5/2018 11:03	32450	120
6/4/2018 11:03	32330	700
6/3/2018 11:03	31630	860
6/2/2018 11:03	30770	860
6/1/2018 11:03	29910	10
5/31/2018 11:03	29900	500
5/30/2018 11:03	29400	440
5/29/2018 11:03	28960	60
5/28/2018 11:03	28900	540
5/27/2018 11:03	28360	980
5/26/2018 11:03	27380	890
5/25/2018 11:03	26490	10
5/24/2018 11:03	26480	20
5/23/2018 11:03	26460	70
5/22/2018 11:03	26390	20
5/21/2018 11:03	26370	30
5/20/2018 11:03	26340	1330
5/19/2018 11:03	25010	850
5/18/2018 11:03	24160	60
5/17/2018 11:03	24100	20
5/16/2018 11:03	24080	20
5/15/2018 11:03	24060	20
5/14/2018 11:03	24040	40
5/13/2018 11:03	24000	1530
5/12/2018 11:03	22470	860
5/11/2018 11:03	21610	20
5/10/2018 11:03	21590	30
5/9/2018 11:03	21560	80



MasterLink Data Collection System

10/4/2018 11:31 am

Data Log Report

Page 6 of 7

From: 4/17/2018 (11:03) To: 10/4/2018 (11:03)

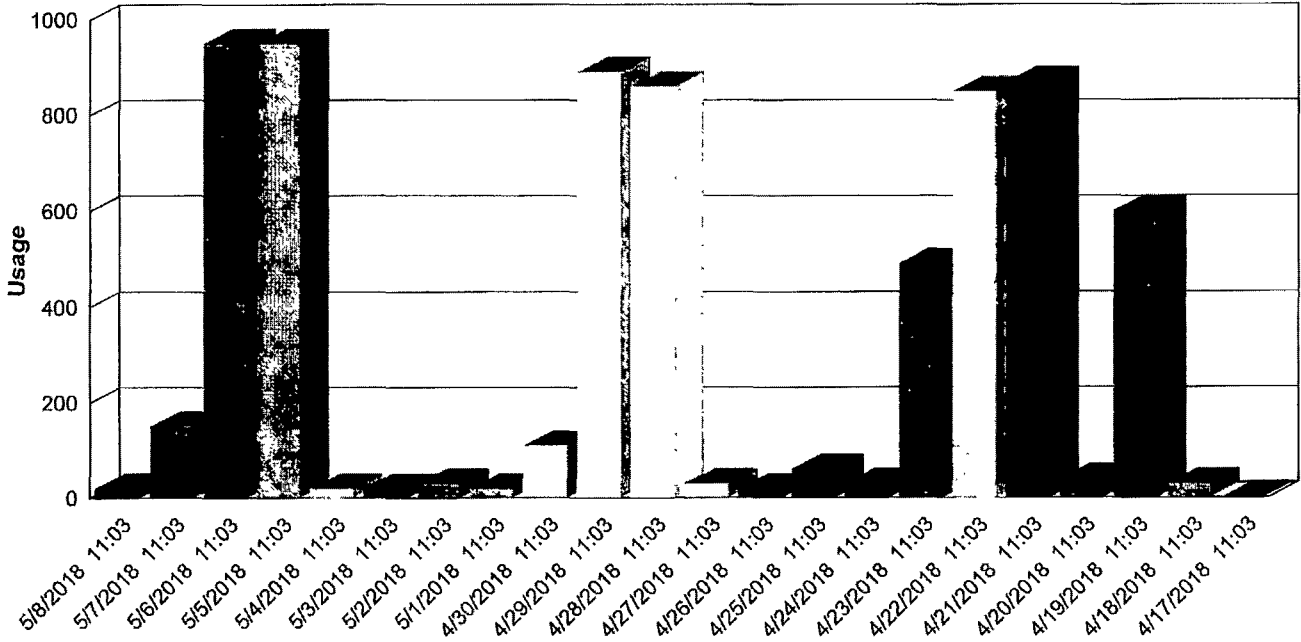
Data Log Event: 2583409:

Address: [REDACTED]

Customer: SUSAN WAHL

MeterSN: 7938646 Electronic ID: 16766180

Peak Consumption: 3820 Occurred 7/22/2018 (11:03)



<u>Date & Time</u>	<u>Reading</u>	<u>Usage</u>
5/8/2018 11:03	21480	20
5/7/2018 11:03	21460	150
5/6/2018 11:03	21310	950
5/5/2018 11:03	20360	950
5/4/2018 11:03	19410	20
5/3/2018 11:03	19390	20
5/2/2018 11:03	19370	30
5/1/2018 11:03	19340	20
4/30/2018 11:03	19320	110
4/29/2018 11:03	19210	890
4/28/2018 11:03	18320	860
4/27/2018 11:03	17460	30
4/26/2018 11:03	17430	20
4/25/2018 11:03	17410	60
4/24/2018 11:03	17350	30
4/23/2018 11:03	17320	490
4/22/2018 11:03	16830	850
4/21/2018 11:03	15980	870
4/20/2018 11:03	15110	40
4/19/2018 11:03	15070	600
4/18/2018 11:03	14470	30
4/17/2018 11:03	14440	0



MasterLink Data Collection System

10/4/2018 11:31 am

Data Log Report

Page 7 of 7

From: 4/17/2018 (11:03) To: 10/4/2018 (11:03)

Data Log Event: 2583409:

Address: [REDACTED]

Customer: SUSAN WAHL

MeterSN: 7938646 Electronic ID: 16766180

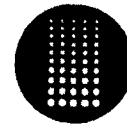
Peak Consumption: 3820 Occurred 7/22/2018 (11:03)

Number of Readings For This Data Log: 171

Average Usage For This Data Log: 770

Total Usage For This Data Log: 131640

rev 2/2/2011



**Water
Services, Inc.**

A SouthWest Water Company

Customer Service
866.654.SWWC (7992)

October 18, 2018

Dear Mr. Batts,

Thank you for bringing this concern to our attention, so we may discuss with you the findings that were sent to the customer, Sue Wahl.

We received your letter and wanted to promptly address the actions taken for Ms. Wahl's concerns.

1. We immediately began our investigation after notification of the issue by the Public Utility Commission.
2. We provided our response on October 5.
3. Within this letter, you will also find the response and supporting documentation for your reference.
4. We also want to confirm that Ms. Wahl is currently receiving water service and was in service during time of investigation.

After thorough review, the results of this investigation are as follows:

- Both reads of 41,000 and 52,000 are correct as displayed by consistent meter reads.
- We did not detect any leaks that would affect the customer's usage.
- The data log shows the usage was accurately calculated. We do see consistent, 3,000 gallon spikes within the usage which can typically indicate the use of irrigation.
- The meter accuracy test concluded the meter is accurately reading the usage. Three flow test utilizing 10 gallons each which, as indicated in the pictures provided of the meter, supported the change in read from 146.09 to 146.12.

To further address Ms. Wahl's concerns about the meter reading device, the meter is the same as before, which has been accurately reading the water usage at the home for many years. We did upgrade the register of the meter. This is the electrical component of the meter that sends signals to our technician of the read each month and helps provide detailed information of usage.

Ms. Wahl is generally a high water user with an average close to 20,000 gallons and spikes up to 35,000 gallons in the summer. However, although the usage is valid, we do understand the bill in questions is an abnormal spike and so we do offer the ability for a payment arrangement. It should be noted Ms. Wahl has recently entered into a payment arrangement with us for the remaining balance owed.

We feel we have fully addressed this matter and hopefully provided Ms. Wahl with as much information needed so she can be confident in knowing she is receiving quality, accurate service. We truly appreciate her as a customer. If she ever has any other questions or concerns, we encourage her to call Customer Care at 866.654.7992 or by email at TXCustomerCare@swwc.com.

Sincerely,

Charles W. Profflet, Jr., P.E.
Managing Director, Texas Utilities

000075



**Water
Services, Inc.**

A SouthWest Water Company

October 5, 2018

Susan Wahl
4626 Evening Shadows Dr.
Bulverde, Texas 78163

Dear Ms. Wahl:

We are in receipt of your inquiry to the Public Utilities Commission (PUC) regarding rates and charges. Providing each customer with an excellent customer service experience is important to us and thank you for allowing us the opportunity to respond.

Per the PUC inquiry, you are disputing the usage due to being billed excessively since the meter changed to a "Smart Meter." Our records indicate that we replaced the meter register on March 4, 2018. The meter is the same, however, just the register portion of the meter was upgraded as per the notice which accompanied the monthly invoices for March, April, and May that provided Notice of Upcoming Routine Maintenance/Register Upgrades.

The register of the meter installed at your address is an Automatic Meter Reader (AMR) register. These registers send an electronic signal to meter reading software each month allowing for the meters to be read without the need for human intervention. This saves not only time and resources but also inhibits the human element of someone incorrectly keying in a read. Please note that your meter is read every month utilizing this procedure. This is a real read and it is what we use for billing.

Our records further indicate that your account was established on May 18, 2007, for water service, within the Oak Village North area. The monthly meter reads occur on/about the 9th of each month. The invoices in question are for the months of August billed for 41 kgals usage, and September billed for 52 kgals usage.

Based on our records, below are our findings and actions taken on this account:

- August 15th – Billing verified the monthly read of 86, prior to releasing the August bill. No dispute of the 41 kgals was received. We thank you for your payment of \$342.83 on September 5, 2018.
- September 17th - records indicate that a "High Bill Dispute" was received due to usage of 52 kgals billed at \$443.38. We also received your call requesting a payment arrangement, and we did inform that we needed a payment for \$221.69, and then we would assist with setting up the arrangement. Also, we checked for a leak at your property as requested, we recorded the read at 145, and there was no leak detected.
- September 18th – we received this inquiry.
- September 19th – we reread the meter, checked for leaks, and the read was 145, with no leaks detected at the location. Again, the reads were progressing and appeared to be in-line with previous reads and usage recorded and billed.
- October 2, 2018 – we received your payment of \$221.00, and we thank you. The current balance due on your account is \$222.38, which is now past due.
- October 4, 2018 – we received the data log which shows that water went through the meter. Also, we included pictures of before and after the meter accuracy test. The test results revealed the meter is performing accurately and meets the American Water Works Association standards. The read captured was 146, and there was no indication of a leak.

000076

Susan Wahl
October 5, 2018
Page 2

Upon further investigation, we researched the meter reads and found the usage had progressed each month prior to the register upgrade on March 4, 2018, and continues to progress after the register upgrade, without any problems.

Per the inquiry, there was a leak before the meters between your property and your neighbors. According to our records, there have not been any leaks found nor any repairs according to our Field Operations. A check of our records reflect that there was a main line leak repair and flushing within the Oak Village North area, the street affected was Eagle Claw, and this did not affect your property.

To date, there is not a payment arrangement on your account. Although we did advise on September 17, 2018, the payment discussed at that time was \$221.69 and we advised you to call back in order to set up one. We are in accordance with PUC Substantive Rule §24.87 (d) if offering a deferred payment plan between the utility and a customer in which an outstanding bill will be paid in installments. The utility shall offer a deferred payment plan to any residential customer if the customer's bill is more than three times the average monthly bill for that customer for the previous 12 months. In all other cases, the utility is encouraged to offer a deferred payment plan to residential customers who cannot pay an outstanding bill in full but are willing to pay the balance in reasonable installments. Should you feel that one is necessary, please contact us.

Some helpful water conservation tips include:

- Check household faucets for leaks. A faucet with even a slow drip takes 10 to 25 gallons of water.
- A five minute shower can use 10-25 gallons of water. Take short showers and save water.
- Repair leaky toilets. To check for leaks, add 12 drops of food coloring into the tank, and if color appears in the bowl one hour later, your toilet is leaking. (Make sure to flush your toilet at the conclusion of the experiment to prevent staining.)
- Water your lawn in the evening or in the early morning to avoid evaporation. Be careful to water only the lawn and not the sidewalk or street.

Ms. Wahl, we hope that we have answered your concerns. Thank you for being a valued Water Services customer. Should you have any questions or concerns, please contact us at (866) 654-7992 Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Sincerely,

Water Services, Inc.
PUC Escalation Team



**SouthWest
Water Company**

Customer Service
866.654.SWWC (7992)



Notice of Upcoming Routine Maintenance/Register Upgrades

Our Automatic Meter Reader (AMR) system installed in 2011 overall helps us save labor time, prevent recording errors, and allows us to document leaks through usage data collection. To ensure you are receiving the best quality service, we will be conducting routine maintenance on the meter at your residence. This notice is to alert you technicians will be stopping by your meter in the upcoming weeks to upgrade the registers of your meter.

Please do not be alarmed if a technician is near your property. You do not need to be home during our visit. Our crews will be conducting the changes throughout the day during normal business hours.

The register is an essential part of your meter that helps us to accurately and promptly read your usage. AMR technology is what enables the registers to send an electronic signal to software each month allowing for meters to be read without the need for human intervention. We will be upgrading the current version of this technology which will lengthen the signal strength to increase the ease of gathering reads and collecting data. Thank you for allowing us to provide you with safe, quality water and waste water services. If you have any questions, comments or concerns regarding the update, please contact Customer Care at 866.654.7992 Monday - Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. or by email at TXcustomer@swwc.com.

Please print only new address information below and check the appropriate box on the reverse side. Thank you.

Address Change(s) _____

Mailing address only

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip Code _____

() _____
Phone Number E-mail Address

Customer Account Number _____

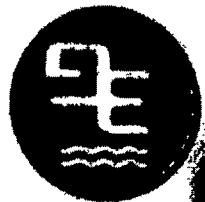
Return to remit address on reverse of coupon. Make sure remit address on reverse shows through window of supplied envelope.



MASTER METER
MADE IN ISRAEL

GALLONS

DS



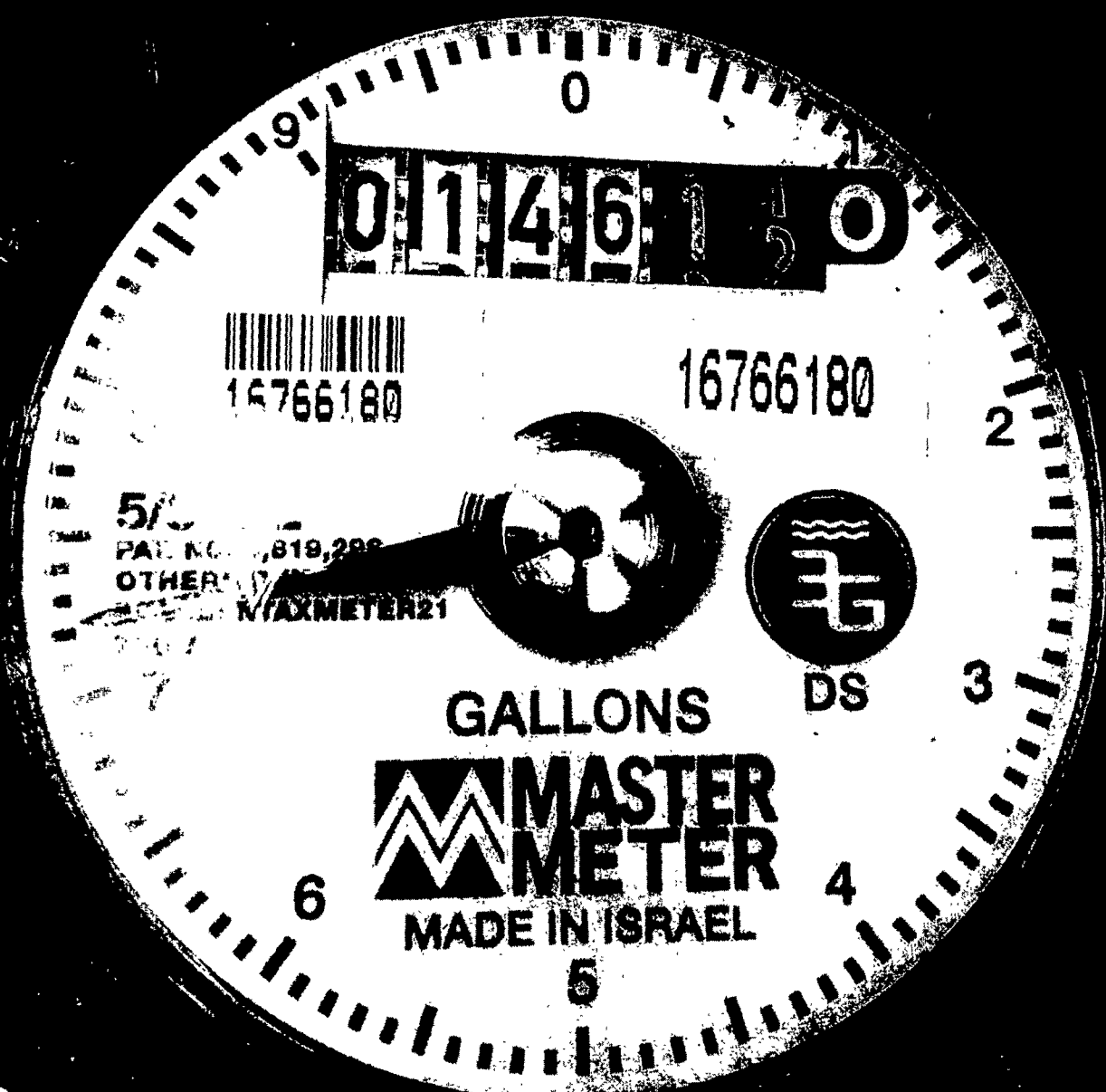
5/8" BL
PAT. NO. 6,819,292
OTHERS PE. DIN
FCC ID: N1
700.7

16766180

16766180



0



0 1 4 6

16766180

16766180

5/2
PAT. NO. 2,819,288
OTHER
MAXMETER21



GALLONS

DS

**MASTER
METER**

MADE IN ISRAEL

City Manager's Office
30360 Cougar Bend
Bulverde, Tx 78163
P:830-980-8832 F:830-438-4339
dbatts@bulverdetx.gov



02/08/2019

SWWC Utilities, Inc.
Attn: Managing Director
12535 Reed Rd.
Sugar Land, Texas 77478

Via U.S. Mail

Sue Wahl
4626 Evening Shadows Dr.
Bulverde TX 78163

Via email: [REDACTED]

RE: Customer Complaint
Customer Account Number: [REDACTED]
Customer Name: Sue Wahl
Customer Address: 4626 Evening Shadows Dr., Bulverde TX 78163

Greetings:

The City Council of the City of Bulverde will review and rule on the formal complaint submitted by Sue Wahl against SWWC Utilities, Inc. This action will take place on Tuesday, February 12, 2019 at 6:30 p.m. at City Hall, 30360 Cougar Bend, Bulverde, TX 78163. Neither party has requested a public hearing, but may choose to attend and speak, either in person or through legal counsel.

Sincerely,

Danny Batts,
City Manager

City Manager's Office
30360 Cougar Bend
Bulverde, Tx 78163
P:830-980-8832 F:830-438-4339
dbatts@bulverdetx.gov



02/14/2019

SWWC Utilities, Inc.
Attn: Managing Director
12535 Reed Rd.
Sugar Land, Texas 77478

Via U.S. Mail, Priority Express
No. 9470 1036 9930 0042 3218 30

Sue Wahl
4626 Evening Shadows Dr.
Bulverde TX 78163

Via email: s [REDACTED]

RE: Customer Complaint
Customer Account Number: [REDACTED]
Customer Name: Sue Wahl
Customer Address: 4626 Evening Shadows Dr., Bulverde TX 78163

Greetings:

This letter is to inform you that a Final Order has been issued relating to the above referenced complaint. Please see the enclosed certified copy of the Order for details relating to SWWC Utilities, Inc's responsibilities under the Order.

Sincerely,

Danny Batts,
City Manager

Enclosures:
City Council Order

CERTIFIED COPY
CITY OF BULVERDE
I certify that the attached is a true and correct copy of a record maintained by me as custodian of the records of the City of Bulverde as of 2/13/19
City Secretary: Maria Flores

COMPLAINT NO. 2018-01

COMPLAINT OF § BEFORE THE CITY COUNCIL
§
SUE WAHL, §
Complainant §
§ OF
AGAINST §
§
WATER SERVICES, INC, §
Respondent § BULVERDE, TEXAS

ORDER

On this, the 12 day of February, 2019, came to be heard before the City Council of the City of Bulverde, Texas (the "City") the complaint filed in the above-styled matter (the "**Complaint**") by Sue Wahl, Complainant, against Water Services, Inc., Respondent, filed with the City pursuant to Texas Water Code § 13.042 and Article 13.08, Code of Ordinances of the City of Bulverde, Texas ("**Article 13.08**"). Having considered the Complaint, the matters on file with the City, and the statements of the Complainant and the Respondent, if any, and the recommendations of City staff, if any, the City Council finds, determines, and orders as follows:

I.
FINDINGS OF FACT

The City Council makes the following findings of fact:

1. Respondent provides water service to Complainant at 4626 Evening Shadows Dr., Bulverde, Texas 78163, an address that is within the corporate limits of the City.
2. Complainant filed an informal complaint against Respondent on October 10, 2018 through the City's online Water Utility Billing Complaint portal alleging that Respondent overcharged Complainant for water services.
3. The City forwarded the informal complaint to Respondent on October 12, 2018.
4. Respondent replied to the Complaint on October 18, 2018 disputing the informal complaint.
5. Complainant filed a formal complaint on November 19, 2018 (the "**Complaint**").

6. On December 3, 2018, the City notified Complainant and Respondent that the City Council would consider the Complaint, requested a response within 30 days including all evidence that the Respondent wanted the City Council to consider, and informed Complainant and Respondent of the rules of procedure under Article 13.08.
7. Respondent filed its response with the City by letter dated December 19, 2018. The response did not request a hearing.
8. Because the Respondent did not request a hearing, pursuant to Section 13.07.004(c), Code of Ordinances of the City of Bulverde, Texas, the City Council heard the Complaint without following the formal hearing procedures and considered the information on file, the same being attached to this Order as Exhibit A, and the recommendation of staff, if any.
9. The City Council heard the complaint on the 12 day of February, 2019, at a meeting that was open to the public and at which meeting Complainant and Respondent were given the opportunity to appear in person or through an attorney.
10. Based on the information attached as Exhibit A, and the recommendation of City staff, if any, the City Council hereby finds that Respondent overcharged Complainant by in the amount of \$ 604,79.

II **CONCLUSIONS OF LAW**

The City Council makes the following conclusions of law:

1. Respondent is a utility under Texas Water Code § 13.002(23).
2. Respondent provides water service within the corporate boundaries of the City.
3. The City has exclusive original jurisdiction over the Complaint pursuant to Texas Water Code § 13.042.
4. Pursuant to Texas Water Code § 13.082(b), within its corporate limits, the City has the same regulatory powers under the same standards and rules as the Public Utility Commission of Texas (the "**Commission**") or other rules and standards not inconsistent with them.
5. The City is a home-rule municipality and adopted Article 13.08 setting forth the rules and standards pertaining to complaints against utilities, and such rules and standards are consistent with the Commission's rules.

6. This matter was processed was in accordance with Chapter 13, Texas Water Code, Article 13.08 and, to the extent applicable, the rules of the Commission, including but not limited to providing proper notice and an opportunity to be heard.

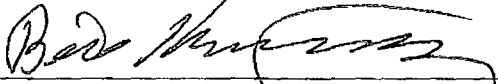
III
ORDER

In accordance with the above findings of fact and conclusions of law, it is hereby ORDERED that:

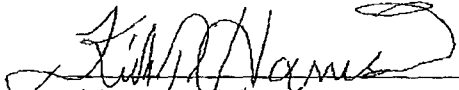
1. Respondent shall reduce any amounts owed to Respondent by Complainant, including amounts owed for the current billing cycle, by the amount of \$604.79 within 10 days of the date of this Order and make any necessary and appropriate credits or adjustments to Complainant's account with Respondent.
2. Respondent shall provide Complainant and the City with proof that the ordered reduction has been made within 30 days of the effective date of this Order.
3. Pursuant to Texas Water Code § 13.414, if Respondent fails to comply with this Order, then Respondent shall be liable to the City for a civil penalty of \$5,000.00 for each day that such failure continues.
4. The City Attorney, or the designee thereof, is hereby authorized to institute suit on behalf of the City in a court of competent jurisdiction to recover the civil penalty imposed under Texas Water Code § 13.414, enjoin a violation of this Order under Texas Water Code § 13.411, institute proceedings for contempt under Texas Water Code § 13.417, and to pursue any other remedy available at law or equity.
5. This Order is effective as of the date that it is signed.
6. This Order is the final order regarding the Complaint, and is appealable to the Commission pursuant to Title 16, Texas Administrative Code § 22.242(e)(1)(A)(ii)

SIGNED on the 12th day of February, 2019

CITY COUNCIL:



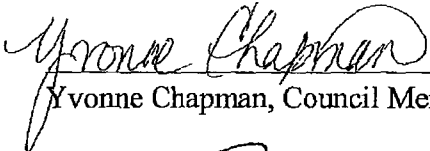
Bill Krawietz, Mayor



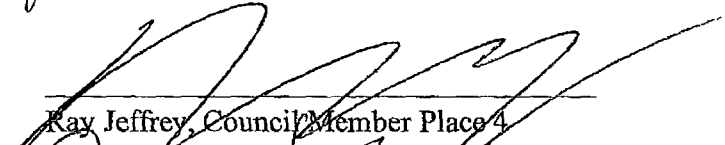
Kirk Harrison, Mayor Pro Tem

Absent

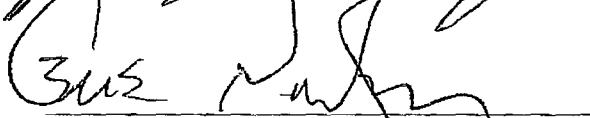
Robert Hurst, Council Member Place 1




Yvonne Chapman, Council Member Place 2



Kay Jeffrey, Council Member Place 4

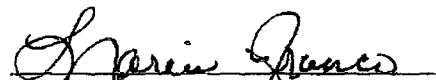


Gene Hartman, Council Member Place 5



Mechelle Salmon, Council Member Place 6

ATTEST:



Maria Franco, City Secretary

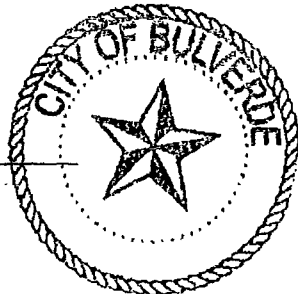


Exhibit "A"

City Manager's Office
30360 Cougar Bend
Bulverde, Tx 78163
P:830-980-8832 F:830-438-4339
dbatts@bulverdetx.gov



12/03/2018

SWWC Utilities, Inc.
Attn: Managing Director
12535 Reed Rd.
Sugar Land, Texas 77478

Via U.S. Mail, First Class, Postage Prepaid
Certified Mail No. 7018 0360 0001 1993 0066

Sue Wahl
4626 Evening Shadows Dr.
Bulverde TX 78163

Via email: swahl846@gmail.com

RE: Customer Complaint
Customer Account Number: 001000031673
Customer Name: Sue Wahl
Customer Address: 4626 Evening Shadows Dr., Bulverde TX 78163

Greetings:

The City of Bulverde (the "**City**") has received the enclosed complaint (the "**Complaint**") regarding the above utility customer (the "**Customer**") served by SWWC Utilities, Inc. (the "**Utility**"). Because the Customer's service address is within its municipal boundaries, the City has original jurisdiction over the Complaint pursuant to Texas Water Code § 13.042.

Pursuant to Article 13.08, Code of Ordinances of the City of Bulverde, Texas ("**Article 13.08**"), the City hereby notifies the Customer and the Utility as follows (as indicated by a mark next to the option selected):

- The City will not consider the Complaint. No further action will be taken or is necessary under Article 13.08. The Customer may file the Complaint with the Public Utility Commission of Texas pursuant to 16 Tex. Admin. Code § 22.242(e)(1)(A)(i).
- The City will consider the Complaint. Pursuant to Article 13.08, the Utility must submit a response to the City within thirty (30) days of the date of this correspondence. Such response may request a hearing and must include all evidence that the respondent wants the City Council to consider in resolving the complaint. If the response is not filed within the 30-day time limit, then the City Council will decide the complaint based on the contents of the complaint and the recommendation of City staff only. If respondent does not request a hearing, then the City Council will decide the complaint based on the information on file and the recommendation of City staff without a hearing. Any hearing regarding the

000087

Complaint shall be conducted in accordance with Article 13.08, a copy of which is enclosed.

The Utility must continue service to the Customer during the resolution of the Complaint. If service to the Customer has been discontinued, then the Utility must restore service to the Customer and continue service during the resolution of the Complaint.

Sincerely,

Danny Batts,
City Manager

Enclosures:
Complaint
Article 13.08

ARTICLE 13.08
WATER AND WASTEWATER UTILITY COMPLAINT PROCEDURES

13.08.001 Applicability

The procedures set forth in this Article apply to all complaints regarding water and wastewater utilities within the city limits of the City of Bulverde, Texas that are subject to the jurisdiction of the City pursuant to Texas Water Code § 13.042.

13.08.002 Definitions

In this Article, the following terms have the meaning ascribed to them below:

Affected person. Any person or entity whose utility service or rates are affected by any proceeding before the City under these Procedures.

City Council. The city council of the City of Bulverde, Texas.

Commission. The Public Utility Commission of Texas.

Commission rules. The rules and regulations adopted by the Commission and the provisions of the Texas Water Code pertaining to the Commission.

Complainant. A person that files a complaint with the City under these Procedures.

Complaint. An informal or formal complaint filed under these Procedures.

Person. Natural persons, organizations, government or governmental subdivision or agency, business trust, estate, trust, partnership, association, utility, and any other legal entity.

Procedures. The procedures and terms of this Article.

Respondent. The person against which a complaint is filed under these Procedures.

TAC. The Texas Administrative Code.

13.08.003 Complaints

(a) Availability. Any affected person may complain to the City in writing setting forth any act or thing done or omitted to be done by any person pertaining to water or wastewater rates, services, or operations under the jurisdiction of the City in violation or in claimed violation of any order, ordinance, rule, regulation, or law of the City or of the Commission over which the City has jurisdiction.

(b) Contents of Complaint. All complaints submitted under these Procedures must be submitted to the City in writing either by hand delivery, United States Postal Service, or via the City's online portal for such complaints, if any. The complainant must send a copy of the complaint to the respondent on the same date that the complaint is filed with the City. No complaint shall be considered received by the City unless and until the City receives the information specified in this subsection. All complaints submitted under these Procedures must contain the following information:

- (1) the name, address, telephone number, and email address, if available, of the complainant or complainants and of the complainant's representative, if any;
- (2) the name, address, telephone number, and email address of the respondent and the account number, or similar identifying information, of the complainant maintained by the respondent, if any;
- (3) a description of the facts that gave rise to the complaint;
- (4) a statement of the relief that the complainant is seeking;
- (5) all documentation or information supporting complainant's request for relief;
- (6) copies of all correspondence between complainant and the respondent; and
- (7) a statement that a copy of the complaint has been provided to the respondent.

(c) Informal Complaints.

(1) *Required; Exceptions.* All complaints must be submitted to the City for informal resolution by City staff before presenting a formal complaint to the City with the following exceptions:

- (A) the complainant is City staff or a governmental entity;
- (B) the complainant alleges that a water or sewer utility has abandoned the service of the utility;
- (C) the complainant alleges that a wholesale water or sewer provider has discontinued, reduced or impaired its wholesale water or sewer service to its customers for reasons other than those specified in 16 TAC § 24.88.
- (D) the complainant has requested and been granted a waiver of informal resolution by City staff. Such waiver request shall clearly state the reasons that informal resolution is not appropriate. City staff may only grant a waiver request for good cause.

(2) *Termination.* City staff shall attempt to informally resolve all complaints within 35 days of the date of receipt of the informal complaint. City staff shall notify, in writing, the complainant and respondent of the status of the dispute at or before the end of the 35-day period. Such notification shall include a copy of these Procedures or a link to a City website containing these procedures. If the complaint has not been resolved to the satisfaction of the complainant within the 35-day period, then the complainant may submit a formal complaint to the City Council.

(d) Formal Complaints. If an attempt at informal resolution fails, or is not required, the complainant may present a formal complaint to the City Council. If an informal complaint is required, a formal complaint must be filed within 10 days of receiving the notification required by subsection (c)(2) of this Section 13.08.003, above. If the formal complaint is not filed within the 10-day period required by this paragraph, the City Council will not consider the formal complaint and complainant may submit the complaint to the Commission pursuant to 16 TAC § 22.242(e)(1)(A)(i).

13.08.004 Formal Complaint Procedures

The following procedures apply to a formal complaint filed with the City:

- (a) Notice. Following receipt of a formal complaint, the City will notify the complainant and the respondent that the City has received the formal complaint and state whether or not the City will consider the complaint.
- (b) Declining to Consider. Notwithstanding anything to the contrary, if the notice states that the City will not consider the complaint, no further action will be taken or is necessary under these Procedures, and the complainant may file the complaint with the Commission pursuant to 16 TAC § 22.242(e)(1)(A)(i).
- (c) Response. Within 30 days of the date that the notice is delivered to respondent, respondent shall file a response to the complaint. If the respondent desires a hearing before the City Council, respondent must request such hearing in its response. If the respondent does not desire a hearing, then the response shall include all evidence that the respondent wants the City Council to consider in resolving the complaint. If the response is not filed within the 30-day time limit, then the City Council will decide the complaint based on the contents of the complaint and the recommendation of City staff only. If respondent does not request a hearing, then the City Council will decide the complaint based on the information on file and the recommendation of City staff without a hearing.
- (d) Hearing Procedures. If the respondent requests a hearing, then the City shall docket the hearing. The City shall provide the complainant and respondent with notice of the hearing date. The notice shall include a copy of these Procedures as well as a schedule governing the submittal of written testimony, conducting discovery, the hearing location and time, and any other matter pertaining to the complaint. Prior to sending the notice, the City may conduct a pre-hearing conference with the parties to determine the schedule and other matters to be contained in the schedule. The procedures applicable to the hearing under this subsection are as follows:
 - (1) *Written Testimony*. The parties shall submit written testimony to the City setting forth all issues of law and fact that supports the parties' cases. The City Council will consider all evidence and testimony that is useful in determining any matter.
 - (2) *Discovery*. The parties to the hearing may obtain information from each other through written requests for information, which include requests for