

ORIGINAL

Decision No. 67297

BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

PHILIP D. ERATH,

Complainant,

vs

PALOS VERDES WATER COMPANY,

Defendant.

Case No. 7854
(Filed March 5, 1964)
(Answered March 24, 1964)

Philip D. Erath, Complainant.
David P. Evans, for defendant.

O P I N I O N

Complainant, who is a graduate mechanical engineer and a consumer of defendant, alleges that he was improperly charged by defendant for the movement of the domestic water service connection to his property at 2686 Sweetgrass Lane, Rolling Hills. The charge by defendant's invoice No. 746, dated December 31, 1963, was in the amount of \$154.72.

Public hearing was held before Examiner Warner on April 22, 1964, at Los Angeles.

In June 1962, complainant purchased a residence under construction from a builder, and he and his wife completed the construction. The house, on a 1/2-acre lot, comprises 2133 square feet including three bedrooms, a den, a living room, two baths, a kitchen, and dining room, and is worth approximately \$50,000. One bath has a shower, the other a tub and shower, and there are four outside hose connections. The domestic water service connection to the property was made by defendant at the lowest elevation of

the property on Sweetgrass Lane. The house is located on a pad at an elevation 23 feet above the connection. The service line from the connection to the house is one inch in diameter and 90 feet long.

Soon after occupying the house, and while still completing the inside, complainant discovered that water pressure was so low that at times there was no flow from the shower or at the sink and it was impossible to use the automatic dishwasher and washing machine. He complained to defendant, and in the early part of 1963 complainant authorized defendant, in writing, to install a new service and meter on Deerhill Drive at the upper extremity of his property and in which there was a 6-inch water main. The estimated cost was \$185 and complainant agreed to accept water pressures in excess of 125 psi. The new service connection was installed in the spring of 1963.

Defendant's superintendent testified that a flow test at the original service connection had been made on July 2, 1962, which showed dynamic pressure of 10 psi and static pressure of 25 psi at the house, and free flow of 26½ gpm at the meter and 15 gpm through the 10-house taps. Defendant considered these to be satisfactory.

The record shows that complainant's property is at the dead end of Sweetgrass Lane and the elevation of the house is 480 feet. Complainant's neighbors below him on Sweetgrass Lane had also complained of low water pressure, but their water pressure has improved recently.

Defendant submitted pressure charts recorded at a meter at 2632 Deerhill Drive at an elevation of 476 feet. Each of the charts, Exhibits A through H, dated January 18, 1964, June 21, 22, 24, 25 and 26, 1962, and March 20 and 21, 1964, respectively,

taken over a 24-hour period, shows average water pressure above the minimum limits prescribed by General Order No. 103. However on several occasions pressures dropped to just above 20 psi.

Defendant did not place the original meter connection on the high pressure line along Deerhill Drive because it would have required the installation of a pressure regulator. This was not discussed with the complainant or the builder at the time of the original installation.

We find that, although water pressures at complainant's original water service connection on Sweetgrass Lane met the minimum standards prescribed by General Order No. 103, water service to complainant's residence, at an elevation 23 feet above the connection, was unsatisfactory.

We further find that defendant had in place a 6-inch main in Deerhill Drive above complainant's residence where a satisfactory water service connection could have been made, except for resulting high water pressure in excess of 125 psi, but that a pressure regulator could have been installed at complainant's expense if a choice had been given him. We find that defendant, reasonably, should have given complainant such choice, and that the charge of \$154.72 for moving the water service connection from the lower level on Sweetgrass Lane to the higher level on Deerhill Drive was unreasonable.

Defendant's invoice No. 746 charging complainant \$154.72 should be canceled.

O R D E R

IT IS ORDERED that Palos Verdes Water Company shall, within ten days after the effective date hereof, cancel the charges to Philip D. Erath on invoice No. 746, dated December 31, 1963, and shall report to the Commission in writing within five days thereafter its compliance herewith.

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

Dated at San Francisco, California, this 3rd day of JUNE, 1964.

William A. Burns
President

George H. Brewer
Commissioners

Frederick B. Hildebrandt
Commissioners