



## STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

### DIVISION OF PUBLIC UTILITIES & CARRIERS

Legal Section  
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November 12, 2020

Senator Leonidas P. Raptakis, District 33  
2080 Nooseneck Hill Road  
Coventry, RI 02816

Representative Patricia L. Serpa, District 27  
194 Kimberly Lane  
West Warwick, RI 02893

Re: Kent County Water Authority

Dear Senator Raptakis and Representative Serpa:

The Rhode Island Division of Public Utilities and Carriers (“Division”) is in receipt of the curtesy copy of the November 9, 2020 letter that you directed to the Kent County Water Authority (“KCWA”). Your letter discusses complaints that you have received from your constituents concerning recent water bills.

From your letter, it appears that many of your constituents have expressed concerns about the accuracy of recent water bills from KCWA. Many of them link the higher bills to the recent installation of new Neptune T-10 water meters in some geographic areas within the KCWA water system, particularly in the town of Coventry. You have requested that KCWA conduct a thorough investigation into these complaints and refrain from terminating service while billing disputes remain unresolved.

In a telephone conference conducted November 10, 2020, between you and your staff and members of the Division’s senior staff, including the Division’s Administrator, I explained that the Division would only exercise its regulatory jurisdiction over these complaints in cases where those effected KCWA customers remained aggrieved following a KCWA investigation into their respective billing disputes. Under the Division’s Rules, KCWA is required to “make a full and prompt investigation of customer complaints.”<sup>1</sup> The Division acknowledges and accepts that KCWA will require time to investigate every individual dispute before issuing its final decisions on the merits of each complaint.

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<sup>1</sup> See *Rules and Regulations Prescribing Standards for Water Utilities*, 815-RICR-40-00-01.3G

For any customer that disagrees with a final KCWA ruling, that customer may file a formal complaint with the Division pursuant to Rule 815-RICF-00-00-1.7 of the Division's *Rules of Practice and Procedure* or request a regulatory review/hearing pursuant to Rule 810-RICR-10-00-1.13 and 1.14 of the Commission's *Rules and Regulations Governing the Termination of Residential Electric, Gas and Water Service*. "During the pendency of such review the utility shall not discontinue service to the customer due to the circumstances out of which the dispute arose."<sup>2</sup> The Division would thereupon conduct a thorough investigation into the complaint, and, where required, conduct a full evidentiary hearing. The Division issues a final written decision after every hearing.

I hope this summary of our discussion sufficiently addresses your concerns about the regulatory process that is available to address the water bill-related complaints from your constituents. Please feel free to contact me if I can be of further assistance.

Respectfully,

*John Spirito, Jr.*

John Spirito, Jr., Esq.  
RIDPUC, Deputy Administrator

Cc: Linda George, Esq., RIDPUC Administrator  
Senator Gordon E. Rogers, District 21  
Representative George A. Nardone, District 28  
David L. Simmons, PE, Executive Director & Chief Engineer, KCWA

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<sup>2</sup> See Rule 810-RICR-10-00-1.13.A of the Commission's *Rules and Regulations Governing the Termination of Residential Electric, Gas and Water Service*