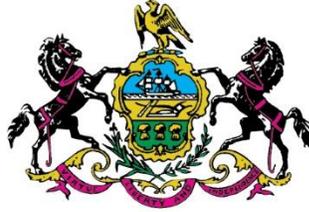


19TH DISTRICT  
STATE SENATOR  
**CAROLYN T. COMITTA**

457 MAIN CAPITOL BUILDING  
SENATE BOX 203019  
THE STATE CAPITOL  
HARRISBURG, PA 17120-3019  
717-787-5709  
FAX: 717-787-4384

17 EAST GAY STREET • SUITE 301  
WEST CHESTER, PA 19380  
610-692-2112  
FAX: 610-436-1721



## Senate of Pennsylvania

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EMAIL: [SenatorComitta@pasenate.com](mailto:SenatorComitta@pasenate.com)  
WEBSITE: [www.pasenate.com](http://www.pasenate.com)  
TWITTER: @SenatorComitta  
FACEBOOK: @SenatorComitta  
INSTAGRAM: @SenatorComitta

September 24, 2021

Secretary Rosemary Chiavetta  
Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission  
400 North Street  
Harrisburg, PA 17120

RE: Docket Number R-2021-3027385

Dear Secretary Chiavetta,

I am writing to respectfully request that the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission (PUC) deny Aqua Pennsylvania's proposed rate increase. Affordable, quality water and wastewater services are a basic necessity. This increase will place an undue burden on residents, families, senior citizens, and those on fixed incomes in communities across my district. Furthermore, it comes at the very time that we continue to face the unprecedented challenges associated with an evolving pandemic, an ongoing economic crisis, and significant storm and flood damage from Hurricane Ida.

Aqua's proposed rate increase means water bills will rise by up to 17 percent and wastewater bills by nearly double that (33 percent). The proposed increase would impact 1.5 million Aqua Pennsylvania customers and families in 32 counties, including many in Chester County and southeastern Pennsylvania.

While I understand that Aqua is attempting to justify this rate increase by tying it to infrastructure repairs and upgrades, I am also compelled to point out that the company continues to purchase and aggressively pursue the acquisition of municipal water authorities across the Commonwealth and the southeast region, including the Chester Water Authority. I hope that the PUC considers weighing Aqua's financial ability and eagerness to invest in expanding its footprint when it asks to saddle customers with such a significant rate increase to pay for necessary upgrades. Please also keep in mind that customers in my district and the surrounding region recently experienced disruptions to service and related miscommunications regarding a boil water advisory during the Hurricane Ida disaster emergency.

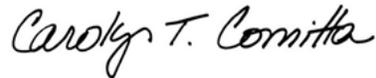
Finally, since the onset of the pandemic, many residents have been forced to apply for utility assistance through multiple programs, such as the Emergency Rental & Utility Assistance

Program, the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), and various non-profit organizations, to maintain service and avoid shutoffs. Given the financial difficulties currently affecting so many Pennsylvanians, this proposed rate increase will only cause a greater burden on those households still struggling to recover and, in turn, result in a greater demand for assistance and already limited resources.

Again, I oppose this increase and respectfully ask that the PUC carefully consider its potential impacts on all our communities, especially our most vulnerable friends, neighbors, and families.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Carolyn T. Comitta". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Carolyn Comitta  
State Senator – 19<sup>th</sup> District