

STATE OF FLORIDA

Commissioners:
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ORIGINAL COPY

Public Service Commission

July 1, 1997

Mr. and Mrs. Edward O. Wood
1043 Daleside Lane
New Port Richey, Fl 34655-4293

Re: Your letter dated June 17, 1997 concerning the "Black Water" provided by Aloha Utilities

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Wood:

I have been asked to respond to your above-noted letter. As you know, the Commission, pursuant to a petition filed by James Goldberg on behalf of the Wyndtree Master Community Association, has opened Docket No. 960545-WS to investigate the rates and quality of service provided by Aloha Utilities (Aloha) to the customers in the Seven Springs service area.

Pursuant to that petition, the Commission held a hearing (in which Mr. Wood testified) in New Port Richey on September 9 and 10, 1996. At that hearing, numerous customers testified about the "black water". Also, several customers complained that the Aloha employees acted as though they were the only customers complaining. The testimony at the hearing made it clear to the Commissioners that there was a problem with quality of service .

The utility presented testimony that its water was in compliance with the standards set by the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). The utility's engineer also presented testimony that indicated the "black water" was caused by the reaction of hydrogen sulfide in the water with the copper piping of the customers to form copper sulfide. Also, Aloha argued that it was attempting to correct the "black water" problem by using a corrosion control program approved by the DEP.

Subsequently, after the filing of briefs by all the parties, the Commission issued Order No. PSC-97-0280-FOF-WS on March 12, 1997. In that Order, based at least in part on the testimony cited above, the Commission found that the quality of service provided by Aloha was unsatisfactory. Further, that Order ordered Aloha to take action as follows:

ORDERED that Aloha Utilities, Inc., shall take aggressive action to correct the water quality problems and shall evaluate treatment alternatives for the removal of hydrogen sulfide from the supply wells. It is further

- ACK _____
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ORDERED that Aloha Utilities, Inc., shall submit a report on this evaluation within three months from the date of this Order containing the information set forth in the body of this Order.

In the body of the Order, the Commission required Aloha to report on the efficiency of any proposed process, the costs, the effect on rates, and a schedule for installation.

Aloha timely filed this report on June 10, 1997. The Commission engineers and other staff are currently reviewing this report and investigating the possible alternatives. As a part of this investigation, the engineers plan to inspect Aloha's facilities, and meet with both the utility's engineers and customers.

Pending this investigation and an indication that the quality of Aloha's water service has improved, the docket for the investigation of rates and quality of water service will remain open. I have advised the Commission engineers assigned to this case of your letter, and they have assured me that they will personally contact you. However, they will not be able to travel to the service area until sometime in July and so it may be a few weeks before you will be contacted.

Since this docket on quality of service has already been opened and there is a continuing investigation, I have not opened a separate docket in regards to your complaint letter. Instead, I will place your letter in that docket file, and place your name on the list to receive any staff recommendations and/or Commission orders in this docket.

If these actions do not meet with your approval, please advise me immediately. Also, if you have any questions, or if I can be of any further assistance please contact me at 850-413-6234.

Sincerely,



Ralph R. Jaeger
Staff Counsel

cc: Division of Consumer Affairs (DeMello)
Division of Water and Wastewater (Chase, McRoy, Moniz, Starling, VonFossen)
Division of Records and Reporting