

Pine Valley Irrigation Company:
March 10, 2010

UTAH PUBLIC
SERVICE COMMISSION

Today, we were made aware, through the help of neighbors, of a Public Hearing that will be taking place concerning the increase in water rates in Pine Valley, Utah. First thing that I do not understand is how a public hearing could be held that would affect every customer of the Pine Valley water district without a proactive notification to each customer. We received our monthly water bill for March and there was no notification of this Public hearing. What means of notification was used to communicate your intentions, other than word of mouth. It would stand to reason that a notice would be included with our monthly statements. Wouldn't this be the most effective way of alerting your customers of such an important hearing?

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It is very difficult as a consumer to be objective when we have been given no notification of your plans to increase rates as well as having no explanation or information explaining how it is that you have arrived at the figures that you are proposing. The one time assessment fee and a 46% increase in monthly water bills are appalling. It is unconceivable that within today's economical situation that you could even consider such a rate hike as we are struggling to keep our properties in Pine Valley.

One of our properties is a vacant piece of land. It has no water meter, no water usage on that property and yet we are required to pay \$10 per month for water. This is already an unreasonable fee, though we were told it is the minimum payment for each parcel number. First, I don't see how you could justify charging for a non-service, yet, you are doing it. Add to this the fact that you now want to increase the charge; we do not understand the justification for increasing the charges for a non-service.

Pine Valley Irrigation advocates conservation of water. Therefore, our second property has "desert style" landscape. We have no lawn and very few trees. One of the reasons we have chosen this is for the conservation of water and subsequently the minimal monthly water bills that go along with this type of landscape. We are starting to question the logic of our water smart decisions. Government agencies and water districts, especially, in the Western states advocate water conservation yet now you are punishing us for conserving water. Another contradiction. Should the people that use larger amounts of this resource be charged accordingly, absolutely. But don't penalize those that follow the rules to conserve by raising basic rates and assessing one-time fees.

We own our own business and dream of dictating a mandatory price increase of even 10% on our products. Let alone a 46% increase. How can you justify that kind of an increase?

What will be the result of the increase? The same result that Nevada (and other States) are experiencing after increasing the sales tax last fiscal year. Sales tax revenue continues to decline each month and the budget shortfall for Nevada and other States continues to increase. People will continue trimming their own budgets to make ends meet.

This increase that you are proposing will not increase your operating profit. Customers will just simple reduce consumption to maintain the lowest monthly water bills their budgets can handle. This will not only affect the customers you service but so many other businesses and visitors to Pine Valley. Not to mention the desirability of future Pine Valley home purchasers.

Please consider your actions very carefully. This State, not to mention, this Nation is in a tenacious period. This increase could bring on consequences that could be devastating for Pine Valley's future.

Brian & Maria Ochs

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