



State of New Jersey

DEPARTMENT OF THE PUBLIC ADVOCATE

DIVISION OF RATE COUNSEL

31 CLINTON STREET, 11TH FL

P. O. BOX 46005

NEWARK, NEW JERSEY 07101

JON S. CORZINE

Governor

RONALD K. CHEN

Public Advocate

STEFANIE A. BRAND

Director

**REMARKS OF STEFANIE A. BRAND,
DIRECTOR
DIVISION OF RATE COUNSEL
PRESENTED BY CHRISTINE M. JUAREZ, ESQ.
ASSISTANT DEPUTY PUBLIC ADVOCATE**

**In The Matter Of The Petition Of United Water West Milford For Approval
Of An Increase In Rates For Wastewater Service And Other Tariff Charges
BPU Docket No. WR08100928
OAL Docket No. PUC 13760-08**

**Public Hearing
The Bald Eagle Commons Building
21 Richmond Road
West Milford, NJ 07408
February 13, 2009 at 1:00 p.m.**

Good afternoon, my name is Christine Juarez. I am an attorney representing the New Jersey Division of Rate Counsel. The Division of 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 and service changes filed by companies who provide energy, water, wastewater,

and telecommunications services in New Jersey.

On October 21, 2008, United Water West Milford Inc. (“United Water” or “the Company”) filed a Petition with the New Jersey Board of Public Utilities (“Board” or “BPU”) seeking approval of an increase in revenues of \$339,888. A residential customer will see his or her bill increase from \$161.13 to \$296.01, an increase of \$134.88 per quarter or 83.71%.

We, at the Division of Rate Counsel, are conducting a comprehensive examination of United Water’s proposals 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 evaluate whether and to what extent an increase in rates is proper at this time. Presently, evidentiary hearings are scheduled to be held at the Office of Administrative Law on June 15 and 18, 2009, 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.