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News Release

KENT COUNTY WATER AUTHORITY

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Kent County Water Authority

KCWA was informed this morning that a new Senate Resolution [S0628](#) sponsored by Senator Raptakis has passed in **his steadfast campaign against KCWA** despite the facts presented to multiple state agencies, public bodies, and members of the General Assembly. Raptakis's Resolution continues to perpetuate misinformation against KCWA. The continued accusation and innuendo have unjustifiably cost rate payers, and RI taxpayers, tens of thousands of dollars and countless hours of time from multiple agencies.

RESOLUTION S0628 STATES:

*WHEREAS, During the previous nine months, some customers of the Kent County Water Authority (KCWA) have received troubling and abnormally high water bills compared to prior billing quarters. Often the **increases seem entirely unjustified based upon their usage history.***

*One customer's bill increased from \$194.60 to an astounding \$1,054.35 WHEREAS, Several residents suffering from this predicament were encouraged by the KCWA to change their water meters and **several of the customers who installed new Neptune brand T-10 water meters have been the recipients of these bill increases.** The Neptune brand T-10 water meter has been the source of similar complaints in other jurisdictions across the nation;*

KCWA RESPONSE:

Raptakis's statements allege fraud and continue to erode the public's trust by stating the new meters are causing the increases. All bills were justified based on the facts presented and available to the public. **Abnormally high water bills were also experienced at the exact same level in the City of Warwick, Warwick Water, (500 complaints) using the same Neptune meters, yet the beat goes on against KCWA. KCWA and Warwick Water are two different entities Despite the difference, KCWA is continuing getting repeated complaints from Warwick Water System customers protesting their bills.** A comprehensive and complete investigation was completed into all complaints received. The complaint called out in the resolution was **fully investigated** (link to investigation)12-4-20 and the usage that the customer was **billed on was entirely on the old meter.** The customer's bill called out in this resolution was thoroughly investigated by KCWA and then again independently by the Division of Public Utilities and Carriers (DPUC), both entities finding the bill to be accurate. Furthermore, this customer's meter was independently tested by a 3rd party on a certified test bench witnessed by DPUC and also found to be accurate. In fact, **all meters, old and new, that were independently tested by a third party came back as accurate. KCWA is required under order by DPUC/PUC to replace all meters in the system.** Increased water usage in Summer 2020 was not unique to the Kent County Water Authority. Public water systems throughout the State of Rhode Island also experienced similar increases in water usage. Many public water systems nationally and locally,

including Warwick Water and Kent County Water Authority, utilize the same Neptune meters, which are factory certified in a registered International Standard ISO 9001 :2015 facility that is audited annually by an accredited third-party auditing firm to assure compliance to the AWWA standard prior to delivery([Link Neptune Summary of Certified Test Procedures](#))Lastly, the Rhode Island Division of Public Utilities and Carriers, whom has appellate jurisdiction/participation over such matters has, to date, arrived at the same conclusion as KCWA on all completed investigations into customer complaints.

RESOLUTION S0628 STATES:

*WHEREAS, The Kent County Water Authority has been asked, in response to this crisis, to enact measures to ensure fair and accurate meter readings such as providing independent, third party testing of the water meters in dispute, prohibiting water shutoffs on accounts with disputed bills, prohibiting any interest charges being assessed on any current or future bills in dispute, regardless of final resolution, **prohibiting the comingling of bills for old and new meters**, suspending any bill in dispute that is thirty percent or more than the same quarter in the previous year, placing such bills in escrow until the issue has been resolved fairly, and providing on the spot documentation of old meter readings to consumers when they are replaced, so the consumer has a photograph, receipt and point of reference when receiving a new bill; and*

WHEREAS, Thus far, the KCWA has not responded to these reasonable requests. At the same time, KCWA customers are being placed under significant financial hardship during a pandemic when they can least afford it; now, therefore be it

KCWA RESPONSE:

This is misinformation. KCWA Responded to these specific requests on December 11, 2020 and has employed every measure requested. Link to [Letter to Senators and Representatives from KCWA](#). KCWA responded and implemented all General Assembly member recommendations months ago. In fact, our customer service staff inundated with calls from Coventry customers for putting the usage period on the old bills, [which was Senator Rodgers idea in our meeting](#) that we all agreed on until the new bills came out. Raptakis then publicly called KCWA “[the three stooges of water utilities](#) ” for employing the recommendation **using taxpayer money and his press office**. The new bills were launching last week with all of the General Assembly recommendations and more. The [bill insert \(linked\)](#) is going out with all new bills.

In addition to completing all of the recommendations, KCWA has deployed a new utility billing and customer information system which is allowing the creation of separate independent bills for usage on the old meters as requested to mitigate the perception of “comingling” of bills. While KCWA maintains that this recommendation is going to cause addition confusion on the bills going out, KCWA has agreed to full adherence to all recommendations. KCWA also filed on 3-4-21 with the PUC to go onto **monthly billing**. A link to the filing can be found here <http://www.ripuc.ri.gov/eventsactions/docket/5133pge.html>

RESOLUTION S0628 STATES:

RESOLVED, That this Senate of the State of Rhode Island hereby respectfully requests that the Rhode Island Auditor General’s Office conduct a thorough review of the Kent County Water Authority; and be it further RESOLVED, That the Secretary of State be and hereby is authorized

and directed to transmit a duly certified copy of this resolution to Mr. Dennis Hoyle, CPA, MBA, Rhode Island Auditor General.

KCWA RESPONSE:

KCWA has spent in the multiple 10's of thousands of dollars of rate payer money on investigations and now we are asking the tax payers in Rhode Island to additionally pay for the Auditor General (OAG) to give the same answer. It is unknown how much taxpayer money and time has been spent for the DPUC investigations that have come to the same conclusions independent of KCWA. Every meter that has been independently tested, old and new, has come back 100% accurate. **All meter testing and accuracy has been physically verified by a member of the RIDPUC.** KCWA is a highly regulated **non-profit** public utility unlike Verizon and National Grid. KCWA cannot make additional money without giving it back to ratepayers. As a regulated public utility, KCWA is continuously overseen by four government agencies PUC, DPUC, AG, and RIDOH. Senator Raptakis has a perceived solution in his mind in search of a problem to gain political favor of his constituency with a complete disregard of the financial toll and erosion of the public's trust in an agency providing a critical water services to 100,000 people in eight cities and towns. Clean potable water is a vital resource that nobody can live without and KCWA continues to deliver on providing this resource at a very low cost of \$0.007/gal.

***Raptakis's 2-25-21 [Press Release](#) States,** "several legislators representing Kent County have written to the Auditor General, Dennis E. Hoyle, requesting a thorough review of the Kent County Water Authority (KCWA)."*

KCWA RESPONSE: This is a lie. The Auditor General Dennis Hoyle was contacted by KCWA the day after Senator Raptakis's press release and was told this is the first he is hearing of the matter and has no letter.

***Raptakis's 2-25-21 [Press Release](#) States,** " The KCWA has refused to listen to any of our recommendations and their behavior and service displays a level of disregard for their ratepayers that is truly unacceptable."*

KCWA RESPONSE: This is a lie. House Resolution [H-5030](#) ,which every component of the Resolution was incorrect, as submitted in written testimony by [DPUC](#), [PUC](#), [AG](#), and [KCWA](#) (linked) at the House Corporations meeting on 2-1-21 and needed amendments. **KCWA has nothing to hide and welcomes any audit /review by any agency which is why every piece of information is publicly available on our website for the world to view.** KCWA is already being independently reviewed by the DPUC as required under the law.