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Shaneka Busby Baker will be mentioned as Ms. Baker interchangeably throughout this document.

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PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION
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PUC Docket #51156

Response To The Veranda/ Counter-proposal

In The Veranda's most recent filing with the PUC; it has made a proposal to resolve the overbilling charges made on Shaneka Busby Baker's water and utilities account, which happens to also appear as overall charges consisting both as rent and utilities on **a)** my ConService statement (the monthly and contracted biller for both rent and utilities on behalf of The Veranda) and **b)** the rentcafe.com rental portal website, contracted rent ledger for The Veranda for tenant use.

Note- the rentcafe.com rental portal for tenants has the same to similar billing formats, given in a monthly breakdown for the following; rent, water usage amount, sewer and administrative fees.

The **crux** of the proposal made by The Veranda consists of The Veranda posting a **\$73/** monthly **credit**, **adjusting** the water bills **downward**, for **every** month through the time period of approximately **October 2019** through **July 2020**, that has an overcharge for water billing asserted by Shaneka Busby Baker, with provisions for an agreement for payment plan agreed upon between Ms. Baker and The Veranda.

Upon initial perusal by Ms. Baker; this proposal does have potential. However, as it *currently* stands- it is lacking 3 *additional* months of adjustment. Ms. Baker would love to believe that this merely an unintentional oversight, and feels that a simple modification to the proposal would demonstrate good faith on the part of The Veranda, to be fair, and upright as to put the matter swiftly and amicably behind both parties. It has already been more than a year since the matter has been unresolved.

Thus, the proposal should include adjustments made downward of \$73 for **each** and **every** month in which the overbilling occurred. For instance, the

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water usage charge reflecting on Ms. Baker's **rentcafe.com login** for her rent and utilities account- asserts water charges for **August 2020** of **\$61.07** with a correlating sewer charge of **\$60.66** with her bills continuing to be **similarly elevated through the month of October 2020.**

However, ConService informed Ms. Baker that the overbilling/ spike in usage **began** in the month of **September 2019** vs. October 2019 and billing for water usage and sewer reflects that this spike continued through **October 2020 vs July 2020. It is reasonable** to conclude that according to Ms. Baker's water bills; this spike for water usage and sewer charges continued for more than an entire year and **all without *The Veranda* hiring a professional, licensed plumber implementing testing in which to help determine the source of the leak,** and therefore her complaint escalated to the PUC stands with merit.

It is also *very very* important to note as **several authoritative, online plumbing sources addressing water leaks** suggest that generally the *first* indication for determining a water leak is **an (unusual) high water bill.** And this is what alerted Ms. Baker to address the issue initially with The Veranda- her bills suddenly escalated without a reasonable explanation. She'd already completed nearly a *2 years consecutive tenancy without issue* and consistent water bills until these unusual high bills.

Ms. Baker originally leased her apartment in 2017, with a **household member total of 4 adults**; by the time the elevated water bills *commenced* in the *early fall months of 2019* and **continued** throughout the *fall of 2020*; please note her household membership was **reduced by 2**. It is also worth mentioning further that generally a spike in water can occur in residential units commonly around the toilet. Plumbers seem to favor a 'dye' test in which to determine a leak in a toilet.

Ms. Baker requested maintenance for a faulty toilet a few times in 2019, also in 2020 and even most recently as February 2021; yet, the same **problematic toilet** has *never* been, to Ms. Baker's knowledge, tested with a 'dye' as recommended by online plumbing sources.

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Notwithstanding; the proposal *should be modified to include* making the monthly credit adjustment *downward* of **\$73 beginning** with *the month of **September 2019***, as aforementioned in Ms. Baker's original PUC complaint, **and continuing through October 2020.**

It is also imperative to note that billing with ConService, the contracted biller for The Veranda, bills *3 months behind (90 days)*, which was also mentioned in Ms. Baker's original PUC formal complaint.

This means that a bill generated, printed in [for example September] was actually from June's meter reading at The Veranda. This is what Ms. Baker was told by various ConService representatives during her multiple conversations with them, in efforts to find a timely resolve for the overbilling issues.

Ms. Baker would also like to see a ***final document*** that specifies the months for overbilling; specifies the monetary adjustments for each bill **downward** for months **September 2019 through October 2020**, ***after*** the **\$73** credit has been applied ***prior to*** accepting any proposal and the overall balance + payment history corrected to reflect the credits applied on **each of the following**; **A)** ConService monthly billing statement; **B)** the in-house rent ledger for The Veranda (its personal ledger system) and subsequently the ***rentcafe.com website portal*** for tenants, which Ms. Baker has access to.

This would ensure that ***accuracy for all months*** affected by overbilling is true correct and mutually agreed upon, prior to The Veranda and Ms. Baker accepting any subsequent proposal and entering an agreement for a payment plan.

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Last but not least; Ms. Baker has discovered that her December 2020 rent payment was misapplied. Her bank statement for December 2020 reflects a rent payment total of **\$387.00**, withdrawn. However, on the rentcafe.com rental portal for tenants reflects on Ms. Baker's account ***currently*** reflects the amount of \$106.80 applied towards her **rent in December**, which is incorrect. Ms. Baker requests that this amount is *promptly corrected--* **applying the shortage of \$280.20 to her December 2020 payment, in addition** to, the proposed adjustments of \$73 credited downward for each month of overbilling on her account. She also requests that this final document- subsequent agreement (should it procure) becomes a permanent record with the PUC ***and that her rental and payment records and history with The Veranda be restored to good standing.***

Respectfully submitted,
Shaneka Busby Baker