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DEPARTMENT OF THE PUBLIC ADVOCATE
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**REMARKS OF STEFANIE A. BRAND,
DIRECTOR
DIVISION OF RATE COUNSEL
PRESENTED BY DEBRA F. ROBINSON, ESQ.
DEPUTY PUBLIC ADVOCATE**

**In The Matter of the Petition of United Water Toms River Inc. for Approval
of an Increase in Rates for Water Service and other Tariff Changes
BPU Docket No. WR0808030139
OAL Docket No. PUCRA 03509**

**Public Hearing
Ritacco Center
Toms River High School North Campus
1245 Old Freehold Road
Toms River, NJ 08753
June 23, 2008 at 7:00 p.m.**

Good evening, my name is Debra F. Robinson. I am an attorney representing the New Jersey Division of Rate Counsel. The Division of Rate Counsel ("Rate Counsel") was created by the New Jersey Legislature to protect the interests of all utility consumers and to represent ratepayers in cases such as this where a utility seeks changes in their rates or services.

In order to effectively represent the public in utility rate cases, our office uses a team of lawyers, accountants, and economists to analyze requests for rate

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and service changes filed by companies who provide energy, water, wastewater, and telecommunications services in New Jersey.

In the present case, United Water Tom Inc. (“United Water” or “Company”) is a public utility that provides water service to approximately 50,000 customers in the central portion of Ocean County, generally in the municipalities of Toms River Township (formerly known as Dover Township), the Borough of South Toms River, and a portion of Berkeley Township.

On March 6, 2008, United Water filed a Petition with the New Jersey Board of Public Utilities (“Board” or “BPU”) seeking approval for an increase in revenues of \$14.9 million or approximately 91% over current base rates.

We, at the Division of Rate Counsel, are conducting a comprehensive examination of United Water’s proposal to verify the reasons for the increase in charges and to determine whether the Company’s calculations are accurate. For example, we have issued questions to the Company, seeking to discover detailed information regarding the proposed increases, including the basis for the Company’s calculations. The Company must justify its expenses and provide evidence to support its calculations.

Rate Counsel has attorneys and expert witnesses analyzing data from the Company to effectively examine the proposed pass-through of charges.

Evidentiary hearings are scheduled to be held at the Office of Administrative Law on August 22, 2008, before Judge Walter Braswell, ALJ, at which time we will cross-examine the Company's witnesses. It is important that you be aware that decisions regarding all rate modifications in New Jersey are made by the Board of Public Utilities.

The purpose of this open public hearing is for you, the customer, to voice your opinion, relate your experiences with the Company, and offer comments about the Company's proposed increase and any service problems you may be experiencing. It is important that you express your views, because they will become part of the record on which the Board of Public Utilities makes its decisions. Rate Counsel also needs to hear your views in order to represent your interests in this legal process. We strongly encourage your participation, which will help us evaluate the Company's proposal and prepare for the evidentiary hearings.

This public hearing is being transcribed and your comments will become part of the record. The Judge will instruct you to give your name and address before you speak. I would like to reiterate the importance of your participation so that Rate Counsel can have a clear record of your concerns and interests.

On behalf of the Division of Rate Counsel, I thank you for attending this public hearing.