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July 6th, 2025

Texas Public Utility Commission 1701 N. Congress Avenue Austin, TX 78701

RE: Formal Complaint Regarding Aqua Texas Proposed Rate Increase in Docket 58124

Dear Commissioners:

I am writing to formally object to the proposed water rate increase submitted by Aqua Texas that would dramatically increase residential water rates in our service area. As a customer directly affected by this proposal, I urge the Commission to thoroughly investigate and reject this excessive rate hike.

The Proposed Increase Is Unreasonable and Excessive

The proposed rate structure would increase our current water bills by 200% to 500% over existing rates. This represents an unprecedented and unjustifiable burden on residential customers who are already facing economic pressures from inflation and rising costs of living. Such a dramatic increase far exceeds any reasonable measure of inflation, cost of service adjustments, or infrastructure improvements.

Lack of Justification for Such Extreme Increases

Aqua Texas has failed to provide adequate justification for why such extreme rate increases are necessary. Customers deserve transparency about:

- Specific infrastructure improvements requiring funding
- Detailed cost-benefit analysis of proposed projects
- Comparison with industry standards and rates charged by comparable utilities
- Evidence that the company has pursued cost-effective alternatives
- Demonstration that existing rates are insufficient for safe, reliable service

Impact on Customers and Community

This rate increase would create significant financial hardship for families, seniors on fixed incomes, and small businesses in our community. Water is an essential service, not a luxury, and rates must remain affordable for all customers. The proposed increases would:

- Force difficult choices between paying water bills and other necessities
- Disproportionately impact low-income households
- Potentially drive customers to unsafe alternatives for water access
- Harm local economic development and property values

Request for Commission Action

I respectfully request that the Public Utility Commission:

1. **Reject the proposed rate increase** as excessive and unjustified
2. **Require Aqua Texas to provide detailed documentation** supporting any rate adjustment request
3. **Conduct thorough public hearings** in affected communities before considering any rate changes
4. **Implement rate caps** to prevent future excessive increases
5. **Investigate alternative solutions** that would address legitimate infrastructure needs without burdening customers

Customer Rights and Regulatory Responsibility

The Commission has a duty to ensure that utility rates are just, reasonable, and in the public interest. The proposed rate structure fails this standard and would constitute an abuse of Aqua Texas's monopoly position in our service area.

I urge you to stand with Texas families and businesses by rejecting this proposed rate increase and requiring Aqua Texas to demonstrate genuine need and cost-effectiveness before approving any future rate adjustments.

Thank you for your consideration of this critical matter affecting our community. I look forward to your response and to the Commission's protection of customer interests in this proceeding.

Sincerely,
Joseph L Becnel