

Oak Lodge Water Services

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Oak Lodge Water Service

Regarding your proposed rate increase when the water district consolidated with the sewer district we were told, at that time our bills would be reduce, I frankly was opposed to combining both districts. As you know everyone has had a turbulent year due to the pandemic and I frankly can't see how you can justify increasing the rates. Customers have been out of work barely able to pay rent and buy food for there families. I suggest you reevaluate the increase. Thank you

Louise Umbarger

16940 SE Shady brook Dr

Milwaukie Or 97267

Submission information

Form: [Public Comment](#) [1]
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Identifying Information

First Name

R. Kent

Last Name

Squires

Group or Organization Affiliation

Address

6469 SE Norma Circle, Milwaukie, Oregon 97267

Phone Number

5039390816

Public Comment

Official Public Testimony off R. Kent Squires Regarding Proposed Rate Increase by Oak Lodge Water Services

I am opposed to the proposed water rate increase, effective July 2021. My opposition stems from what I consider to be poor policy decisions by the OLWS Board of Directors to surcharge rate payers in 2020 to provide financial assistance due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The OLWS Board adopted this increase despite overwhelming opposition by those providing public comment. Not only did the OLWS Board force higher costs on the vast majority of rate payers during a pandemic which affects everyone in the community, but it did so against the wishes of the public it serves. This poor policy decision was compounded recently by continuing this ill-conceived program after one year in which there was little use of the program.

This decision flies in the face of the purpose for which OLWS exists, which is to provide water, sewer and stormwater services in a cost effective and efficient manner consistent with the legal requirements of the regulatory authorities and the values of the public being served. OLWS is a public utility. It is not a social service agency nor is it a charity. The District already has a low income rate relief program which is also subsidized by the rest of the rate payers.

The Covid-19 pandemic impacted virtually everyone. Federal and State governments invested trillions of dollars supporting citizens, businesses, and programs to maintain a viable economy, pursue health remedies, and support those that serve others. That is the proper role and function of Federal and State governments. It is not the proper role of a small public utility which already offers fair and reasonable solutions to those less fortunate.

I suggest the OLWS Board of Directors immediately end the ill-conceived Covid-19 subsidy program, apply the moneys obtained through the surcharge to meet whatever financial need is driving the proposed rate increase, and focus on honoring the values expressed by the ratepayers.

R. Kent Squires
6469 SE Norma Circle
Milwaukie, Oregon 97267

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Links

[1] <https://www.oaklodgewaterservices.org/bc/webform/public-comment>