

STATE OF FLORIDA

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OFFICE OF THE GENERAL COUNSEL
KEITH C. HETRICK
GENERAL COUNSEL
(850) 413-6199

Public Service Commission

February 16 2022

Troy Rendell
Country Walk Utilities, Inc.
4939 Cross Bayou Blvd.
New Port Richey, Florida 34652
trendell@uswatercorp.net

VIA EMAIL

Re: Docket No. 20210182-WU - Application for limited alternative rate increase in Highlands County by Country Walk Utilities, Inc.

Dear Mr. Rendell:

Please find enclosed draft Notice for the Solicitation of Comments. In order to allow customers an opportunity to provide comments, please mail the attached notice to the customers of the Utility and provide an affidavit of mailing. We ask that this be mailed to your customers as soon as possible so that comments may be received in time to be considered by the Florida Public Service Commission at its April 5, 2022 Commission Conference. The date has been left blank so you can fill in the date that the notice is sent to the customers. Please furnish me with a copy of the notice that is distributed to your customers, together with a cover letter indicating the exact date(s) on which the notice was mailed or otherwise delivered to the customers.

Should you have any questions about the matters contained herein, please do not hesitate to contact me at (850) 413-6738 or Emily Knoblauch at (850) 413-6632.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jacob Imig".

Jacob Imig
Attorney

Enclosures
JDI/mgm

cc: Office of Commission Clerk (Docket No. 20210182-WU)

BEFORE THE FLORIDA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION
NOTICE FOR THE SOLICITATION OF COMMENTS
TO THE CUSTOMERS OF
COUNTRY WALK UTILITIES, INC.
AND ALL OTHER INTERESTED PERSONS

RE: DOCKET NO. 20210182-WU

Application for a limited alternative rate increase proceeding in Highlands County by Country Walk Utilities, Inc.

DATED: _____

NOTICE is hereby given that the staff of the Florida Public Service Commission (Commission) is seeking comment and information from utility customers pertaining to the petition of Country Walk Utilities, Inc. (Country Walk or Utility) for a limited alternative rate increase (LARI) in Highlands County.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this Notice is to advise customers and other interested persons how they may provide comment to Commission staff regarding the quality of service the Utility provides and on the Utility's proposed increase in rates included in this notice. These comments will be taken into consideration by the Commission in its decision regarding the proposed rate increase.

HOW TO PROVIDE COMMENTS TO THE COMMISSION

Any person who wishes to comment or provide information may do so in one of the ways listed below.

- ❖ Email your comments to the Commission at clerk@psc.state.fl.us.
- ❖ Fill out and return, by US Mail or fax, the "Comment Card" attached to this Notice.
- ❖ Submit written comments to the Commission Clerk at the address below.

Office of Commission Clerk
Florida Public Service Commission
2540 Shumard Oak Boulevard
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0850

All correspondence should refer to "Docket No. 20210182-WU, Country Walk Utilities, Inc."

- ❖ Address the Commissioners by phone or in-person during the Commission's Conference, currently scheduled for April 5, 2022. You may address the Commissioners even if you also provide written comments through any of the other methods. If you would like to provide comments by phone or in-person at the Commission Conference, please contact Jacob Imig with the PSC at (850) 413-6738 or JImig@psc.state.fl.us prior to April 5, 2022.

Please note that written comments are given the same consideration as if they were provided to the Commission in-person.

BACKGROUND

Country Walk Utilities, Inc. (Country Walk or Utility) is a Class C utility providing water service to approximately 70 residential water customers and one general service water customer in Highlands County. The service area is located in Southwest Florida Water Management District. Wastewater treatment is provided by septic tank. Country Walk was granted Certificate No. 579-W in a transfer from Holmes Utilities, Inc. in Docket No. 20130294-WU. The Utility’s rates for water were last approved by the Commission in a staff-assisted rate case in 2018. According to Country Walk’s 2020 Annual Report, water service total gross revenues were \$58,820 and total operating expenses were \$32,246.

The LARI process allows small water and wastewater utilities to petition the Commission for a rate increase of up to 20 percent under a streamlined process. The Commission’s rule (25-30.457, Florida Administrative Code) requires the utility to identify the need for the rate increase and it provides protections to customers that ensure the utility’s earnings do not exceed the range of its authorized rate of return. On November 16, 2021, Country Walk filed an application for a LARI due to under earnings as a result of a decrease in revenues, increase in operating expenses, and an increase in Highlands County taxes. In its application, the Utility is requesting an 8.18 percent increase to its existing rates.

Copies of the Utility's application for a LARI and all attachments are available for review by members of the public by visiting <http://www.floridapsc.com/ClerkOffice/Docket> and entering 20210182 in the docket number search field.

CURRENT AND PROPOSED MONTHLY WATER RATES

	UTILITY’S CURRENT RATES	UTILITY’S PROPOSED RATES
<u>Residential Service</u>		
Base Facility Charge by Meter Size:		
5/8"X 3/4"	\$29.65	\$32.08
3/4"	\$44.48	\$48.12
1"	\$74.13	\$80.19
1-1/2"	\$148.25	\$160.38
2"	\$237.20	\$256.61
3"	\$474.40	\$513.21
4"	\$741.25	\$801.89
6"	\$1,482.50	\$1,603.78
Charge per 0 – 3,000 gallons	\$13.29	\$14.38
Charge over 3,000 gallons	\$24.15	\$26.13
<u>General Service</u>		
Base Facility Charge by Meter Size		
5/8"X 3/4"	\$29.65	\$32.08
3/4"	\$44.48	\$48.12
1"	\$74.13	\$80.19
1-1/2"	\$148.25	\$160.38
2"	\$237.20	\$256.61

3"	\$474.40	\$513.21
4"	\$741.25	\$801.89
6"	\$1,482.50	\$1,603.78
Charge per 1,000 gallons	\$15.45	\$16.71

PROCEDURES AFTER RECEIVING COMMENTS

Commission staff will prepare a recommendation on the Utility’s proposed rate increase which is tentatively scheduled to be submitted to the Commission on March 24, 2022. The Commission will then vote on staff’s recommendation, taking into consideration customer comments, at its April 5, 2022 Commission Conference. As noted above, customers may address the Commission directly at this Conference. Customers may also watch the Commission Conference live from the PSC website at www.floridapsc.com. Look for the “Watch Live Broadcast” icon on the left side of the webpage.

The Commission will thereafter issue a proposed agency action (PAA) order containing rates which may be different from those contained in staff’s final recommendation. Substantially affected persons have 21 days from the date that the PAA order is issued to protest the Commission's PAA order. Customers may obtain a copy of staff’s recommendation and all documents filed in this docket under the Clerk's Office tab at the Commission's website (<http://www.floridapsc.com>).

CONTACTING THE OFFICE OF PUBLIC COUNSEL

At any time during this process, you may contact the Office of Public Counsel. The Office of Public Counsel was established by the Florida Legislature to advocate on behalf of you and the other utility consumers before both the Commission, and other state and federal regulatory authorities. The Public Counsel is independent from the Commission, and accounts only to the people of the state of Florida through the Florida Legislature. You can reach the Office of Public Counsel at (800) 342-0222 or www.floridaopc.gov

HAVE QUESTIONS OR NEED ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Contact information for staff is provided below. You may also find additional information in the Rate Case Overview, which can be viewed at <http://www.floridapsc.com/Publications/RateCaseOverviews>.

For technical questions contact: Emily Knoblauch at (850) 413-6632 or EKnoblau@psc.state.fl.us

For legal questions contact: Jacob Imig at (850) 413-6738 or JImig@psc.state.fl.us

Please note, if you would like to provide comments by phone at the Commission Conference, please contact Jacob Imig prior to April 5, 2022.

If you wish to contact the Commission regarding complaints about service, you may call the Commission's Division of Consumer Assistance and Outreach at the following toll-free number 1-800-342-3552.

