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20TH District

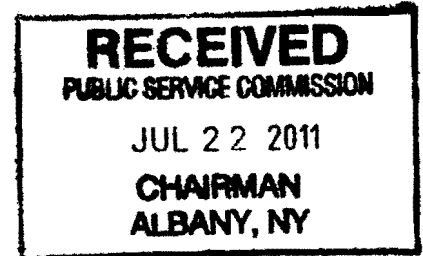
PLEASE REPLY TO:
Room 731
Legislative Office Building
Albany, New York 12248
(518) 455-3028
FAX (518) 455-5769

July 20, 2011

ASSISTANT SPEAKER
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Hon. Garry A. Brown, Chair
New York State Public Service Commission
Three Empire State Plaza
Albany, NY 12223-1350



Dear Chairman Brown:

On behalf of my constituents who reside in the Town of Hempstead, I write to express my opposition to Long Island American Water Corporation's (LIAW) request before your agency (Rate Case # 11-W-0200) to raise their rates by an astounding 19.5% for the delivery of water services. I understand that utilities need to make necessary critical infrastructure improvements, but I question this increase. There also needs to be a balance between the enormity of the proposed increases, the quality of the product and services and what rate payers can bear.

Customers being served by LIAW have advised me that they are forced to pay for expensive filtration systems in order to simply use the water for bathing and washing. Bottled spring water is also purchased by these customers for drinking and cooking. I question how a rate increase can be warranted when these households already bear the added expense of products needed to make LIAW's water usable.

It is my understanding that LIAW has requested and received at least three rate increases during the past 6 years in order to rectify continued iron problems in the water. After receiving these increases, the company has yet to make improvements to the water delivered to the affected homes.

There have been news stories in which customers of Long Island American Water have repeatedly complained about the quality of their water. In a July 15, 2011, South Shore Standard article entitled: *Residents Enduring Rust as Local Water Company Planning to Raise Rates*¹, Lawrence Mayor Martin Oliner, noted that water quality has been a major issue for some time now and that iron deposits have plagued his village since he moved there 20 years ago. Residents have been further upset by a lack of response by LIAW with regard to addressing this problem.

¹ <http://standardli.com/?p=2020>

In a My Fox NY story published on February 7, 2011², residents of Malverne expressed concerns with Long Island American Waters product, stating they are "*worried about the quality of their water. Brown water has been flowing from taps in sinks, bathtubs and toilets across the village.*" When asked if he would drink the water, the President of LIAW, William M. Varley responded, "absolutely not." I find it incredulous that Mr. Varley is requesting that ratepayers fork over an additional 19.5% for the delivery of water that he will not drink himself.

The company clearly knew iron levels were problematic during their previous two successful requests for rate increases. After receiving the increases to fix the problem, the situation has deteriorated further. In a statement dated April 29, 2011, Richard Kern, a Long Island American Water representative, stated that one of their wells, "*is currently out of service due to iron levels higher than 1.5 parts per million, which is greater than the maximum allowed by state health code.*"

I also respectfully request that Long Island American reconfigure their School, General and Village property tax estimates they submitted as exhibits to justify yet another rate increase. The state enacted a property tax cap thus; I believe their projected multi-million dollar increase should be less than initially projected.

Thank you for your kind consideration of my comments on behalf of the people I represent in the affected communities. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or require further information.

Sincerely,



Harvey Weisenberg
Member of Assembly

² http://www.myfoxny.com/dpp/news/local_news/long_island/brown-tap-water-in-long-island-community-20110207