



CITIZENS UTILITY BOARD

Fighting for Illinois Consumers

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CONTACT: Jim Chilsen,
312-513-1784
jchilsen@citizensutilityboard.org

CUB STATEMENT ON AQUA ILLINOIS' PROPOSED \$26.5 MILLION RATE HIKE

Citizens Utility Board (CUB) Executive Director Sarah Moskowitz released a statement Monday about Aqua Illinois' \$26.5 million rate-hike request before the Illinois Commerce Commission:

At a time when Illinois consumers are already burdened with rising costs for all utilities, Aqua Illinois' proposed rate hike would increase bills by an average of more than \$23 a month—hitting customers with yet another hardship. Aqua says this is about maintaining their system, but they conveniently leave out the fact that they're asking for an outrageous profit rate for shareholders of 10.8 percent, which would be the highest of any utility in Illinois. CUB will review Aqua's proposal and we will fight every penny of corporate excess and profit mongering.

Also, the fact that Illinois' two biggest private water companies—Aqua and Illinois American—are seeking higher rates in 2026, as one parent company tries to purchase another, just proves CUB's point that the companies are more interested in seeking higher profits than actually serving the public good. As we call on the ICC to reject both the Aqua and Illinois American rate-hike proposals, we also call on state regulators to reject the acquisition.

Background:

- Aqua Illinois [has announced](#) that it is seeking a \$26.5 million rate hike (\$19,471,600 for all classes of water service statewide and \$7,028,658 for all classes of wastewater service statewide) before the Illinois Commerce Commission (ICC) ([Docket 26-0495](#)). The utility says the rate hike would take effect at the end of April 2027.
- Aqua said in a [public notice](#) that the rate hike would increase an average combined monthly residential wastewater (collection and treatment) and water bill (4,000 gallons) by \$23.79, or about 15.4 percent, to \$177.99. It would increase an average combined monthly residential wastewater (collection only) and water bill (4,000 gallons) by \$23.27, or 29.5 percent, to \$102.15. (Aqua says the estimated bill impact may vary based on multiple factors, including meter size and usage volume.)
- CUB has yet to examine the full proposal, but an initial review shows that Aqua is pushing to increase its Return on Equity (ROE), or profit rate for shareholders, from 9.6 percent to 10.8 percent, which would be the highest among all major utilities. Aqua also wants to increase its “common equity ratio”—how much of the utility's financing comes from issuing stocks—from 51 percent to 52 percent.
- Aqua last received a rate hike, \$11.6 million, in November of 2024.
- Customers opposed to the rate hike can file a [public comment with the ICC here](#). Also, they can visit [CUBActionCenter.com](#) to sign a petition against the rate hike.

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309 W. Washington St., Suite 800, Chicago, IL 60606
Phone (312) 263-4282 | Toll Free 800-669-5556 | Fax (312) 263 4329

- Thanks to favorable state laws that have escalated private water bills, Aqua customers are among the most frustrated utility customers who contact CUB. State law allows Aqua and Illinois American Water—Illinois’ two biggest private water utilities—to...
 - Charge a “Qualifying Infrastructure Plant” fee on bills.
 - Buy up depreciated water and wastewater systems across the state and charge their customers to cover 100 percent of the acquisition costs. **CUB Water Tracker**, CUB’s online center for monitoring the problem, found that these for-profit water utilities have purchased 61 systems since 2013, when state legislators passed a law that allows them to pass acquisition costs—**\$411.5 million and counting**—onto their customers.
- Both Aqua (\$26.5 million) and Illinois American (\$142.4 million) are pursuing rate hikes as their parent companies attempt to get approval for a major deal. American Water, the parent company of Illinois American, wants to purchase Aqua’s parent, Essential Utilities. CUB opposes the deal, arguing that American Water has not proven that it would serve the public interest. The deal requires ICC approval—a final ruling is due around November—and the companies hope to close the deal early next year.

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For more than 40 years, the Citizens Utility Board (CUB) has been Illinois’ leading nonprofit utility watchdog group. Created by the Illinois Legislature, CUB opened its doors in 1984 to represent the interests of residential and small-business utility customers. Since then, CUB has saved consumers more than \$20 billion by helping to block rate hikes and secure refunds. For more information, call CUB’s Consumer Hotline at **1-800-669-5556** or visit CUB’s award-winning website, www.CitizensUtilityBoard.org.