



Mahoning Township

849 Bloom Road, Danville PA 17821

Tel: 570. 275. 5521

Fax: 570. 271. 3108

March 11, 2024

Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission
Secretary of the Commission
Commonwealth Keystone Building
2nd Floor, Room-N201
400 North Street
Harrisburg, PA 17120

*RE: Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission v. Veolia Water
Pennsylvania, Inc. Docket Nos. R-2024-3045192 (Water) and R-2024-
3045193 (Wastewater)*

To whom it may concern:

On February 16, 2024, Veolia Water Pennsylvania, Inc. ("Veolia") filed a request with the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission ("PUC") to increase rates for its customers. Mahoning Township, Montour County, Pennsylvania (the "Township") and its residents are all served by Veolia.

I offer the following public comment on PUC Docket Numbers R-2024-3045192 (Water) and R-2024-3045193 (Wastewater), in opposition to proposed water and wastewater rate increases requested by Veolia.

The Township's Board of Supervisors have received many calls, comments, and expressed concerns regarding the proposed rate increases, from its residents. At our March 11, 2024 duly advertised meeting, the Board of Supervisors concurred with the residents' reservations of the proposed increases and voted to submit a protest to the proposed increased rates, by and through this correspondence.

If the rate increases requested by Veolia are granted, the monthly bill for a residential water customer using 3,500 gallons, would increase from \$49.64 to \$60.79, or by \$11.15 (**22%**). For a residential wastewater customer, their bill would increase from \$56.20 to \$77.00, or by \$20.80 (**37%**).

In the current economic climate, the Township's residents and Veolia's ratepayers are still firmly in the grip of rising inflation. Their purchasing power with a dollar continues to decrease.

We recognize there is no ideal time for a rate increase. We also recognize increases are never favored by the ratepayers; however, increases of more than \$10 per month are significant, particularly as a percentage of the current rates. The proposed increase would also be immediate, and its effect could otherwise be mitigated through smaller, incremental changes over the coming years, while inflation cools.

In its February 16, 2024 correspondence to the Township, Veolia admits that the primary reason it requires the increase is to recover \$167.3 million associated with an investment plan to enhance water quality and service reliability. The Township believes such a comprehensive capital improvement plan is ill advised and unnecessary at the present time.

The Township previously operated a public utility, and it never increased rates to its customers in such a manner. Capital projects were phased in incrementally to avoid such hardship.

As such, Veolia is not in need of immediate rate relief. The company's current and near-term financial outlook is stable and the utility has sufficient revenues to continue to provide safe and reasonable service, to continue its construction activities, pay all of its expenses and earn a reasonable profit.

It is unreasonable to raise rates on essential water and wastewater service at the present time. It would present a hardship to the Township's residents. Rate increases on essential services are regressive and impact those who need assistance and protection the most. The Township's Board is mindful of such individuals and accordingly request that Veolia's petition for rate increases for water and wastewater services be denied.

In conclusion, the Township's Board of Supervisors would welcome a public hearing by the Commission and the Administrative Law Judge, at the Township's Building, in order to hear from its constituents directly.

The Board thanks the PUC for review of this correspondence and trusts it will adjudicate the proposed rate increase accordingly.

Should you have any questions, please contact me.

Very truly yours,
Mahoning Township Board of Supervisors



Bill Lynn, Chairman

cc: Jonathan L. DeWald, Esquire – Solicitor (via e-mail to jdewald@mpvhlaw.com)
Leigh Ann M. Urban, Veolia (via e-mail to leighann.urban@veolia.com), Senator Lynda Culver, Representative Michael Stender, Montour County Commissioners.