ds ORIGINAL 57177 Decision No. BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA In the Matter of the Application of CITIZENS UTILITIES COMPANY OF CALIFORNIA, a corporation, for Authority to Increase its Rates and Charges for its Water System serving the area known as Boulder Creek, Ben Lomond, Brookdale, of Santa Application No. 39674 Cruz County. Graham, James & Rolph, by Boris H. Lakusta, for applicant. Kirkbride, Wilson, Harzfeld & Wallace, by Peggy L. McElligott, for San Lorenzo Valley County Water District, interested party. San Lorenzo Valley Chamber of Commerce, San Lorenzo Valley Property Owners Association, Ben Lomond Recreation District and Boulder Creek Recreation District, by Alice Earl Wilder, interested parties. J. McCarthy, John F. Donovan and John R. Gillanders, for the Commission staff. OPINION The above entitled application was filed December 27, 1957 and amendments thereto were filed January 6 and March 17, 1958. By this application as amended, Citizens Utilities Company of California, a corporation, seeks an order of this Commission authorizing an increase in rates for water service rendered in its Boulder Creek District embracing the communities of Boulder Creek, Ben Lomond and Brookdale in Santa Cruz County. Public Hearing After due notice a public hearing was held before Examiner E. Ronald Foster at Boulder Creek on May 26 and 27, 1958. A number of local residents, including customers of the utility, attended the hearing and a few of them testified in regard to the rate schedules available to various classes of water users. -1Applicant also requests authority to revise Section A of its Rule and Regulation No. 7 pertaining to the amount of deposit required to establish credit for metered service. Applicant claims that the present rule does not provide adequate protection against uncollectible bills and proposes that the amount of deposit required for domestic service be twice the monthly minimum charge for the size of the meter serving the premises and for all other service an amount equal to twice the estimated average monthly bill, but not less than \$10.00.

## Rates, Present and Proposed

The presently filed rates were authorized by the Commission's Decision No. 50652 dated October 13, 1954, in Application No. 33581, as amended, and have been in effect since January 1, 1955. The following comparative tabulation summarizes the present rates and those proposed by applicant as set forth in various appendices to its original application and second amendment thereto:

Per Meter

	Per Meter		
	:Present: Proposed : Increase : Rates Rates Percent :		
Monthly Quantity Rates:  First 500 cu. ft. or less  Next 1,500 cu. ft., per 100 cu. ft.  Next 2,000 cu. ft., per 100 cu. ft.  Next 3,000 cu. ft., per 100 cu. ft.  Next 5,000 cu. ft., per 100 cu. ft.  Over 12,000 cu. ft., per 100 cu. ft.	.37 .60 62.2 .31 .50 61.3 .26 .43 65.4		
Annual Minimum Charge, General Schedule:  For 5/8 x 3/4-inch meter  For 3/4-inch meter  For 1-inch meter  For 12-inch meter  For 2-inch meter	31.20 54.00 73.1 44.00 75.00 70.5 56.00 95.00 69.6 100.00 170.00 70.0 150.00 250.00 66.7		
Annual Minimum Charge, Seasonal Schedule  For 5/8 x 3/4-inch meter  For 3/4-inch meter  For 1-inch meter  For 1½-inch meter  For 2-inch meter	(ten consecutive months):  26.00		
Public Fire Hydrant Service: On mains 4" dia. or larger On mains less than 4" dia.	Per Hydrant Per Month 1.50 2.45 63.3 .50 .80 60.0		

The next tabulation provides a comparison of the additional charges for various usages greater than the quantity included with the annual or seasonal minimum charge, computed on a bimonthly basis and assuming service through a  $5/8 \times 3/4$ -inch meter:

	Additional Bimonthly Charge Per Meter			
Bimonthly Consumption	:Present : Proposed : Increase : : Rates : Rates : Percent :			
1,000 cu. ft. 1,100 cu. ft. 1,300 cu. ft. 1,500 cu. ft. 2,000 cu. ft. 3,000 cu. ft. 5,000 cu. ft. 10,000 cu. ft. 15,000 cu. ft.	Included in Minimum Charge \$ 0.45 \$ 0.75 66.7% 1.35 2.25 66.7 2.25 3.75 66.7 4.50 7.50 66.7 9.00 15.00 66.7 17.20 28.50 65.7 34.50 56.50 63.8 49.50 80.80 63.2			

In its late-filed Exhibit No. 5, applicant has suggested a single schedule for all general metered service which incorporates the basic features of the proposed rates and charges of the seasonal schedule but makes it applicable to service rendered for more than ten consecutive months of the calendar year and also provides for bimonthly billing.

#### Summary of Showings

The respective showings of applicant and the Commission staff are compared in the following tabulation extracted from Exhibits No. 2 and No. 4 in this proceeding:

# SUMMARY OF EARNINGS YEAR 1957 RECORDED, ADJUSTED AND ESTIMATED

<u>Item</u>	Recor	CPUC	Rates Adjuste Applicant	d CPUC Staff	Esti- mated Pro- posed Rates CPUC Staff
Operating Revenues Operating Expenses	\$93,573	\$93,573	\$ 93,573 \$	93,570	\$159,990
Other than Depr. & Taxes Depreciation Taxes - General Income Taxes:	33,963 16,148 10,518	33,963 19,060* 10,524*		34,870 15,529 10,540	34,870 15,529 10,540
(S.L.Tax Depreciation) (Accel. Tax Depr.)	14,485	10,557*	13,695	10,170 6,590	45,990 42,410
Total Operating Expenses (S.L.Tax Depreciation) (Accel. Tax Depr.) Net Revenue:	75,114 -	74,104	75,789	71,109 67,529	106,929 103,349
(S.L.Tax Depreciation) (Accel. Tax Depr.)	18,459 -	19,469	17,784	22,461 26,041	53,061 56,641
Rate Base (Depreciated) Rate of Return:	475,602	-	475,681	512,600	512,600
(S.L. Tax Depreciation) (Accel. Tax Depr.)	3 <b>.</b> 88% -	-	3.74%	4.38% 5.08%	10.25%

<sup>\*</sup> From Exhibit No. 3, Chapter 4, Table 4-B.

## YEAR 1958 ESTIMATED

Substitute		Present Rates		Proposed Rates		
Operating Expenses         4,040         5,550         4,040         5,550           Transmission & Distrib.         8,770         8,400         8,770         8,400           Accounting, Coll. & Prom.         8,065         9,000         8,532         9,000           Admin., Gen'l. & Misc.         27,860         13,410         27,860         13,410           Subtotal         48,735         36,360         49,202         36,360           Depreciation         18,607         17,016         18,607         17,016           Taxes - General         11,302         11,810         11,302         11,810           Income Taxes:         (S.L.Tax Depreciation)         6,370         9,270         41,178         46,420           (Accel. Tax Depreciation)         -5,250         -42,390           Total Operating Expenses:         -5,250         -42,390           (S.L.Tax Depreciation)         -70,436         120,289         111,606           (Accel. Tax Depreciation)         -70,436         107,576           Net Revenue:         -5,594         -58,334           Rate Base (Depreciated)         545,695         557,400         545,695         557,400           Rate of Return:         -5,500         -5,500	<u> Item</u>	Applicant	CPUC Staff			
Transmission & Distrib. 8,770 8,400 8,770 8,400 Accounting, Coll. & Prom. 8,065 9,000 8,532 9,000 Admin., Gen'l. & Misc. 27,860 13,410 27,860 13,410 Subtotal 48,735 36,360 49,202 36,360 Depreciation 18,607 17,016 18,607 17,016 Taxes - General 11,302 11,810 11,302 11,810 Income Taxes: (S.L.Tax Depreciation) 6,370 9,270 41,178 46,420 (Accel. Tax Depreciation) - 5,250 42,390 Total Operating Expenses: (S.L.Tax Depreciation) 85,014 74,456 120,289 111,606 (Accel. Tax Depreciation) - 70,436 107,576  Net Revenue: (S.L.Tax Depreciation) 11,986 22,574 41,733 54,304 (Accel. Tax Depreciation) - 26,594 58,334  Rate Base (Depreciated) 545,695 557,400 545,695 557,400  Rate of Return: (S.L.Tax Depreciation) 2.20% 4.05% 7.65% 9.74%	Operating Expenses	\$ 97,000	\$ 97,030	\$162,022	\$165,910	
Subtotal 48,735 36,360 49,202 36,360  Depreciation 18,607 17,016 18,607 17,016  Taxes - General 11,302 11,810 11,302 11,810  Income Taxes: (S.L.Tax Depreciation) 6,370 9,270 41,178 46,420 (Accel. Tax Depreciation) - 5,250 - 42,390  Total Operating Expenses: (S.L.Tax Depreciation) 85,014 74,456 120,289 111,606 (Accel. Tax Depreciation) - 70,436 107,576  Net Revenue: (S.L.Tax Depreciation) 11,986 22,574 41,733 54,304 (Accel. Tax Depreciation) - 26,594 - 58,334  Rate Base (Depreciated) 545,695 557,400 545,695 557,400  Rate of Return: (S.L.Tax Depreciation) 2.20% 4.05% 7.65% 9.74%	Transmission & Distrib. Accounting, Coll. & Prom.	8,770 8,065	8,400 9,000	8,532	8,400 9,000	
(S.L.Tax Depreciation) 6,370 9,270 41,178 46,420 (Accel. Tax Depreciation) - 5,250 - 42,390 Total Operating Expenses: (S.L.Tax Depreciation) 85,014 74,456 120,289 111,606 (Accel. Tax Depreciation) - 70,436 107,576 Net Revenue: (S.L.Tax Depreciation) 11,986 22,574 41,733 54,304 (Accel. Tax Depreciation) - 26,594 - 58,334 Rate Base (Depreciated) 545,695 557,400 545,695 557,400 Rate of Return: (S.L.Tax Depreciation) 2.20% 4.05% 7.65% 9.74%	Subtotal Depreciation Taxes - General	48,735 18,607	36,360 17,016	49,202 18,607	36,360 17,016	
(S.L.Tax Depreciation) 85,014 74,456 120,289 111,606 (Accel. Tax Depreciation) - 70,436 107,576  Net Revenue: (S.L.Tax Depreciation) 11,986 22,574 41,733 54,304 (Accel. Tax Depreciation) - 26,594 - 58,334  Rate Base (Depreciated) 545,695 557,400 545,695 557,400  Rate of Return: (S.L.Tax Depreciation) 2.20% 4.05% 7.65% 9.74%	(S.L.Tax Depreciation) (Accel. Tax Depreciation)	6,370		41,178		
(S.L.Tax Depreciation) 11,986 22,574 41,733 54,304 (Accel. Tax Depreciation) - 26,594 - 58,334 Rate Base (Depreciated) 545,695 557,400 545,695 557,400 Rate of Return: (S.L.Tax Depreciation) 2.20% 4.05% 7.65% 9.74%	(S.L.Tax Depreciation) (Accel. Tax Depreciation)	85,014		120,289		
Rate Base (Depreciated) 545,695 557,400 545,695 557,400  Rate of Return: (S.L.Tax Depreciation) 2.20% 4.05% 7.65% 9.74%	(S.L.Tax Depreciation)	11,986		41,733		
(S.L.Tax Depreciation) 2.20% 4.05% 7.65% 9.74%	Rate Base (Depreciated) Rate of Return:	545,695	557,400	545,695	<del>-</del>	
and the second s	(S.L.Tax Depreciation)	2.20%		7.65%		

A. 39674 ds 1. Income Tax Depreciation In the foregoing tabulation, both the applicant's and the staff's estimates of operating expenses, net revenues and rates of return reflect income taxes based on the assumption of straight-line depreciation. The staff has also estimated these items to reflect applicant's actual basis of taxes on income. Beginning with the year 1954, applicant has taken advantage of accelerated depreciation permitted by the provisions of Section 167 of the Internal Revenue Code. Applicant's witness testified, however, that applicant would abandon its past practice in this respect and return to the method of calculating depreciation expense on the straight-line basis if the Commission intended to render its decision herein on a basis by which the applicant would gain no advantage from such acceleration. In support of its testimony, applicant presented Exhibit No. 7 which is a commitment respecting accelerated depreciation. Applicant declares that if the Commission determines in this proceeding that the tax deferral resulting from the use of accelerated depreciation in the calculation of federal income taxes should flow through into earnings for rate-making purposes, then applicant commits itself for the property involved in this application to elect and use the straight-line method of depreciation for income tax purposes. In view of this commitment, therefore, we shall calculate applicant's income tax expense on the basis of straight-line depreciation. This anticipates that applicant will make suitable application to the United States Internal Revenue Service for permission to revert from the basis of accelerated depreciation to straight-line depreciation and that the necessary approval will be obtained. It is understood that applicant has not yet filed its federal income tax return for the calendar year 1957. Should -6A. 39674 the staff applied the proposed rates to the water use tables and thus arrived at estimated revenues which are considered more exact. Inspection of the percentage increases shown in the tabulation of present and proposed rates indicates that the over-all increase of 71% developed by the staff is more nearly correct than the 67% used by the applicant. 3. Expenses In the first three groups of operating expenses, the staff's total is about \$1,600 greater than applicant's due to some differences in the distribution of certain items of expense. However, the staff's estimate of administrative, general, and miscellaneous expenses is \$14,500 less than applicant's. A large portion of this difference is the item of \$8,000 used by applicant to amortize, over a five-year period, engineering and legal fees anticipated to be incurred in connection with the petition of the San Lorenzo Valley County Water District to fix the just compensation to be paid by said district for applicant's Boulder Creek properties. The staff did not include this, or any other amount, for such purposes in its estimates of applicant's operating expenses. The staff also disallowed additional amounts included by applicant representing the cost of the rehearing of the 1953 rate increase proceeding, the cost of appealing that proceeding to the Supreme Court, and the cost of opposing the bond election in 1955, all involving the Boulder Creek District. The exclusion of these items is considered fitting and proper in the present proceeding for the same reasons expressed in the Commission's Decision No. 56345 pertaining to applicant's North Sacramento District. Another small portion of the difference results from the variation in the methods of allocating a number of classifications Application No. 39637 2/ Application No. 38663 -8A. 39674 ds been installed and put into operation by the end of 1958, with the possible exception of a well which requires further exploration. The difference of \$11,700 between the two estimates of depreciated rate base is largely due to the methods of weighting the cost of the items of plant involved in the 1958 construction program. The staff gave the reservoir a full year's weighting while the applicant gave it a half year's weighting, the effect of which is partially offset by the fact that the staff weighted the other installations on the basis of estimated completion in August and September, while the applicant also gave those items a half year's weighting. Customer Participation Several customers testified to their dissatisfaction with the manner in which applicant administers its filed rate schedules and the misunderstandings or lack of understanding resulting from the bills rendered for water service under the several schedules. In particular, these witnesses complained of the applicant's practice of continuing to bill established residents in advance for the entire annual minimum charge instead of more universal application of the special condition whereby such customer may elect to pay the annual minimum charge on a monthly basis. It should be noted that no customer complained concerning the quality of water service. This indicates that the installations heretofore ordered by the Commission, supplemented by efforts of the applicant's personnel, have resulted in substantial improvements in service. Proposed Rate Schedule In an endeavor to eliminate the diseatisfaction expressed by the customers at the hearing and the apparent confusion caused by the optional annual and seasonal minimum charges, applicant has - 10 -

appear to be adequate to protect applicant against any unusual amount of uncollectible bills and no change in rules will be authorized at this time.

## Findings and Conclusions

In view of all of the evidence as discussed hereinabove, the Commission finds and concludes that the staff's estimates of operating revenues, expenses, including taxes and depreciation, and the rate base for the year 1958 are reasonable and they will be, and hereby are, adopted for the purpose of this proceeding.

The evidence demonstrates that applicant is in need of, and entitled to, increased revenue. However, the revenues which applicant's proposed rates will produce are greater than, and the resulting rate of return on applicant's investment is in excess of, those which are reasonable. Applicant's proposed rates will not be authorized.

Applicant claims, and offered considerable testimony, that it is essential that it earn a rate of return of 7½%. Much of the testimony concerned substantial amounts expended by applicant during recent years in improving the water supply, storage and distribution facilities. The fact that no service protest was registered at the hearing demonstrates that applicant has improved service to its customers in this district. We are aware of the changes in economic conditions and of the increases in interest levels which have taken place since water rates for this district were last established in 1954.

The Commission has considered all factors and is of the opinion that applicant should be accorded the opportunity to earn a rate of return, on the hereinabove adopted depreciated rate base of \$557,400, of 6.5% based upon the level of business estimated to prevail in the test year 1958. We find said rate of return of 6.5% to be fair and reasonable for this district

of applicant's operations. It follows, therefore, that applicant should be authorized to file increased rates for water service rendered in this district estimated to produce net revenues of \$36,250. To make allowance for operating expenses, depreciation and taxes, including those on income based on straight-line depreciation, gross revenues of about \$126,730 will be required, an increase of \$29,700, or 30.5%, over those estimated to be obtainable at present rates. The rates herein authorized are designed to produce such results and the Commission finds as a fact that the increases in rates and charges authorized herein are justified and that the present rates, insofar as they differ from those herein prescribed, are for the future unjust and unreasonable.

## ORDER

Citizens Utilities Company of California, a corporation, having applied to this Commission for an order authorizing increases in rates and charges for water services rendered to customers in its Boulder Creek District, a public hearing having been held, the Commission having been fully informed thereon, the matter having been submitted and now being ready for decision based upon the evidence and the findings and conclusions thereon expressed in the foregoing opinion,

#### IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that:

1. Applicant is authorized to file in quadruplicate with this Commission, on or after the effective date of this order and in conformity with the provisions of General Order No. 96, the schedules of rates attached to this order as Appendix A and, on not less than five days' notice to this Commission and to the public, to make such rates effective for all such services rendered on and after September 1, 1958.

- 2. Applicant shall forthwith file an appropriate application with the Internal Revenue Service of the United States Treasury Department requesting permission to change the method of accounting for depreciation of the properties in its Boulder Creek District from the sum-of-the-years digits method to the straight-line method for the calendar year 1958 and subsequent years for plant on which it has claimed accelerated depreciation on the sum-of-the-years digits method in the years since December 31, 1953. Applicant shall inform the Commission in writing within ten days after permission has been given by the said Treasury Department, including all pertinent details pertaining to the action taken by the Treasury Department. In the event that the requested permission is refused or has not been granted by December 1, 1958, applicant shall so inform the Commission in writing within ten days after such refusal and in no event later than December 10, 1958, stating what steps have been taken by applicant and the reasons given for any denial of the application made to the Treasury Department.
- 3. Should applicant elect to take accelerated depreciation for the year 1958 or any future year, it shall immediately report such election to the Commission, and the Commission will promptly move to adjust the rates herein authorized in such manner as it may then find to be appropriate.
- 4. Beginning with the year 1958, applicant shall determine the accruals for depreciation by dividing the original cost of utility plant less estimated future net salvage less depreciation reserve by the estimated remaining life of the plant; applicant shall review the accruals when major changes in utility plant composition occur and for each plant account at intervals of not more than three years. Results of these reviews shall be submitted to the Commission.

5. Applicant shall, within sixty days after the effective date of this order, file four copies of a comprehensive map drawn to an indicated scale not smaller than 400 feet to the inch, delineating by appropriate markings various tracts of land and territory served; the principal water production, storage and distribution facilities; and the location of the various water system properties of applicant.

The effective date of this order shall be ten days after the date hereof.

Dated at San Francisco, California, this 14th

Commissioners

resident

Commissioner. Thoodero H. Jenner, being necessarily absent, did not participate in the disposition of this proceeding.

APPENDIX A Page 1 of 5

## Schedule No. BC-1

## Boulder Creek Tariff Area

## ANNUAL GENERAL METERED SERVICE

#### APPLICABILITY

Applicable to all metered water service furnished on an annual basis.

## TERRITORY

The unincorporated area including the communities of Boulder Creek, Brookdale and Ben Lomond and vicinity, Santa Cruz County.

### RATES

Monthly Quantity Rates:	Per Meter Per Month
First 500 cu.ft. or less  Next 1,500 cu.ft., per 100 cu.ft.  Next 2,000 cu.ft., per 100 cu.ft.  Next 3,000 cu.ft., per 100 cu.ft.  Next 5,000 cu.ft., per 100 cu.ft.  Over 12,000 cu.ft., per 100 cu.ft.  Annual Minimum Charge:	\$ 3.50 .55 .45 .40 .35 .25 Per Meter Per Year
For 5/8 x 3/4-inch meter  For 3/4-inch meter  For 1-inch meter  For 12-inch meter  For 2-inch meter	\$ 42.00 60.00 96.00 168.00 252.00

The Annual Minimum Charge will entitle the customer to the quantity of water each month which one-twelfth of the Annual Minimum Charge will purchase at the Monthly Quantity Rates.

### SPECIAL CONDITIONS

1. The annual minimum charge applies to service during the 12-month period commencing January 1, and is due in advance.

APPENDIX A Page 2 of 5

## Schedule No. BC-1

## Boulder Creek Toriff Area

## ANNUAL GENERAL METERED SERVICE

## SPECIAL CONDITIONS (CONTD)

- 2. A customer who has established his permanency by having paid for service at the same location for each of the preceding 12 months may elect to pay the annual minimum charge on a bimonthly basis equal to one-sixth of the annual minimum charge.
- 3. The charge for water used in excess of the quantity allowed each month for the annual minimum charge will be billed bimonthly on a noncumulative monthly consumption basis.

APPENDIX A Page 3 of 5

#### Schedule No. BC\_1S

#### Boulder Creek Tariff Area

#### SEASONAL METERED SERVICE

#### APPLICABILITY

Applicable to all metered water service furnished on a seasonal basis.

#### TERRITORY

The unincorporated area including the communities of Boulder Creek, Brookdale and Ben Lomond and vicinity, Santa Cruz County.

#### RATES

Mont	thly Quantity Rates:		Per Meter Per Month
	First 500 cu.ft. or less, inclu Seasonal Minimum Charge	ded in	
	Next 1,500 cu.ft., per 100 cu.;		\$ .55
	Next 2,000 cu.ft., per 100 cu.	£t	-45
	Next 3,000 cu.ft., per 100 cu.		-40
	Next 5,000 cu.ft., per 100 cu.		•35
	Over 12,000 cu.ft., per 100 cu.	ft	-25
Seas	onal Minimum Charge:	Per Meter Per Season	Quantity Allowed per month for Minimum Charge
	For 5/8 x 3/4-inch meter	\$ 35.00	500 cu.ft.
		50.00	800 cu.ft.
		80.00	1,300 cu.ft.
	For light inch meter	140.00	2,500 cu.ft.
	For 2-inch meter	210.00	4,000 cu.ft.
	-		

#### SPECIAL CONDITIONS

1. The seasonal minimum charge applies to service during ten consecutive months of the calendar year and is due in advance on January 1. The seasonal charge is for the period January through October; however, a customer may elect to take service during the ten consecutive months commencing February 1 or March 1 by giving notice to the company prior to January 1, stating the period for which service is desired.

APPENDIX A Page 4 of 5

Schedule No. BC-1S

#### Boulder Creek Tariff Area

#### SEASONAL METERED SERVICE

#### SPECIAL CONDITIONS (CONTD)

- 2. The charge for water used in excess of the quantity allowed each month for the seasonal minimum charge will be billed bimonthly on a noncumulative monthly consumption basis.
- 3. A customer, having paid the seasonal minimum charge, may obtain service during the other two months of the same calendar year upon payment of a monthly minimum charge equal to one-tenth of the seasonal minimum charge for each such month service is desired. All water used in excess of this monthly minimum will be billed at Monthly Quantity Rates.
- 4. For initial service the seasonal minimum charge will be prorated on the basis of the ratio of the number of months remaining in the calendar year to the seasonal period of ten months.

APPENDIX A
Page 5 of 5

#### Schedule No. BC-5

#### PUBLIC FIRE HYDRANT SERVICE

#### APPLICABILITY

Applicable to fire hydrant service furnished to duly organized or incorporated fire districts or other political subdivisions of the State.

#### TERRITORY

The unincorporated area including the communities of Boulder Creek, Brookdale and Ben Lomond and vicinity, Santa Cruz County.

RATES		Per Hydrant Fer Month	
Attached	Attached to mains less than 4 inches in diameter	3	0.60
	Attached to mains 4 inches in diameter or larger	,	2.00

#### SPECIAL CONDITIONS

- 1. The cost of installing and maintenance of hydrants will be borne by the fire protection agency.
- 2. For water delivered for other than fire protection purposes, charges will be made at quantity rates under the applicable metered service schedule.
- 3. The utility will supply only such water at such pressure as may be available from time to time as the results of its normal operation of the system.
- 4. Relocation of any hydrant shall be at the expense of the party requesting relocation.