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DOCKET NO. 54947

APPLICATION OF EMERALD HILLS	§	PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION
WATER FOR A CERTIFICATE OF	§	
CONVENIENCE AND NECESSITY IN	§	OF TEXAS
SAN PATRICIO COUNTY	§	

COMMISSION STAFF'S FINAL RECOMMENDATION

On May 1, 2023, Emerald Hills Water (Emerald Hills) filed an application to obtain a water certificate of convenience and necessity (CCN) in San Patricio County. Emerald Hills filed supplemental information on May 22, 2023, June 29, 2023, July 7, 2023, August 4, 2023, August 24, 2023, and October 4, 2023.

On October 19, 2023, the administrative law judge (ALJ) filed Order No. 6, directing the Staff (Staff) of the Public Utility Commission of Texas (Commission) to file a final recommendation on the application by December 21, 2023. Therefore, this pleading is timely filed.

I. FINAL RECOMMENDATION

Staff has reviewed the application and as detailed in the attached memorandum of Jolie Mathis, Infrastructure Division, and Fred Bednarski, Rate Regulation Division, recommends that it be approved. Staff's review indicates that Emerald Hills meets the applicable technical, managerial, and financial requirements of Chapter 13 of the Texas Water Code and Title 16, Chapter 24 of the Texas Administrative Code (TAC), and therefore, the approval of the application is necessary for the service, accommodation, convenience, and safety of the public.

In addition, in order to true-up the proposed tap fees and rates, Staff recommends that Emerald Hills file a rate application with actual financial information with the Commission within 18 months from the date service begins per 16 TAC § 24.25(b)(1)(C).

On or before January 4, 2023, the parties will file agreed proposed findings of fact and conclusions of law.

II. CONCLUSION

For the reasons discussed above, Staff respectfully recommends approval of the application. Staff respectfully requests the entry of an order consistent with this pleading.

Date: December 20, 2023

Respectfully submitted,

**PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION OF TEXAS
LEGAL DIVISION**

Marisa Lopez Wagley
Division Director

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Managing Attorney

/s/ David Berlin
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DOCKET NO. 54947

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I certify that unless otherwise ordered by the presiding officer, notice of the filing of this document was provided to all parties of record via electronic mail on December 20, 2023 in accordance with the Second Order Suspending Rules, issued in Project No. 50664.

/s/ David Berlin
David Berlin

Public Utility Commission of Texas

Memorandum

TO: David Berlin, Attorney
Legal Division

FROM: Jolie Mathis, Utility Engineering Specialist
Infrastructure Division

DATE: December 20, 2023

RE: Docket No. 54947 – *Application of Emerald Hills Water for a Certificate of Convenience and Necessity in San Patricio County*

1. Application

On May 1, 2023, Emerald Hills Water (Emerald Hills) filed with the Public Utility Commission of Texas (Commission) an application to obtain a water certificate of convenience and necessity (CCN) in San Patricio County, Texas under Texas Water Code (TWC) §§ 13.242 through 13.250 and 16 Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §§ 24.225 through 24.237.

Based on the mapping review by Dave Babicki, Infrastructure Division:

- The requested area includes 62 customer connections and approximately 81.2 acres, comprised of uncertificated area to amend (add) to Emerald Hills and the issuance of water CCN number.
- The application proposes the addition of approximately 81.2 acres and the issuance of water CCN number to Emerald Hills.

2. Notice

Affidavits were provided affirming that notices were submitted to neighboring system, customers, and cities, and that there is one landowner in the requested area. A map indicating the location of each landowner was also provided.

The deadline to intervene was September 25, 2023; there were no motions to intervene, protests, or opt-out requests received.

3. Factors Considered

Under TWC §§ 13.241 and 13.246, and 16 TAC §§ 24.11(e) and 24.227, the Commission must consider certain factors when granting or amending a water or sewer CCN. Therefore, the following factors were considered.

3.1. *Consideration of the adequacy of service currently provided to the requested area and system compliance (TWC § 13.246(c)(1); 16 TAC § 24.227(a) and (e)(1)).*

Customers in the requested area currently receive service from Emerald Hill's Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) approved public water system (PWS) registered as Emerald Hills RV Park, PWS ID No. 2050077. Emerald Hills has one violation listed in the TCEQ database that has since been resolved.

No additional construction is necessary for Emerald Hills to serve the requested area. The Commission's complaint records, which go back 5 years, show no complaints against Emerald Hills.

3.2. *Consideration of the need for additional service in the requested area (TWC § 13.246(c)(2); 16 TAC § 24.227(e)(2)).*

There is a need for service as there are 62 existing customers in the requested area.

3.3. *Consideration of the effect of granting an amendment on the recipient of the certificate or amendment, on the landowners in the area, and on any other retail public utility of the same kind already servicing the proximate area (TWC §§ 13.241(b) and 13.246(c)(3), 16 TAC § 24.227(e)(3)).*

Emerald Hills will be the certificated entity for the requested area and will be required to provide continuous and adequate service to the requested area.

The landowners in the area will have a water provider available when they need to request water service.

There will be no effect on any retail public utility servicing the proximate area. All retail public utilities in the proximate area were provided notice of the CCN amendment requested in this application and did not request to intervene.

3.4. *Consideration of the managerial and technical ability of the applicant to provide adequate service (TWC § 13.246(c)(4); 16 TAC § 24.227(a) and (e)(4)).*

TCEQ rule, 30 TAC § 290.46, Minimum Acceptable Operating Practices for Public Drinking Water Systems, requires the operation of a public water system by trained and licensed personnel. The production, treatment, and distribution facilities at the public water system must be operated at all times under the direct supervision of a water works operator who holds an applicable, valid license issued by the TCEQ executive director. The licensed operator of a public water system may be an employee, contractor, or volunteer. Emerald Hills will have qualified TCEQ licensed operators licensed in water treatment to run the acquired systems.

Emerald Hills will have licensed operators to run the system operations. A Class A operator will be the responsible operator for the system.

3.5. *The applicants' demonstration that regionalization or consolidation with another retail public utility is not economically feasible when construction of a physically separate water or sewer system is required to provide service to the requested area. (TWC § 13.241(d); 16 TAC § 24.227(b)).*

Construction of a physically separate water system is not required to provide service to the requested area.

3.6. *Consideration of the feasibility of obtaining service from an adjacent retail public utility (TWC § 13.246(c)(5); 16 TAC § 24.227(e)(5)).*

Emerald Hills is currently serving customers in the requested area, has facilities in the requested area to serve any future customers, and has sufficient capacity. Therefore, it is not feasible to obtain service from an adjacent retail public utility.

3.7. *An application for a certificate of public convenience and necessity or for an amendment to a certificate must contain: a capital improvements plan, including a budget and estimated timeline for construction of all facilities necessary to provide full service to the entire proposed service area (TWC § 13.244(d)(3)).*

There are no improvements necessary to provide continuous and adequate service to the requested area therefore a capital improvements plan is not necessary.

3.8. *Consideration of the financial ability of the applicant to pay for facilities necessary to provide continuous and adequate service (TWC § 13.246(c)(6); 16 TAC §§ 24.227(a) and (e)(6), 24.11(e)).*

The Rate Regulation Division will be addressing this criterion in a separate memo.

3.9 *Requirement of the applicant to provide a bond or other financial assurance in a form and amount specified by the Commission to ensure that continuous and adequate utility service is provided (TWC §§ 13.246(d); 16 TAC § 24.227(f)).*

The Rate Regulation Division will be addressing this criterion in a separate memo.

3.10. *Consideration of the environmental integrity and the effect on the land to be included in the certificated area (TWC § 13.246(c)(7) and (9); and 16 TAC § 24.227(e)(7) and (9)).*

The environmental integrity of the land will not be affected as no additional construction is needed to provide service to the requested area.

3.11. *Consideration of the probable improvement in service or lowering of cost to consumers (TWC § 13.246(c)(8); 16 TAC § 24.227(e)(8)).*

Emerald Hills will continue to provide water service to the existing customers in the area. There will be no change in the quality or cost of service to customers.

In order to true-up the proposed tap fees and rates, I recommend that Emerald Hills file a rate application with actual financial information with the Commission within 18 months from the date service begins per 16 TAC § 24.25(b)(1)(C).

4. Recommendation

Based on the mapping review by Dave Babicki, Infrastructure Division, and my technical and managerial review, I recommend that Emerald Hills meets all of the statutory requirements of

Texas Water Code Chapter 13 and the Commission's Chapter 24 rules and regulations, is capable of providing continuous and adequate service. I further recommend that approving this application to obtain a water CCN No. 13314 is necessary for the service, accommodation, convenience and safety of the public.

Emerald Hills consented to the attached map, tariff, and certificate on December 19, 2023.

Public Utility Commission of Texas

Memorandum

TO: David Berlin, Attorney
Legal Division

FROM: Fred Bednarski III, Financial Analyst
Rate Regulation Division

DATE: December 20, 2023

RE: Docket No. 54947 *Application of Emerald Hills Water for a Certificate of Convenience and Necessity in San Patricio County*

On May 1, 2023, Emerald Hills Water (Emerald Hills) filed an application for a water certificate of convenience and necessity in San Patricio County under Subchapter G of Texas Water Code Chapter 13.

An owner or operator of a retail public utility must have the financial resources to operate and manage the utility and to provide continuous and adequate service to the current and requested utility service areas, as established by 16 Texas Administrative Code (TAC) § 24.11. Emerald Hills must demonstrate that it meets one of the five leverage tests under 16 TAC § 24.11(e)(2) as well as the operations test under 16 TAC § 24.11(e)(3).

An owner or operator of a retail public utility must have the financial resources to operate and manage the utility and to provide continuous and adequate service to the current and requested utility service areas, as established by 16 Texas Administrative Code (TAC) § 24.11. Emerald Hills must demonstrate that it meets one of the five leverage tests under 16 TAC § 24.11(e)(2) as well as the operations test under 16 TAC § 24.11(e)(3).

Leverage Test

My analysis is based on Emerald Hills's financial projected financial statements. Based upon my review of the financial statements, I calculate the debt-to-equity ratio to be 0.75. The debt-to-equity ratio is based on long-term debt of \$15,000 divided by equity of \$19,999.¹ Because

¹ Cover letter revised financial projection to replace the other due to corrections at pdf 2 (Aug. 4, 2023).

the ratio is less than one, I recommend a finding that Emerald Hills meets the leverage test specified in 16 TAC § 24.11(e)(2)(A).

Operations Test

An owner or operator must demonstrate sufficient available cash to cover projected cash shortages for operations and maintenance expense during the first five years of operations, as required by 16 TAC § 24.11(e)(3).

Emerald Hills provided financial projections indicating no cash shortages to cover for the first five years of operations.² Therefore, I recommend a finding that Emerald Hills meets the operations test specified in 16 TAC § 24.11(e)(3).

Capital Improvements

Per the memorandum provided by Jolie Mathis, Infrastructure Analyst, no capital improvements are required to provide continuous and adequate water service to the requested area. Therefore, I recommend a finding that Emerald Hills should not be required to provide loan approval documents or a firm capital commitment and meets the requirements specified in 16 TAC § 24.11(e)(5)(B) and if necessary, a good cause exception should be granted.

Recommendation

Because Emerald Hills meets the financial tests, I do not recommend that the Commission require additional financial assurance.

Consequently, I recommend a finding that Emerald Hills demonstrates the financial and managerial capability needed to provide continuous and adequate service to the area subject to this application. My conclusions are based on information provided by Emerald Hills before the date of this memorandum and may not reflect any changes in Emerald Hills's status after this review.

² *Id.* at pdf 2 and 3.



WATER UTILITY TARIFF

Docket Number 54947

Emerald Hills Water

(Utility Name)

23934 CR 704

(Business Address)

Mathis, TX 78368

(City, State, Zip Code)

(361)537-8890

(Area Code/Telephone)

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

13314

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

San Patricio

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

n/a

This tariff is effective in the following subdivisions or systems:

Emerald Hills Water

TABLE OF CONTENTS

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

SECTION 1.0 -- RATE SCHEDULE	2
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APPENDIX A – DROUGHT CONTINGENCY PLAN

APPENDIX B – APPLICATION FOR SERVICE

NOTE: Appendix A – Drought Contingency Plan (DCP) is approved by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ); however the DCP is included as part of your approved tariff pursuant to PUCT rules. If you are establishing a tariff for the first time, please contact the TCEQ to complete and submit a DCP for approval.

SECTION 1.0 – RATE SCHEDULESection 1.01 - Rates

<u>Meter Size</u>	<u>Monthly Minimum Charge</u> (Includes <u>0</u> gallons)	<u>Gallonage Charge</u>
5/8"	<u>\$35.87</u>	<u>\$3.50</u> per 1,000 gallons for first 3,000 gallons <u>\$4.66</u> per 1,000 gallons from 3,001 gallons to 5,000 gallons <u>\$5.27</u> per 1,000 gallons from 5,001 gallons and above

FORM OF PAYMENT: The utility will accept the following forms of payment:

Cash X, Check X, Money Order X, Credit Card X, Other (specify)

THE UTILITY MAY REQUIRE EXACT CHANGE FOR PAYMENTS AND MAY REFUSE TO ACCEPT PAYMENTS MADE USING MORE THAN \$1.00 IN SMALL COINS. A WRITTEN RECEIPT WILL BE GIVEN FOR CASH PAYMENTS. AT THE CUSTOMER'S OPTION, ANY BILLING TRANSACTION OR COMMUNICATION MAY BE PERFORMED ON THE INTERNET. THIS INCLUDES THE UTILITY SENDING PAPERLESS BILLS BY EMAIL.

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

SECTION 1.0 -- RATE SCHEDULE (CONTINUED)**Section 1.02 – Miscellaneous Fees**

TAP FEE \$350.00

TAP FEE IS BASED ON THE AVERAGE OF THE UTILITY'S ACTUAL COST FOR MATERIALS AND LABOR FOR STANDARD RESIDENTIAL CONNECTION OF 5/8" METER PLUS UNIQUE COSTS AS PERMITTED BY PUCT RULE AT COST.

TAP FEE (Unique costs) Actual Cost

FOR EXAMPLE, A ROAD BORE FOR CUSTOMERS OUTSIDE OF SUBDIVISIONS OR RESIDENTIAL AREAS.

LARGE METER TAP FEE Actual Cost

TAP FEE IS BASED ON THE UTILITY'S ACTUAL COST FOR MATERIALS AND LABOR FOR METERS LARGER THAN STANDARD 5/8" METERS.

RECONNECTION FEE

THE RECONNECT FEE WILL BE CHARGED BEFORE SERVICE CAN BE RESTORED TO A CUSTOMER WHO HAS BEEN DISCONNECTED FOR THE FOLLOWING REASONS:

a) Non-payment of bill (Maximum \$25.00) \$25.00

b) Customer's request \$50.00

or other reasons listed under Section 2.0 of this tariff

TRANSFER FEE \$5.00

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

LATE CHARGE 10%

A ONE-TIME PENALTY MAY BE MADE ON DELINQUENT BILLS BUT MAY NOT BE APPLIED TO ANY BALANCE TO WHICH THE PENALTY WAS APPLIED IN A PREVIOUS BILLING.

RETURNED CHECK CHARGE \$30.00

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

COMMERCIAL AND NON-RESIDENTIAL DEPOSIT 1/6TH ESTIMATED ANNUAL BILL

METER TEST FEE (actual cost of testing the meter up to) \$25.00

THIS FEE MAY BE CHARGED IF A CUSTOMER REQUESTS A SECOND METER TEST WITHIN A TWO-YEAR PERIOD AND THE TEST INDICATES THAT THE METER IS RECORDING ACCURATELY.

METER RELOCATION FEE Actual Relocation Cost

THIS FEE MAY BE CHARGED IF A CUSTOMER REQUESTS RELOCATION OF AN EXISTING METER.

METER CONVERSION FEE Actual Cost to Convert Meter

THIS FEE MAY BE CHARGED IF A CUSTOMER REQUESTS CHANGE OF SIZE OF AN EXISTING METER OR CHANGE IS REQUIRED BY MATERIAL CHANGE IN CUSTOMERS SERVICE DEMAND.

SEASONAL RECONNECTION FEE:

BASE RATE FOR METER SIZE TIMES NUMBER OF MONTHS OFF THE SYSTEM NOT TO EXCEED SIX MONTHS WHEN LEAVE AND RETURN WITHIN A TWELVE MONTH PERIOD.

SECTION 1.0 -- RATE SCHEDULE (CONTINUED)

Section 1.02 – Miscellaneous Fees (Continued)

LINE EXTENSION AND CONSTRUCTION CHARGES:

REFER TO SECTION 3.02 POLICY FOR TERMS, CONDITIONS, AND CHARGES.

GOVERNMENTAL TESTING, INSPECTION AND COSTS SURCHARGE CLAUSE:

WHEN AUTHORIZED IN WRITING BY PUCT AND AFTER NOTICE TO CUSTOMERS, THE UTILITY MAY INCREASE RATES TO RECOVER INCREASED COSTS FOR INSPECTION FEES AND WATER TESTING [16 TEXAS ADMINISTRATIVE CODE (TAC) § 24.25(b)(2)(G)].

SUPPLEMENTAL EMERGENCY SERVICE FEE

APPLICABLE TO NONRESIDENTIAL WATER SERVICE CUSTOMERS WHO REQUIRE SUPPLEMENTAL SERVICE OVER AND ABOVE THEIR EXISTING WATER SERVICE FROM TIME TO TIME. USAGE IS TO BE DETERMINED BY CUSTOMER. THE MINIMUM DIAMETER FOR SUPPLEMENTAL SERVICE METER SHALL BE 2 INCHES.

METER TAMPERING, DAMAGE OR DIVERSION FEE:

ONE TIME PENALTY PER OCCURRENCE FOR TAMPERING WITH OR DAMAGING A WATER METER OR ANY APPURTENANCE THERE TO INCLUDING LOCKS AND METER BOXES OR SERVICE DIVERSION OF ONE HUNDRED DOLLARS (\$100.00).

SECTION 2.0 - SERVICE RULES AND REGULATIONS

The utility will have the most current Public Utility Commission of Texas (PUCT or commission) rules relating to Water and Wastewater Utility regulations, available at its office for reference purposes. The Rules and this tariff shall be available for public inspection and reproduction at a reasonable cost. The latest Rules or commission approved changes to the Rules supersede any rules or requirements in this tariff.

Section 2.01 - Application for Water Service

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

Section 2.02 - Refusal of Service

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

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

(A) Customer Deposits

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

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

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

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

SECTION 2.0 - SERVICE RULES AND REGULATIONS (CONTINUED)**Section 2.03 - Fees and Charges & Easements Required Before Service Can Be Connected (Continued)****(B) Tap or Reconnect Fees**

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

Fees in addition to the regular tap fee may be charged if listed specifically in Section 1 to cover unique costs not normally incurred as permitted by 16 TAC § 24.163(a)(1)(C). For example, a road bore for customers outside a subdivision or residential area could be considered a unique cost.

(C) Easement Requirement

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

Section 2.04 - Utility Response to Applications for Service

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

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

SECTION 2.0 - SERVICE RULES AND REGULATIONS (CONTINUED)**Section 2.05 - Customer Responsibility**

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

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

Section 2.06 - Customer Service Inspections

Applicants for new service connections or facilities which have undergone extensive plumbing modifications are required to furnish the utility a completed customer service inspection certificate. The inspection certificate shall certify that the establishment is in compliance with the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) Rules and Regulations for Public Water Systems, Title 30 TAC § 290.46(j). The utility is not required to perform these inspections for the applicant/customer, but will assist the applicant/customer in locating and obtaining the services of a certified inspector.

Section 2.07 - Back Flow Prevention Devices

No water connection shall be allowed to any residence or establishment where an actual or potential contamination hazard exists unless the public water facilities are protected from contamination by either an approved air gap, backflow prevention assembly, or other approved device. The type of device or backflow prevention assembly required shall be determined by the specific potential hazard identified in 30 TAC § 290.47(f) Appendix F, Assessment of Hazards and Selection of Assemblies of the TCEQ Rules and Regulations for Public Water Systems.

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

At any residence or establishment where it has been determined by a customer service inspection, that there is no actual or potential contamination hazard, as referenced in 30 TAC § 290.47(f) Appendix F, Assessment of Hazards and Selection of Assemblies of the TCEQ Rules and Regulations for Public Water Systems, then a backflow prevention assembly or device is not required. Outside hose bibs do require, at a minimum, the installation and maintenance of a working atmospheric vacuum breaker.

SECTION 2.0 - SERVICE RULES AND REGULATIONS (CONTINUED)**Section 2.07 - Back Flow Prevention Devices (continued)**

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

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

Section 2.08 - Access to Customer's Premises

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

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

Section 2.09 - Meter Requirements, Readings, and Testing

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

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

SECTION 2.0 - SERVICE RULES AND REGULATIONS (CONTINUED)Section 2.09 - Meter Requirements, Readings, and Testing (continued)

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

Section 2.10 - Billing(A) Regular Billing

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

(B) Late Fees

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

(C) Information on Bill

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

(D) Prorated Bills

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

SECTION 2.0 - SERVICE RULES AND REGULATIONS (CONTINUED)

Section 2.11- Payments

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

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

Section 2.12 - Service Disconnection

(A) With Notice

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

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

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

B) Without Notice

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

Section 2.13 - Reconnection of Service

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

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

Section 2.14 - Service Interruptions

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

SECTION 2.0 - SERVICE RULES AND REGULATIONS (CONTINUED)

Section 2.15 - Quality of Service

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

Section 2.16 - Customer Complaints and Disputes

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

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

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

Section 2.17 - Customer Liability

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

SECTION 3.0--EXTENSION POLICY

Section 3.01 - Standard Extension Requirements

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

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

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

Section 3.02 - Costs Utilities and Service Applicants Shall Bear

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

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

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

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

Exceptions may be granted by the PUCT if:

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

SECTION 3.0--EXTENSION POLICY (CONTINUED)**Section 3.02 - Costs Utilities and Service Applicants Shall Bear (continued)**

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

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

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

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

Section 3.03 - Contributions in Aid of Construction

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

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

SECTION 3.0--EXTENSION POLICY (CONTINUED)**Section 3.03 - Contributions in Aid of Construction (continued)**

Any service extension to a subdivision (recorded or unrecorded) may be subject to the provisions and restrictions of 16 TAC § 24.163(d). When a developer wishes to extend the system to prepare to service multiple new connections, the charge shall be the cost of such extension, plus a pro-rata charge for facilities which must be committed to such extension compliant with the TCEQ minimum design criteria. As provided by 16 TAC § 24.163(d)(4), for purposes of this section, commercial, industrial, and wholesale customers shall be treated as developers.

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

- Under a contract and only in accordance with the terms of the contract; or
- if service is not being provided to a lot or lots within two years after installation of facilities necessary to provide service to the lots has been completed and if the standby fees are included on the utilities approved tariff after a rate change application has been filed. The fees cannot be billed to the developer or collected until the standby fees have been approved by the commission or executive director.

for purposes of this section, a manufactured housing rental community can only be charged standby fees under a contract or if the utility installs the facilities necessary to provide individually metered service to each of the rental lots or spaces in the community.

Section 3.04 - Appealing Connection Costs

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

Section 3.05 - Applying for Service

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

SECTION 3.0--EXTENSION POLICY (CONTINUED)**Section 3.05 - Applying for Service (continued)**

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

Section 3.06 - Qualified Service Applicant

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

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

Section 3.07 - Developer Requirements

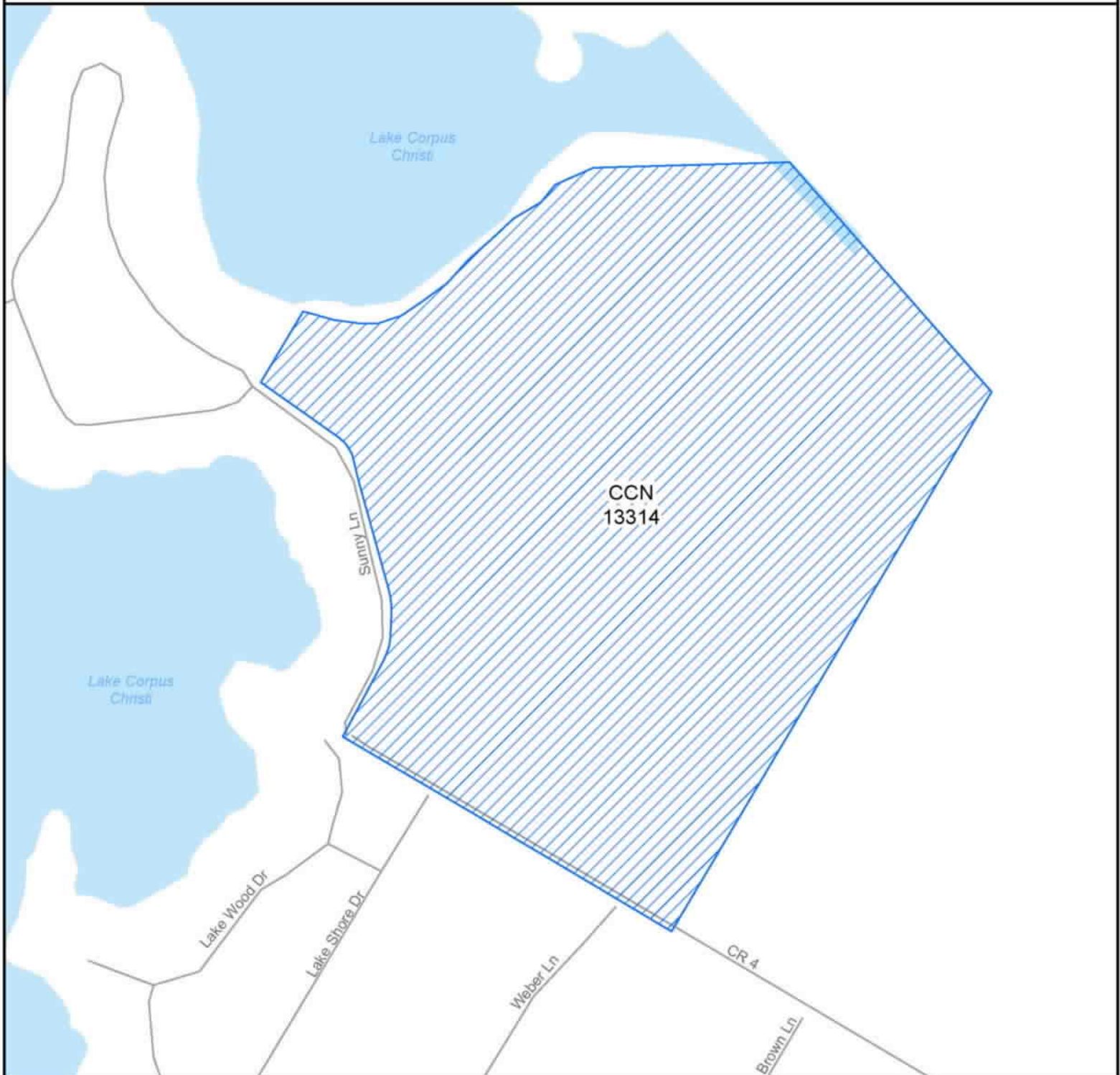
As a condition of service to a new subdivision, the utility shall require a developer (as defined by PUCT rule) to provide permanent recorded public utility easements as a condition of service to any location within the developer's property.

APPENDIX A - DROUGHT CONTINGENCY PLAN

(This page incorporates by reference the utility's Drought Contingency Plan, as approved and periodically amended by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality.)

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

PUCT Docket No. 54947
Emerald Hills Water
Water CCN No. 13314
Obtain New Water CCN in San Patricio County



Water CCN

 13314 - Emerald Hills Water

0 225 450
Feet





Public Utility Commission of Texas

By These Presents Be It Known To All That

Emerald Hills Water

having obtained certification to provide water utility service for the convenience and necessity of the public, and it having been determined by this Commission that the public convenience and necessity would in fact be advanced by the provision of such service, Emerald Hills Water is entitled to this

Certificate of Convenience and Necessity No. 13314

to provide continuous and adequate water utility service to that service area or those service areas in San Patricio County as by final Order or Orders duly entered by this Commission, which Order or Orders resulting from Docket No. 54947 are on file at the Commission offices in Austin, Texas; and are matters of official record available for public inspection; and be it known further that these presents do evidence the authority and the duty of the Emerald Hills Water to provide such utility service in accordance with the laws of this State and Rules of this Commission, subject only to any power and responsibility of this Commission to revoke or amend this Certificate in whole or in part upon a subsequent showing that the public convenience and necessity would be better served thereby.