### CALIFORNIA PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION WATER DIVISION

# STANDARD PRACTICE FOR PROCESSING INFORMAL GENERAL RATE CASES OF CLASS B, C and D WATER UTILITIES

**STANDARD PRACTICE U-9-W** 

SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

November, 1999

#### WATER ADVISORY BRANCH

# STANDARD PRACTICE FOR PROCESSING INFORMAL GENERAL RATE CASES (GRC)

#### OF WATER UTILITIES

#### A - PURPOSE AND SCOPE

- 1. The purpose of this standard practice is to provide the utility and the staff engineer or analyst (analyst) with the steps and schedule for processing an advice letter (AL) GRC for small (Class B, C and D) water utilities.
- 2. While many of the steps in this Standard Practice are required by the Public Utilities Code, General Orders (G.O.) or the Commission's Rules of Practice and Procedure, in processing small water utility rate requests common sense and practicality must take precedence. A small company's lack of time or money can be a major deterrent to what is mandated "by the book". Consequently, the analyst is expected to exercise discretion in directing actions to be taken by the utility. The analyst must maintain a courteous and business-like relationship with all parties in the proceeding. In all cases, if there is any doubt about what action to take, consult with your Project Manager or Supervisor.

#### **B - REVIEW and PUBLIC NOTICE**

- 3. Within seven days after being accepted, the AL will be reviewed by an engineer or analyst in the Water Advisory Branch (WAB), and by an accountant in the Audit & Enforcement Branch (AEB). The AEB analyst will prepare a cash flow study. If the utility is identified as operating in the red on a cash flow basis, AEB will prepare a resolution to authorize an immediate rate increase adequate to meet the cash flow needs.
- 4. The WAB analyst will first check that annual reports have been filed as required by G.O. 104-A. If the utility is not up to date with its annual reports, or if the reports are clearly in error, the analyst will inform the utility and processing will not continue until they are up to date. The analyst will apply judgment, since if there are many years of reports missing or wrong, it could be difficult for the utility to reproduce them. At the

very least, the latest annual report must be filed before any additional rate case work is done.

- 5. The WAB analyst will then check all of the calculations on the worksheets and the standard data request items for Class D filings (Appendix A) for accuracy. Completion of these two reviews enables the analyst to determine whether the filing is complete or needs further explanation or additional data. If the AL is not complete, the analyst will send a data request to the utility listing the information needed to make it complete. Upon receipt of this information and verification of its accuracy, or if it is determined that the original filing is complete, the analyst will send an acceptance letter with the draft Notice to Customers (see Appendix B) to the utility.
- 6. The analyst will maintain a log of all data requests and telephone conversations with the utility. All data requests made orally should be followed by a letter signed by the Supervisor or Project Manager.
- 7. If the workpapers are in such poor condition that they cannot be used, the analyst will confer with the Project Manager about converting the filing to an outreach filing (Class D only). If it is an outreach filing, staff will prepare the AL.

#### C – PUBLIC MEETING AND SCHEDULE

- 8. The schedule starts when the acceptance letter and draft Notice to Customers is sent. It is the utility's responsibility to obtain a meeting place for the public meeting that is accessible to the handicapped. Once the analyst, or project manager, and the utility agree on the date and place, the utility completes and distributes the notice.
- 10. The analyst then produces a schedule of events, using the example in Appendix C. The analyst will fill in the actual anticipated calendar dates, considering other workload, vacations, training, holidays, etc. and forward it to the project manager. After approval by the PM and review by the supervisor, the analyst will send a copy to the utility and the WAB branch chief.

#### D - PREPARATION FOR THE FIELD INVESTIGATION

- 11. The analyst will do the following in order to finish the field trip with all of the information needed to complete the R/O report:
  - a. Review prior Commission decisions, resolutions and the utility's correspondence files (602, 609). Check the compliance report to see if there are any delinquent items.
  - b. Review prior GRC resolutions, workpapers and reports, if available. Compare the amounts authorized in the last GRC with the utility's request. This should help identify potential issues.

- c. Check with Consumer Affairs Branch for customer complaints.
- d. Review all replies to the Public Notice. Each reply will be answered. The analyst may use a form letter for general complaints, but will write a personalized letter for specific complaints.
- e. Check the local telephone book for the utility's listing. There should be adequate identification so the customers can contact the utility. The analyst will call the company during non-business hours to determine that the answering machine works.
- f. Call the State Department of Health Services or the local health department. The analyst will attempt to make an appointment to talk to the assigned engineer during the field trip and will invite him or her to the public meeting and the system inspection trip.
- g. Request the system map from the utility. This map is a requirement of G.O. 103, I.10.a.
- h. Make an appointment with the local fire chief or representative.
- i. Contact the utility to make sure it is prepared for the visit and has its books of accounts in order.
- j. Inform the utility representative ahead of time that he or she needs to make a presentation on the reasons the utility wants the increase. Request that the utility prepare a handout that summarizes its situation.

#### **E-FIELD INVESTIGTATION**

- 12. During the field trip, the analyst will meet with the county health department or Department of Health Services engineer assigned to the utility to discuss the water quality history of the utility and any other information the health department has.
- 13. During the field inspection the analyst will.

#### In the Utility's Office

- a. Using the system map, have the company explain how the system operates.
- b. Ask to see the utility's copy of its tariff book. It is a requirement of G.O. 96-A that the tariff book be available for public inspection.

- c. Ask to see the utility's complaint file. It is a requirement of G.O. 103, I.8. that the utility maintain a file for two years and a summary list for an additional three years.
- d. Ask for a leak map. This is a map showing the system with main leaks marked on it. Some small companies won't have one. It is not a requirement, but it is handy to have as it helps to determine when mains need replacement.
- e. Audit the utility's books of account to determine the accuracy of its records, verify expenses and plant additions and for ensure conformance with the Uniform System of Accounts.

#### In the Field

- a. Inspect facilities. Determine the condition of the facilities, the type and location of supply sources, the location of any proposed additions, inspect any new construction and any prior ordered or authorized additions (particularly where money has been authorized in rate base), growth potential, current activities, compliance with G.O. 103, etc. Verify that any prior ordered or authorized additions have actually been installed.
- b. Take pictures of facilities.
- c. Take pressure readings, particularly at a high point or at a location distant from the source of water.
- d. Meet with the chief or representative of the local fire-fighting agency (discuss pressure problems, fire flows, etc.).

#### Public Meeting (normally conducted by Project Manager)

- a. These meetings are usually held in the evening during the field trip; however, in some resort or vacation areas the meetings are scheduled on weekends.
- b. The Project Manager will open the meeting and introduce the utility and other staff, then explain Commission procedures and the steps and scheduling of the rate case.
- c. The utility will then use its handout to make a presentation on the reasons for the increase and answers questions.
- d. The analyst will take notes. Upon return, the Project Manager will prepare a memorandum of the meeting and forward it to the analyst, the supervisor and the branch chief.

#### F - STAFF REPORT

- 14. See Standard Practice U-3-W.
- 15. After the field trip, the analyst will identify any areas of concern, prepare an information sheet similar to Appendix D and send a copy to the Branch Chief, the Division Director and the utility.
- 16. The project manager will hold progress meetings to discuss the status of the report. As problem areas are identified, they will be communicated to the utility for potential resolution.
- 17. After the project manager approves the report, the division will mail a copy to the utility and to any person who requested one. The analyst will send an electronic copy to the WAB branch chief and mark the document for "read-only" access in Docs Open.
- 18. The project manager or analyst will prepare a resolution authorizing the utility to charge the rates calculated in the report and will prepare a notice to the customers informing them of the amount of increase and in general why it was authorized, the new rates and the effective date in the format of Appendix D. The utility will distribute the notice to its customers in the first subsequent billing. The resolutions will be added to the Commission agenda as soon as it is final.

#### **G-SETTLEMENT**

- 21. If the utility agrees with the summary of earnings in the staff report, the original Advice Letter is approved as modified by the resolution.
- 22. If the utility does not agree with the staff report, the Supervisor will schedule a meeting with the utility representative to discuss any differences. All issues of expense amounts, salary levels, etc. should be resolved at this level. The Branch Chief and Director should be appealed to only if there are issues of policy.
- 23. If a settlement cannot be reached between the staff and the utility, the utility may send a letter to the WAB branch chief explaining the deficiencies in the staff report and why its position is superior. The branch chief will answer the letter as soon as possible, but no longer than two weeks after receipt. A similar process will be used to appeal to the Division Director.
- 24. If there is still no agreement, the utility needs to send a letter to the Chief, Water Advisory Branch requesting the Administrative Law Judge Division schedule a hearing., as ordered in Decision (D) 92-03-093, March 31, 1992, p. 31.

#### **H-RESOLUTION**

- 25. If the appeal process has resulted in changes in rates from those in the first resolution, the Project Manager or analyst will prepare a second resolution authorizing the utility to file a supplemental advice letter to charge those rates.
- 26. The analyst will respond to any remaining letters from customers.

#### I - FILE

27. The analyst shall file all workpapers and a copy of the staff report in the file room under the utility's name and discard the prior GRC file except for any material that may need to be retained for future use.

#### Appendix A

#### (Letterhead if Available)

Advice Letter No. 123 Any Water	Company (U 456 W) December 31, 1999
Public Utilities Commission of the	State of California
Any Water Company requests discrets General Rate Increase request.	ionary review and approval of the enclosed
Any protests or responses to this	filing should be sent to:
(name)	(address)
(fax number)	
If your have not received a reply	to your protest within 10 business days,
contact this person at	·

Signature

# CALIFORNIA PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

## For Class D Water Utilities Regulated by the CPUC

Workpapers for rate increases (decreases)

WATER UTILITY NAMI	E:		
Name of Contact Person:_			
ADDRESS OF UTILITY:			Box and/or suite number
		City and Zip	Code
PHONE NUMBER of Contact Person:	(	)	
Requested:			
Increase (decrease)	doll	ar amount	(May not be more than Worksheet Page 1, Line 33)
	perc	cent	(May not be more than Worksheet Page 1, Line 34)

#### **INSTRUCTIONS:**

- 1. Have your latest annual report available.
- 2. Obtain a copy of your utility's latest GRC resolution or decision. (Water Branch will provide you a copy upon request)
- 3. Collect the information requested on the Standard Data Request Form.
- 4. Complete the entries in column A of page 1, using Schedule F of your latest annual report.
- 5. Do not include SDWBA surcharge funds or PUC reimbursement funds collected under Schedule UF.
- 6. Complete page 2 using adopted quantities from the last GRC and the dollar value of investments made since the last GRC as recorded in your annual reports since the last GRC.
- 7. Using the proposed net revenue from page 2, estimate income tax using page 3
- 8. Complete the remainder of page 1. In choosing a Test Year, use the current calendar year if you file between January and June or the following year if you file between July and December. If any test year estimate differs sharply from the last recorded value, please include an explanation on a separate sheet.

#### STANDARD DATA REQUEST

This is the standard data request enclosed with the informal rate change workbook. The information requested herein is necessary for the staff to evaluate a rate increase request, so we are requesting it at the outset of the process. Please provide the filled-in forms and the following information if applicable. Call the Water Advisory Branch at (415) 703-1739 if you have any questions.

- 1. Copies of electric bills for the last twelve months;
- 2. Copies of purchased water bills for the last twelve months;
- 3. Employee salary records (or wage rates and hours worked) and job descriptions for all employees;
- 4. A copy of the latest liability, auto, and worker's compensation insurance premium bills;
- 5. A summary of property, payroll, and franchise taxes with copies of the latest tax statements;
- 6. A statement of whether the utility expects to require major changes in operating expense or plant investment due to water quality regulation and what those changes will consist of;
- 7. A statement of needed or completed major repairs; and
- 8. Any changes to rate structures you wish to propose in this rate case.

		Column	A	В	C
			19 annual	Is this a typical value?	19 Test
<sub>7</sub> .		Operating Poyonus	report	(If no, please attach	Year Estimate
		Operating Revenue		explanation) yes□ no□	(present rates)
1		Unmetered water revenue		yes□ no□	
2		Fire protection revenue		yes□ no□	
3		Irrigation revenue		yes□ no□	
4		Metered water revenue		•	
5	480	Other water revenue		yes□ no□	
6		Total Revenue		-	
7		Operating Expenses			
8	610	Purchased Water		yes□ no□	
9	615	Power		yes□ no□	
10	618	Other volume related expenses		yes□ no□	
11	630	Employee labor		yes□ no□	
12	640	Materials		yes□ no□	
13	650	Contract work (excluding water testing)		yes□ no□	
14		Water testing portion of contract work		yes□ no□	
15	660	Transportation expenses		yes□ no□	
16	664	Other plant maintenance		yes□ no□	
17	670	Office salaries		yes□ no□	
18	671	Management salaries		yes□ no□	
19	674	Employee pensions & benefits		yes□ no□	
20	676	Uncollectibles expense		yes□ no□	
21	678	Office services and rentals		yes□ no□	
22	681	Office supplies and expenses		yes□ no□	
23	682	Professional services		yes□ no□	
24	684	Insurance		yes□ no□	
25	688	Regulatory Commission expense		yes□ no□	
26	689	General expenses		yes□ no□	
27	Tota	al Operating Expenses (sum of Lines 8 thru 26)			
28	403	Depreciation expense		yes□ no□	
29		Taxes other than income taxes		yes□ no□	
30		Income tax on proposed net income (From Page 3	, Line 4 <b>OR</b> Line 6		
31		al Expenses at proposed rates (Lines 27 +28 + 29 +		,	
32		Net Income (From Page 2, Line 21)	,		
33		Total Revenue Requirement (Line 31 + Line 32)			
34		Net Change in Revenue (Column C, Line 33minu	s Column C, Line	5)	
35		Percent Change in Revenue (Column C, Line 34	divided by Column	C, Line 6)	

	Column	A	В	С	D	
line					Amount	
	Last Approved Rate					
1	Base	Authorized By	Res or I	Dec		
2	Changes to ratebase by	y Year				
3	Year	New Plant Investment	Contributed or Advanced Portion	OPTIONAL: Depreciation Accrual *	Net Rate Base Change (Col A-Col B - Col C)	
4						
5						
6						
7						
8						
9						
10						
11						
12						
13						
14						
15						
16						
17						
18	Test Year Proposed					
	Test Year Estimated F	*				
	Requested Rate of Ret					
21	21 Net Income (Line 19, Col. D multiplied by Line 20, Col. D)					

Copy to Page 1, Line 32

Fı	anchise Fees.	A Franchise Fee is	s a connection	charge for new	customers that can	n be used to build
	new infrastruc	ture or replace or r	epair existing	infrastructure.	Franchise fee reve	enues are not to
	be used for O&	kM expenses and c	annot be book	ed to retained e	arnings.	

Do vour	want a Franchise Fee?	Yes	No	. It so.	how much?	S
---------	-----------------------	-----	----	----------	-----------	---

<sup>\*</sup> NOTE: The ratebase you are calculating is an approximation. Unless you have accurate records of depreciation accrual since the last GRC, you should enter -0- in Column C. This omission is made to simplify filing. The Commission's staff will calculate actual depreciation reserve and rate base during its investigation.

#### **Income Tax Calculations**

(USE EITHER A, B, or C, DEPENDING ON YOUR NET INCOME, PAGE 2, LINE 21)

#### **METHOD A**

#### TO BE USED IF NET INCOME (PAGE 2, LINE 21) IS LESS THAN \$6,630

1	Net Income (Page 2, Line 21)		
2	Federal Tax (=Net Income X 0.177)		
3	State Tax	800	
4	Total Tax (= Federal Tax + State Tax)		Transcribe to Page 1, Line 30

OR

#### **METHOD B**

#### TO BE USED IF NET INCOME (PAGE 2, LINE 21) IS BETWEEN \$6,630 and \$38,500

5 Net Income (Page 2, Line 21)	
6 Total Tax (= Net Income X 0.291)	Transcribe to Page 1, Line 30

OR

#### **METHOD C**

#### TO BE USED IF NET INCOME (PAGE 2, LINE 21) IS ABOVE \$38,500

7 Net Income (Page 2, Line 21)	
8 Total Tax (= Net Income X 0.313)	Transcribe to Page 1, Line 30

STATE OF CALIFORNIA GRAY DAVIS, Go

#### PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

505 VAN NESS AVENUE SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94102-3298



Date	602-19	
Any Water Company Address City CA Zip Code		
Dear Mr/Ms	_	
	receipt of your draft advice letter rate increase request, v The Branch has completed its preliminary revif today.	
	ater awareness during the rate increase process and to a meeting be held to afford customers the opportunity to the approval process.	_
place of the meeting sho	range for a suitable meetingroom which must be accessiful be convenient to the water company's customers. F. at the telephone number below to make sure the	Please contact
otherwise, but should be Commission with three	planks and distribute the enclosed notice to each customer ereceived by the customer at least 20 days before the purcopies of the notice as distributed, one to the attention one to the Advisory Branch of the Water Division, advice wise.	ablic meeting date. Please furnish the of the Office of Public Affairs, one to
	ntative(s) at the public meeting should be prepared to die an increase, system operations, and service problems.	iscuss and answer customer questions
	ate any letters received from the utility's customers and our request for an increase in rates.	will correspond with you regarding
	questions in this matter, please contactMr(s)ttion in this matter.	at We
Very truly yours,		
, Project Advisory Branch	Manager	
Enclosure	Data	
	Date	<del></del>

#### NOTICE OF PROPOSED RATE INCREASE AND PUBLIC MEETING WITH THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION STAFF

Water Company () has req	uested authority from the CALIFORNIA PUBLIC
UTILITIES COMISSION to increase its water rates.	The total increase in gross revenue will be \$ or
% in the year The increase is necess	ary to offset increased operating expenses and to provide
an adequate rate of return. The Commission Staff will	l hold a public meeting on
at	, located at
,	to explain the rate process and receive public input.
's last general rate increase became company proposes to increase rates as follows:	effective per The
company proposes to increase rates as ronows.	

#### **Metered Service Rates**

#### Per Meter Per Month

Service Charge	:	Present Rates	Proposed Rates
For 5/8	x 3/4-inch meter	\$	\$
For	3/4-inch meter	\$	\$
For	1-inch meter	\$	\$
For	11/2-inch meter	\$	\$
For	2-inch meter	\$	\$
For	3-inch meter	\$	\$
For	4-inch meter	\$	\$
Quanti	ty Rates:		
	All water., per 100 cu.ft	\$	\$

Service charge is a readiness-to-serve charge which is applicable to all metered service and to which is to added the monthly charge computed at the Quantity Rates.

The Commission staff will make a thorough investigation of the utility's request. Following the investigation, the Commission may grant the utility's request in whole or in part, or may deny it. It may also order the utility to charge rates different from those shown in this notice.

The public meeting is informal and affords customers the opportunity to ask questions and express their views. \_\_\_\_\_ will have representatives there to explain the reasons for the proposed increase. Likewise there will be a Commission Staff representative who will conduct the meeting and explain how the staff will analyze the proposed rates and fee increases.

Section 454 of the California Public Utilities Code provides that no public utility shall raise any rate or so alter any classification, contract, or rule as a result of any rate increase except on a showing before the Commission

and a finding of the Commission that such increase is justified. Customers may wish to call to the Commission's attention any problem covering water service, billing procedure or other factor pertaining to a reasonable service for the charge. Customers who would like to provide any other information or comments regarding this requested increase, should write to the Commission at the following address:

California Public Util Water Utilities Division	
505 Van Ness Avenue	•
San Francisco, CA 94	
Attention:	, Project Manager
Comments should me than (20) days after th	ntion that they pertain to Water Company and must be send no later this notice is sent.
A copy of	's filing may be inspected in its business office at:
Further information n	nay be obtained from the utility at its business office or from the Commission at the

above address.

NOTE: THE MEETING PLACE IS ACCESSIBLE TO THE HANDICAPPED

"Service Guarantee Plan"

#### **GRC PROCEDURES**

Time Schedule

Activity		<u>Day</u>
PHASE I		
Filing received by Water Utilities Branch		
Reviewed - for completeness of filing. If filing incomplete, prepare data request for project manager's signature.		7
Assigned to auditor for cash flow analysis and need for interim rate relief.		7
If complete as filed, Acceptance Letter and Notice to Customers mailed to utility - A.L. considered filed.		14
Resolution prepared granting cash-flow interim increase (if needed)		45
PHASE II		
After filing is accepted, assigned to staff analyst to complete investigation - Utility provides notice to customers	14	
Field Investigation and Public Meeting Conducted - last day to add or modify filing		45
Staff Report to Project Manager for Review		
Staff Report completed and mailed to Utility and any customers who requested one at the Public Meeting.  Project Manager submits Commission Resolution based		

on staff Results of Operations report.

If not accepted, schedule meeting with Supervisor and utility	120
Resolution approved.	125
If issues not resolved, utility appeals to Branch Chief, then Water Divison Director.	130 135
If issues not resolved, utility requests hearing, branch contacts Chief ALJ for hearing.  - Hearing held, decision rendered.	155
Final Resolution (if necessary) completed by Project Manager	165
Final Action by Commission-Resolution approved.	185
Staff completes tariff book; Utility requested to sign tariffs and include notice of "final" increase in first bill to customers.	190
Staff analyst files Report, resolution and work papers.	195

#### Appendix D

ANY WATER COMPANY (AWC) (WTD 999)

P.O. BOX 123

ANYWHERE, CA 92004

(ANY COUNTY)

Office: 456 Palm Drive

ANY CA 92004

(619) 767-5314: Alice G.(Jere) Hansen(Secy)

Receptionist: Diane

President: J. Any (New Jersey) Phone: O: (908) 541-XXXX

H: (908) 656-XXXX

Accountant: M. A. Expert

Phone: (310) 498-XXXX (Secretary: Lara)

(310) 498-XXXX

DHS contact: Steve Sniff, Sanitary Engineer

(619) 525-XXXX

Case Filed: November 16, 1995

Accepted by Branch: February 23, 1996

Notice Published on March 7 & also mailed toward the end of February 1996 with customers water

bill.

Public Meeting: Tuesday, April 2, 1995 at 7:00 p.m. at LaCasa Del Zorro Resort Hotel

Last GRC: Resolution No. W.-3XXX, dated July 22, 1992

\$67,388 or 12.65% increase, 11.56% ROR

Last Offset: DHS Surcharge, November 18, 1995

Last Increase: CPI-U of 2.7%, October 10, 1994

AWC Proposed Revenues: \$749,260 Test Year 1996)

AWC Current Revenues: \$603,764

AWC Proposed increase: \$145,496 or 24%

AWC Proposed ROR: 13.50%

CPUC Approved ROR Range: 13.00% to 13.50% = 13.25% Avg.

Service Connections: 1,131 Metered (End of 1995)

CPUC Adopted in 1992: 1,052 Metered

Unusual Expenses:

Rate Base Proposed: \$1,083,098 Rate Base Adopted: \$818,851 Employee Labor Proposed: \$99,421

Adopted: \$69,350

Management Salaries Proposed: \$20,183

Adopted: \$11,000

Professional Services Proposed: \$26,071

Adopted: \$15,640

#### Appendix E

#### (LETTERHEAD OF WATER UTILITY)

#### NOTICE TO CUSTOMERS (Date)

Any Water Company recently requested permission from the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) to increase its rates for water service. The CPUC rendered its decision on (date) and has authorized Any Water Utility to charge the rates shown below. The effective date for the new rates is (date).

Service Charge	Per Meter Per Month
For 5/8 x 3/4-inch meter	\$XX.XX
3/4-inch meter	\$XX.XX
1-inch meter	\$XX.XX
1 1/2-inch meter	\$XX.XX
2-inch meter	\$XX.XX
3-inch meter	\$XX.XX
4-inch meter	\$XX.XX
6-inch meter	\$XX.XX
Quality Rate	
All water, per 100 cu. Ft.	\$XX.XX

If you have any questions about the billing or your service, please contact our office at (company's telephone number).

(If the utility has a flat rate schedule, substitute or add the appropriate rates. Also include all other rates or charges that have been increased.)