



Filing Receipt

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RATEPAYER COMMENTS/REQUESTS TO INTERVENE

If you wish to PROTEST the proposed rate change, you must complete this form and file it electronically using the PUC Interchange Filer (<http://www.puc.texas.gov/industry/filings/E-FilingInstructions.pdf>) or mail the original to:

**Filing Clerk
Public Utility Commission of Texas
1701 North Congress Avenue
P.O. Box 13326
Austin, Texas 78711-3326**

No hearing will be held and the rates will be effective as proposed unless protests are received from at least 10% of ratepayers or from any affected municipality, or the Commission Staff requests a hearing.

CUSTOMER INFORMATION (please provide all of the requested information)

First Name: JOSEPH Last Name: COOK

Phone Number: 4096592329 Fax Number: _____

Email Address: JMCOOK engr@reagan.com

Address, City, State: 22 WICKLOW DR. ORANGE TX 77632

Location where service is received: _____
(if different from the mailing address)

Please select the applicable :

I wish to PROTEST the following proposed rate action/s:

☒ I wish to be a COMMENTER. I understand that: I am NOT a party to this case; my comments are not considered evidence in this case; and I have no further obligation to participate in the proceeding. Public comments may help inform the PUCT of the public concerns and identify issues to be explored. Please provide comments below. Attach a separate page, if necessary.

SEE ATTACHED DOCUMENTS

☐ I am requesting to INTERVENE in this proceeding. As an INTERVENOR, I understand that: I am a party to the case; I am required to respond to all discovery requests from other parties; I may be required to attend hearings, and if I file testimony, I may be cross-examined in the hearing; if I file any documents in the case, I must provide a copy to every other party in the case; and I acknowledge that I am bound by the Procedural Rules of the PUCT and the State Office of Administrative Hearings (SOAH).

Signature of Ratepayer: Joseph M. Cook Date: 3/17/23

Si desea informacion en Espanol, puede llamar al
1-888-782-8477

Hearing- and speech-impaired individuals with text telephones may contact the PUCT's Customer Assistance Hotline
at
512-936-7136

March 17, 2023

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

RE: PUC DOCKET NO. 54565
RATEPAYER COMMENT/REQUEST TO INTERVENE

To Whom it May Concern:

First let me give you some information about myself. I have lived at this address for approximately 10 years. I am a licensed Professional Civil Engineer in the state of Texas and some other states. I have engineering knowledge about how these wastewater treatment systems work hydraulically. I do not have specific knowledge about the type of treatment system used at the small plant that is treating the wastewater in the subdivision where I live. I also have knowledge in the type of fresh water system that provides the fresh water to the homes in this subdivision. I have seen some of the equipment in this fresh water system located in my subdivision, and I have included some pictures with this document that I will reference in this document. I am not requesting to be a INTERVENE because of how difficult the Utility Commission makes it for the individual who would want to be an INTERVENER.

Some history on what I have witnessed during the time I have live in this subdivision is as follows. The former owner, North Orange Water and Sewer (NOW&S) of the water and wastewater system in this subdivision that CSWR Texas UOC LLC purchased it from never put any money into the system to improve the reliability of the water service or the wastewater system. Every time the power goes out in the area there is no water service and the wastewater backs up in the underground sewer pipes. Sometimes the wastewater comes into my house because the pump at the wastewater plant stops pumping from the sump into the above ground treatment tank. After the pump has no power and cannot pump the wastewater that is produce from people flushing their toilets (water left in toilet tank on toilet) and running water until the fresh water tank (at the fresh water plant) drains out from gravity because the tank is higher in elevation than the pipes in the houses. I was out of town for 6 months, and when I got home I found dry sludge in both bathtubs. Before I left I had the water turned off. A month after we got back my sewer pipe plugged up. NOW&S has a piece of equipment that uses a high velocity water coming out of a hose that they put into the sewer line to blow out plugs. This plugging happens a lot in the subdivision. NOW&S (the current person doing the maintenance for CSWR Texas UOC LLC) blew out my sewer line and then told me that roots from a tree in my yard caused the plug. I replaced a concrete slab porch in my back yard 1.5 years before, and my sewer line goes under the slab, and I know the type of plastic pipe plumbers used back when my house was built and it was not schedule 40 PVC and I know the pipe material will break down over time, so I replace the pipe before

I installed the new slab. I am a civil engineer but I was a carpenter that know every trade and I can design a house foundation, design the plumbing system, the structure, and the electrical. I can make the construction drawing for all trades. Finally, I can build the entire house, plumb the house, wire the house, and do all rest of what it takes to build the house with my own hands. I did all the work for the sewer line replacement and slab installation myself. The sewer pipe was around 14 inches below the ground. When I dug it up I saw that the roots from a very large Oak (50+ years old) tree that is about 15 foot away were even close to the depth of the pipe. The roots were about 4 inch deep. Since the plug was removed I have had no problems with my pipe plugging. The NOW&S man over maintenance did not tell me the truth, and would have cost me a lot of money and time to replace that section of the sewer line. Why does a company spend thousands of dollars on trailer mounted, gas operated high velocity water equipment if this plugging is not a normal occurrence? It is cheaper than fixing the real problem. The problem that causes an unreliable wastewater treatment system that cause poop to back up into people houses. What about their customers? I think what happened, is that while I was gone for six months, the wastewater pump stopped working, the wastewater and solids (toilet paper and human waste) backed up into the neighborhood pipes and into my house. When the pump started working again, some of the solids did not drain out of my pipes because I was not home to use water (flush toilets and shower) that would have probably washed the solids out of the pipe. The solids dried because the pipe was dry. When I returned home after 6 months and started using the toilet, the dried waste plug which did not completely plug the pipe, did not dislodge but let toilet paper and solids get stuck and eventually completely plugged the pipe. There is only my wife and I living at the house, this is why it took a month to completely plug the pipe. This was because when the power goes off, the wastewater pump stop working.

I have been informed by some of my neighbors who have live in this subdivision for approximately 30 years that North Orange water and Sewer was approved by this Public Utility Commission Texas to increase the rates they charged the residences of this subdivision for providing fresh water and treatment of the wastewater several time. My neighbors informed that that the basis of the rate increase request was that North Orange Water and Sewer would use it to improve the reliability utilities they provide. North Orange Water and Sewer was owned by the Manshake family who has live in North Orange for a few generations.

When I received a letter informing me that CSWR Texas UOC LLC was going to purchase North Orange Water and Sewer (NOW&S). I called CSWR Texas UOC LLC and no one answered. I left a message on their voice mail that they were buying a money pit if they went through with the purchase. I also informed them that NOW&S had not put any money into the maintenance and improvement of these water and wastewater systems. I informed them that both the water and wastewater underground pipes were leaking and would need to be replaced soon. I knew this because I had a water leak in the water pipe at the street at the end of my driveway. In addition, when it rains very hard as it does a lot in Orange Texas, the toilets do not flush normally and they gurgle because, I suspect, rainwater soaking into water saturated soil underground seep into the wastewater underground pipe through holes in the pipes. I left my phone number but never received a call back. The reason I provided this information to CSWR Texas UOC LLC is, that

with what I have witnessed, a new company would buy this money pit without inspecting the condition of the system they were purchasing or even contacting residences for information and when they found out they bought a money pit and raise our rates. It looks like this is exactly what is happening. Since CSWR Texas UOC LLC has made the purchase they have done nothing to improve the system.

This winter we had no water for a few days because the insulation that NOW&S probably put on the aboveground pipe before they sold it (I could see it was new) was air-conditioning duct insulation with no covering. CSWR Texas UOC LLC hired one of the owners of NOW&S to do the maintenance for them and he is the person that did the maintenance for NOW&S that probably put duct insulation on above ground pipe with no heat tracing, the incorrect type of insulation for steel water pipe, and no aluminum outside jacketing to protect the insulation. I have attached pictures of this to this document. I would not be surprised if this Utility Commission gave NOW&S a rate increase and NOW&S said they were going to heat trace and insulate the aboveground pipe so the water system did not go down due to pipes freezing. I would like to know if this Utility Commission ever inspected what NOW&S did with the rate increase money. One of the other rate increases was justified by having to buy electrical generators so that when the power goes out, we still have water as I mentioned before. In this document I have included a picture of generator that was located at the fresh water plant. It is not connected to any of the electrical equipment. It is rusting away and it looks like it is 20 years old.

It looks like to me the Public Utility Commission of Texas got sold a bunch of bologna and fell for it. In other words they did not do their job to watch out for the Public. Now I feel this commission is going to do it again. Why do the residence of this community have to pay for the bad investment that CSWR Texas UOC LLC made when they bought this business from NOW&S? If NOW&S did not disclose the true condition of the business they were selling, CSWR Texas UOC LLC should take NOW&S to court not make the residence of this subdivision pay for it. If the Utility commission wants to truly do what is best for the public, have CSWR Texas UOC LLC spend their profits and make the improvements to this system that benefit the residences of this community/subdivision and give them a reliable water and wastewater system first before letting them have a rate increase? I have seen what needs to be done to this system to have reliable power and freeze protection and the cost to do this is far-far less than less than what they will get from this rate increase. In fact, from the financial numbers I see in the information CSWR Texas UOC LLC provided in the letter I received, they could upgrade these systems for less than the profit they make in one year. They need to connect generators to the panel at the wastewater plant and at the water treatment plant. There is natural gas already in this subdivision and the gas company will run the gas line to generator location for free. I know because they ran it to my house for free and to my neighbor's house for generators they installed. My neighbors did the electrical tie-in to their power panel themselves, so how much do you think an electrician will charge maybe a couple thousands of dollars. Installing electrical heat tracing and insulating the aboveground pipe, and installing metal jacketing is maybe \$10,000. There is not that much pipe. All of this work to make this system reliable is less than \$100,000.00. I do

not think there are many subdivisions water and wastewater systems that CSWR Texas UOC LLC purchased from NOW&S. Why do they need a rate increase? They are not going to fix the underground pipe or replace it until they start getting fined by the state or the TCEQ makes them do it.

I have spent a few hours to provide this information to you. I hope it has been a waste of my time. I feel the fairest and most logical way to approach this is to have CSWR Texas UOC LLC spend their money to make their system more reliable to the customer, the Utility Commission audits the actual cost for the upgrades, asks for input from the customer to make sure the reliability has actually improved, and based on this investigation, determines if a rate increase is needed or justified. I think the Utility Commission will find that even with CSWR Texas UOC LLC having to spend their money to make the improvements, it will not justify a rate increase it will only increase their profits. I hope the Utility Commission does their job this time, and protects this community/subdivision from a company that made a poor investment and wants their customers to make them whole and even more by increasing their profits. Currently what I see is that companies are increasing the cost to the consumer, making more profits, while wages are not going up, and if they are going up, it is no where near the approximately 50% increase CSWR Texas UOC LLC is asking for. I hope the Utility Commission notices they are not raising the rate on the water charge of the bill, they are raising the rate on the cost to have water service. If the Utility Commission decides, at some time, (after the logical approach is completed) to allow a rate increase it should be temporary, and a detailed and measurable description of what the rate increase is going to be spent should be required so that after the improvements are completed, the rate goes back to what it was before it was temporally increased. This should be a contract or legal document that the customers of CSWR Texas UOC LLC receive a copy of before the rate increase goes into affect. My water bill is the highest utility bill I have, and it is the least reliable utility I have. That should tell you something. If you want more information, please call. My phone number is 409-659-2329.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Joseph M. Cook". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Joseph M. Cook P.E.