

BEFORE THE FLORIDA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

In Re: Request for Approval to )  
implement monthly late payment )  
charge on delinquent accounts in )  
Highlands County by HIGHLANDS )  
UTILITIES CORPORATION )

DOCKET NO. 971471-SU

APPLICATION FOR APPROVAL TO IMPLEMENT MONTHLY  
LATE PAYMENT CHARGE ON DELINQUENT ACCOUNTS

Applicant, HIGHLANDS UTILITIES CORPORATION, (the "Utility"), by and through its undersigned attorneys and pursuant to Section 367.091, Florida Statutes, and Chapter 25, Part V Florida Administrative Code, files this Application for approval to charge a monthly late fee on delinquent accounts to its customers in Highlands County, Florida.

1. The name of the Utility and its principal place of business is:

Highlands Utilities Corporation  
136 County Road 29  
Lake Placid, FL 33852

2. The name and address of the person authorized to receive notices and communications in respect to this application is:

Martin S. Friedman, Esquire  
Rose, Sundstrom & Bentley, LLP  
2548 Blairstone Pines Drive  
Tallahassee, Florida 32301

3. It is the Public Service Commission's policy that the customers who pay their accounts in a timely manner should not be required to absorb costs associated with collecting past due

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accounts.

4. Based upon this policy, the Utility requests that it be permitted to assess a \$5.00 late charge on all delinquent customers in order to defray the costs associated with carrying and collecting past due accounts.

5. Charging a late fee is reasonable in this case since the Utility provides wastewater service only and thus can not readily discontinue service for nonpayment. The construction of the wastewater system makes it extremely burdensome to disconnect a delinquent customers.

6. The Utility provides wastewater service to 1,270 customers in Highlands County. Between One hundred (100) to two hundred and fifty (250) of these customers do not pay their accounts in a timely manner. On average, approximately 14% of the customers are delinquent monthly.

7. These delinquencies also affect the Utility's monthly projected revenue. Highlands' monthly projected revenue is between \$36,000 and \$45,000. The past due amounts ranges from \$6,000 to \$10,000 a month. On average, approximately 20% of the projected monthly revenue is received late due to delinquent customers.

8. Observing the size of the Utility, the above discussed percentages are considerably substantial and thus have a negative financial impact on this Utility.

9. The original and two copies of Second Revised Sheet No. 16.0 of Utility's Wastewater Tariff reflecting the proposed late fees are attached hereto as Composite Exhibit "1".

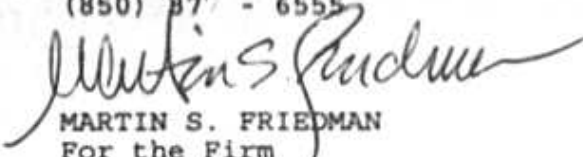
WHEREFORE, the Utility requests that the Florida Public Service Commission do the following:

a. Accept jurisdiction of this Application and grant approval to HIGHLANDS UTILITY CORPORATION to charge a \$5.00 late fee on all delinquent customers in order to prevent customers who pay their bill in a timely manner from absorbing the cost associated with collecting past due bills.

b. Provide such other and further relief as is fair, just and equitable.

Respectfully submitted this 7th day of November, 1997, by:

ROSE, SUNDSTROM & BENTLEY, LLP  
2548 Blairstone Pines Drive  
Tallahassee, Florida 32301  
(850) 877 - 6555

  
MARTIN S. FRIEDMAN  
For the Firm

highlands\97latepy.app

MISCELLANEOUS CHARGES

Initial Connection . . . . .	\$ 15.00
Normal Reconnection . . . . .	\$ 15.00
Violation Reconnection . . . . .	Reasonable Actual Cost of Disconnecting Sewer Service
Premises Visit Charge . . . . .	\$ 10.00
Insufficient Funds . . . . .	\$ 15.00
Change of Address . . . . .	\$ 3.00
Late Payment . . . . .	\$ 5.00

1. INITIAL CONNECTION - This charge would be levied for service initiation at a location where service did not exist previously.
2. NORMAL RECONNECTION - This charge would be levied for transfer of service to a new customer account at a previously served location, or reconnection of service subsequent to a customer requested disconnection.
3. VIOLATION CONNECTION - This charge would be levied prior to reconnection of an existing customer after disconnection of service for cause according to Rule 25-30.320(2), Florida Administrative Code, including a delinquency in bill payment.
4. PREMISES VISIT CHARGE (IN LIEU OF DISCONNECTION) - This charge would be levied when a service representative visits a premises for the purposes of disconnecting service for nonpayment of a due and collectible bill and does not discontinue service because the customer pays the service representative or otherwise makes satisfactory arrangements to pay the bill.
5. INSUFFICIENT FUNDS - This charge would be levied when a customer's check is returned for insufficient funds.
6. CHANGE OF ADDRESS - This charge would be levied when a customer changes his billing address.
7. LATE PAYMENT - This charge would be levied when a customer's billing account is not paid within 30 days, and is therefore delinquent.

EFFECTIVE DATE -

Dixon Pugh  
ISSUING OFFICER

President  
TITLE

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