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BEFORE THE
FLORIDA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

In re: DOCKET NO. 20250052-WS

Application for increase in water and
wastewater rates in Brevard, Citrus, Duval,
Highlands, Marion, and Volusia Counties by
CSWR-Florida Utility Operating Company.
_____ /

PROCEEDINGS: SERVICE HEARING

COMMISSIONERS
PARTICIPATING: CHAIRMAN GABRIELLA PASSIDOMO SMITH
COMMISSIONER GARY F. CLARK
COMMISSIONER MIKE LA ROSA
COMMISSIONER ANA ORTEGA
COMMISSIONER BOBBY ~~PANE~~ *Payne*

DATE: Thursday, March 5, 2026 *3/25/26*

TIME: Commenced: 5:00 p.m.
Concluded: 5:30 p.m.

PLACE: College of Central Florida
Webber Center Gallery
3001 SW College Road
Ocala, Florida

REPORTED BY: DEBRA R. KRICK
Court Reporter and
Notary Public in and for
the State of Florida at Large
Court Reporter

PREMIER REPORTING
TALLAHASSEE, FLORIDA
(850) 894-0828

1 APPEARANCES:

2 TOM A. CRABB, ESQUIRE, Radey Law Firm, 301
3 South Bronough Street, Tallahassee, Florida 32301;
4 appearing on behalf of CSWR-Florida

5 WALT TRIERWEILER, PUBLIC COUNSEL; AUSTIN
6 WATROUS, ESQUIRE, OFFICE OF PUBLIC COUNSEL, c/o The
7 Florida Legislature, 111 West Madison Street, Room 812,
8 Tallahassee, FL 32399-1400, appearing on behalf of the
9 Citizens of the State of Florida.

10 DANIEL DOSE and ZACHARY BLOOM, ESQUIRES, FPSC
11 General Counsel's Office, 2540 Shumard Oak Boulevard,
12 Tallahassee, FL 32399-0850, appearing on behalf of the
13 Florida Public Service Commission.

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EXHIBITS

NUMBER:		MARKED
76	Notice of lead in water	21

1 P R O C E E D I N G S

2 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Okay. You have guys have all
3 gotten quiet, so I think I am going to just go
4 ahead and start two minutes early just since we
5 already have some people here to speak.

6 So thank you all for attending this customer
7 service hearing. This is a part of our review of
8 CSWR-Florida Utility Operating Company's request
9 for a rate adjustment. Today's service hearing is
10 an important part of the process, and is dedicated
11 to you, the customer.

12 Staff, will you please read the notice?

13 MR. DOSE: By notice issued on February 19th,
14 2026, this time and place has been set for a
15 customer service hearing in Docket No. 20250052,
16 the purpose of the service hearing is set out more
17 fully in the notice.

18 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Thank you.

19 Now we will take appearances, starting with
20 CSWR.

21 MR. CRABB: Tom Crabb of the Radey Law Firm
22 for CSWR-Florida.

23 MR. WATROUS: And Austin Watrous on behalf of
24 the Florida Office of Public Counsel. And I would
25 also like to enter an appearance for Walt

1 Trierweiler, the Public Counsel.

2 MR. DOSE: Daniel Dose and Zachary Bloom FOR
3 Commission legal staff.

4 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Thank you all.

5 I thank you for participating today and
6 sharing your experience with the quality of service
7 provided by CSWR and providing any comments you may
8 have regarding the utility's rate request.

9 In addition to sharing your comments here, you
10 can also provide written comments or additional
11 materials by paper mail or by email. The rate case
12 overview includes instructions on how to provide
13 written comments to the Commission, and rest
14 assured that your written comments will be made
15 available to us, the Commissioners, for review.

16 If you have specific service or billing
17 issues, representatives from CSWR are here. They
18 are in the front row there. And they are here to
19 assist you in those specific questions that you
20 might have. We also have Commission staff that's
21 there over here present to answer general questions
22 about the rate case.

23 Before we hear from the customers, I will
24 allow brief opening statements by the parties. If
25 we could limit our statements to five minutes, and

1 we WILL start with CSWR.

2 MR. CRABB: The company's CEO, Josiah Cox,
3 will give our opening statements.

4 MR. COX: Did I make five minutes last time?
5 No? All right. I will go faster.

6 All right. Central States Water Resources
7 Florida, I imagine you have got three utilities
8 represented here today, probably Sunshine,
9 Tradewinds and Landfair -- Landfair.

10 So brief overview of the systems. Sunshine
11 was one of the worst water utilities -- we buy
12 water utilities all over the country -- one of the
13 worst ones we have experienced to date, lack of
14 reinvestment so bad that the water tanks, the high
15 pressure tanks that service those communities were
16 structurally failing, so we had one actually
17 explode on us. So there has been a ton of
18 replacement there in that system, full electrical
19 and mechanical rehab along with that, and
20 distribution work going on.

21 If you are a Tradewinds customer, that system
22 has been out of compliance for lack of storage and
23 for lack of dual backup wells. There was only one
24 service in that community. You all experienced a
25 bad outage from us -- not an outage, but a long

1 BWA. That well had not been cleaned for years and
2 years.

3 Florida is very interesting, at the raw water
4 tap, before it gets treated and goes out to you
5 guys, there is a treatment testing requirement
6 there, which is not necessarily in all the other
7 places, and we had to do a lot of work over a week
8 there to try to bring that raw water sample into
9 compliance before it went to treatment before it
10 went out to you all. We are doing work there and
11 they had to drill a new well, and that one,
12 Landfair is the other one, out of compliance for
13 lack of dual sources. There is not two wells. You
14 know, it's failed hydro tanks we had to replace,
15 and the wastewater plant completely failed. So
16 there has been a lot of meeting, you know, modern
17 EPA requirements, there is a whole plant
18 replacement that's slated again next year there.
19 So in addition to all that, we have installed
20 backup generation and a remote monitoring, so we
21 can see what's happening in the system kind of
22 realtime.

23 So I understand that, you know, rate increases
24 are not something everyone likes. We have spent a
25 ton of money trying to bring the system back into

1 compliance, and a lot of professional operations
2 and maintenance to support those things.

3 So I appreciate you all coming here to
4 participating. We do want to hear from you. I
5 have my assistant Vice-President here who is head
6 of customer service. If you have specific
7 questions, please come see him. We will get your
8 account number and may even be able to do it right
9 here in person.

10 All right. Thank you all. I appreciate it.

11 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Thank you, Mr. Cox.

12 Mr. Watrous.

13 MR. WATROUS: Thank you, Madam Chair.

14 Good afternoon. My name is Austin Watrous,
15 and I am an attorney with the Florida Office of
16 Public Counsel.

17 The Office of Public Counsel, also known as
18 OPC, was created over 50 years ago by the Florida
19 Legislature to give customers an effective advocate
20 in these proceedings. The Public Counsel, Walt
21 Trierweiler, thanks you for taking the time to be
22 here today.

23 Today, I want you to know that the Office of
24 Public Counsel is actively challenging CSWR's
25 proposed rate increase. The theme for this case is

1 affordability and customer prosperity. We will
2 argue, with the assistance of our nationally
3 respected experts, the proposed rate increases and
4 the acquisition adjustments will result in unjust,
5 unfair and unreasonable rates for you.

6 I am not going to take the time today to share
7 all of the things we are doing to resolve this case
8 in your favor, but I do want you to be confident in
9 the pretrial preparation our office is conducting,
10 the countless hours our team is devoting to
11 studying thousands of pages of responses and
12 documents from CSWR to identify reductions that
13 should be made to the request.

14 I also want you to be confident that your
15 voice is a valuable part of this rate case. The
16 rate case has not yet been decided, and these
17 Commissioners, who are conducting virtual and
18 in-person customer service hearings, are here to
19 listen to you, so please share your thoughts as
20 clearly and persuasively as you can, because your
21 sworn testimony will be considered by the
22 Commission and parties, both now and in the future,
23 when the Commission examines all the evidence
24 before them to approve only that portion of CSWR's
25 rate increase that are reasonable, prudent and in

1 the public interest.

2 I invite you to share details of your
3 experiences as a CSWR customer, and to share the
4 personal impacts CSWR's proposed rate increases
5 will have upon you, your family, your friends, your
6 businesses and your neighbors. Do be mindful of
7 time so that your neighbors here may also have time
8 to speak.

9 Thank you again for taking the time to
10 participate in today's customer service hearing.
11 We look forward to hearing from you.

12 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Thank you, Mr. Watrous.

13 All right. Now we are going to move to the
14 customer testimony portion. Your comments will
15 become part of the official record and, therefore,
16 are subject to cross-examination, meaning that you
17 may be asked questions either by the parties or one
18 of the Commissioners. And that's just to get
19 clarification on something you might have said.
20 It's not to intimidate you or anything like that,
21 so just know that there is the potential you can be
22 asked follow-up questions.

23 For all customers who intend to testify and
24 who are able do so, will you please stand and raise
25 your right hand so that I may swear you in all at

1 the same time?

2 (Whereupon, Chairman Smith administered the
3 oath.)

4 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Thank you. You can sit.

5 To make sure that all of your neighbors have
6 an opportunity to speak, we do have a timer here.
7 It's set for three minutes. It will be -- it
8 will -- it's green when you have a minute
9 remaining. It will turn yellow, and then red is
10 when we kind of like you to wrap up your comments.
11 This room is not packed, so I am not going to cut
12 you off if you are mid-thought, but I just wanted
13 you to be cognizant of who are -- those who signed
14 up behind you just so everybody gets adequate time
15 to provide their testimony.

16 Representatives for OPC will be helping today.
17 When it's your turn to speak, they will call your
18 name in the order in which you signed up. We will
19 begin with customers who preregistered on-line, and
20 then move to those who signed up in person today.
21 OPC will call two names at a time, so you know that
22 if you hear your name second, that you are on deck.

23 We are going to go ahead and get started here.

24 Are there any elected officials in the room?

25 That's who we usually start with.

1 Okay. Seeing none, let's move to customers.
2 OPC, can you call your first two customers, please?

3 MR. WATROUS: Thank you, Madam Chair.

4 Lozell Bennett will be up first, and then
5 Wayne McMillian will be on deck.

6 PUBLIC COMMENT

7 MS. BENNETT: Good afternoon.

8 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Good afternoon.

9 MS. BENNETT: My name is Lozell Bennett, and I
10 live in Pine Forest apartments. I am here because
11 of the rate. I have a \$3,000 water bill that I
12 know it's not mine. I didn't have a water bill for
13 a very long time where I live at, so -- and I never
14 received a letter from CSWR.

15 CHAIRMAN SMITH: He is just checking the
16 microphone.

17 **Q I'm just going to double check the mic.**

18 CHAIRMAN SMITH: It's on.

19 MS. BENNETT: I never received a water bill
20 from CSWR saying that they had taken over Pine
21 Forest apartments, so therefore, I didn't know.
22 You can't blame me for not knowing, and I didn't
23 receive anything.

24 Now, I live on a fixed income because I am
25 disabled. I have been asking for help from

1 Community Action, different agencies around here,
2 and I never got any help to help pay this \$3,000
3 water bill. Well, if I don't have any water, I
4 don't have a home. I can't live there. So I am
5 asking for a reduced rate or someone to help me
6 with this water bill. This is why I am here today.

7 I have tried. My church paid some money on
8 it, you know, and I continue paying my regular
9 water bill, but I need help. It's \$3,000 and 67
10 water bill. That's why I am here today.

11 Thank you.

12 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Thank you, Ms. Bennett. And
13 I will definitely have you -- have a company
14 representative work with you, because I think it's
15 a specific issue. Thank you.

16 MR. WATROUS: Wayne McMillian is up now, and
17 Krystin Dorin will be up next.

18 PUBLIC COMMENT

19 MR. MILLICAN: Okay. There is no C in my
20 name. It's M-I-L-L-I-C-A-N, not McMillian, but
21 that's -- you are not alone.

22 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Thank you.

23 MR. MILLICAN: My name is Wayne Millican. I
24 am a customer on Northeast 25th Avenue, and we've
25 had consistent problems where waters have leaked --

1 ut-oh.

2 CHAIRMAN SMITH: You are fine.

3 MR. MILLICAN: Oh, very nice.

4 We have had problems with water leaking. In
5 fact, there is water leaking in front of my house
6 right now. I called in on Monday to have it
7 investigated, and nobody has shown up yet. I have
8 prepared a notice here -- something to say, which I
9 am going to read, but I guess I need to put it into
10 the record someplace?

11 CHAIRMAN SMITH: It will be -- you can recite
12 it into the record and it will be -- it's being
13 transcribed.

14 MR. MILLICAN: Okay. All right. So I
15 received a notice saying CSWR is trying to acquire
16 some nonviable water systems, and in return, will
17 be raising my water rates. I have a problem with
18 this because they have difficulty keeping my system
19 working properly. I have had numerous breaks in
20 the lines that keep flooding different areas, and
21 actually it's the County's property, but it's right
22 next to the road where the pipes are running.

23 Since December of 2025, I have been under a
24 boil water notice at least four times, totaling 25
25 days. I have had leaks in my front yard multiple

1 times where I have had to call CSWR to come out.
2 They seem to be only patching the problem, not
3 fixing it. In other words, I have seen them come
4 out and take a rubber coupling and maybe another
5 piece or two, put that all back together and not do
6 anything to the pipes that are causing the problem.

7 I have also had to call them to come back out
8 and fix my yard where they have left sand and
9 depressions where I couldn't mow any more.

10 I recently have had major surgery, and being
11 on a boil water notice is a major inconvenience for
12 me. I do not feel comfortable using non-potable
13 water for all my water needs -- and I realize that
14 we are supposed to boil water to make it safe --
15 such as drinking water, dishes cleaning my hands or
16 countertops. I also don't feel comfortable with
17 taking a shower for fear of getting an infection.
18 I have had open-heart surgery. So for this reason,
19 I have had to purchase water.

20 I don't understand how CSWR can be allowed to
21 acquire more nonviable systems when they can't keep
22 their current systems working for longer than a
23 month at a time. I am out money every time this
24 happens, as I have to purchase water, and when the
25 boil water notice is lifted, I have to flush all my

1 water lines. There has never been any mention
2 about compensation for all my, you know, flushing
3 the lines and stuff.

4 Right now, there is currently a few leaks on
5 my street, and water is running down the culverts.
6 I personally called Monday morning, and as of
7 Wednesday -- which is now as of Thursday -- nothing
8 has been done, and no contact from CSWR to let us
9 know when they are going to fix the problem or if
10 we are on a boil water notice again. I don't even
11 know that right now.

12 So essentially, this is what my daughter and I
13 kind of put together, and I feel that CSWR hasn't
14 owned up to the problem. I did talk with a
15 customer representative, and asked when they are
16 were going to fix the piping, and said there was no
17 foreseeable future to do that.

18 I am through.

19 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Thank you, Mr. Millican.

20 THE WITNESS: Okay. I am going to set it
21 down.

22 CHAIRMAN SMITH: That's okay, you can put it
23 there. Thank you very much. Thank you for your
24 testimony.

25 THE WITNESS: Uh-huh.

1 water for weeks at a time, up to two weeks I have
2 seen at one -- in one stretch.

3 And it seems to be at least once a month or
4 more that we are under a boil water notice, and
5 they just keep doing a patchwork job of, you know,
6 go and fix that immediately and then move on until
7 the next one. In my neighborhood, I know in the
8 last week, there have been three of my neighbors
9 that have had major breaks in the lines on their
10 property.

11 So that's really all I have to say, just the
12 extra expense we have to go through the boil water
13 notice, and quadrupling our rate increase. I
14 understand that they have to increase. I know the
15 infrastructure needs some work, but that just seems
16 like an extreme amount.

17 Thank you.

18 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Thank you for your testimony.

19 MR. WATROUS: Doreen McRae, and up next will
20 be Allysha Serrano.

21 PUBLIC COMMENT

22 MS. McRAE: I am Doreen McRae, and Wednesday
23 of last week, I left my house and came back at one
24 o'clock after lunch, and I had a small four- to
25 five-inch guiser coming out under my driveway. The

1 company was good about finding the leak and digging
2 it out. They had to take out my driveway, part of
3 my driveway, and replace it. I guess my -- it's
4 just -- it's so frequent now about having to have
5 my water turned off, and I am not sure there is a
6 real good answer, but thank you.

7 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Thank you, Ms. McRae.

8 MR. WATROUS: Allysha Serrano, and up next
9 will be John Ghannam.

10 PUBLIC COMMENT

11 MS. SERRANO: Hi. I am Allysha Serrano. I
12 live on the northeast side as well, Sunrise --
13 Sunshine Utilities it used to be. So along the
14 same lines, I do understand that we need to have a
15 rate increase to address some of the infrastructure
16 issues that we are having because it's a continual
17 thing, we go through failures all the time, but
18 just how much is really where my concern comes.

19 We have a lot of neighbors that are on fixed
20 incomes, and I have elderly neighbors that would be
21 affected tremendously by having a rate increase
22 like that. So it's not only for me, but for them
23 as well I am concerned.

24 And for me, whenever I had a notice come in
25 the mail that said that we had lead possibly in our

1 service line, that was a big concern for me,
2 because, you know, I have filters, but I don't know
3 that that gets out everything. So to me, I would
4 just like to see some more responsibility to see
5 where we are going to go with it. If, you know,
6 there is going to be notices handed out, like, hey,
7 we are going to get this done at this time, that's
8 really where I am at. I am wanting to know, you
9 know, what's going to go forward with the whole,
10 you know, redesign of it, but that's it.

11 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Thank you, Ms. Serrano.
12 Thank you for your testimony.

13 MR. WATROUS: Excuse me, I have one question
14 for you. Was the lead in a notice that you
15 received?

16 MS. SERRANO: It was, back in October of 2025.

17 MS. McRAE: I have a copy of the letter here
18 too.

19 MR. WATROUS: Would you like to put that
20 letter in the record?

21 MS. McRAE: I can.

22 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Do you want to hand that to
23 counsel here, and then we it mark that for Exhibit
24 76.

25 MR. DOSE: 76.

1 CHAIRMAN SMITH: There you go, staff. Thank
2 you.

3 MR. WATROUS: John Ghannam, and then Lauren
4 Caponigro.

5 John, are you here?

6 Lauren Caponigro, and then Sandra Fernandez.

7 Lauren, are you here?

8 And Sandra Fernandez?

9 Well, if there are any customers who have not
10 signed up to speak yet, I ask you to please come
11 forward.

12 CHAIRMAN SMITH: Is there anybody who has not
13 given testimony that would like to? Well, okay.

14 All right. So staff, we -- yeah, sorry,
15 exhibits.

16 MR. DOSE: Yes, we will mark that as Exhibit
17 77.

18 CHAIRMAN SMITH: 77?

19 MR. DOSE: Or 76. I apologize.

20 CHAIRMAN SMITH: 76. Thank you.

21 (Whereupon, Exhibit No. 76 was marked for
22 identification.)

23 CHAIRMAN SMITH: All right. Well, thank you
24 all for those of you who are able to be here. I
25 know it's difficult to take the time, but we really

1 appreciate hearing your comments.

2 I do want to make you aware, we have a virtual
3 service hearing, so we will be doing the exact same
4 thing, but it's all telephonically. That's going
5 to be March 31st at 6:00 p.m. So please, if your
6 neighbors or friends who are also CSWR customers
7 who got the notice are wanting to submit any sort
8 of testimony to us, that is an opportunity that
9 they can do it if they weren't able to make it
10 today, so please let them know about that. Your
11 comments are really important in this process and
12 we appreciate your willingness to participate this
13 evening.

14 Commissioners, do we have anything to add?

15 Seeing none.

16 Okay. Seeing none, this customer service is
17 adjourned. Thank you all for being here.

18 (Proceedings concluded.)

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CERTIFICATE OF REPORTER

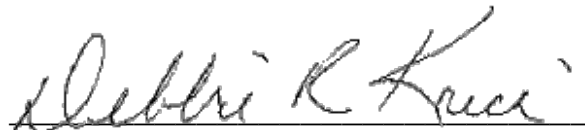
STATE OF FLORIDA)
COUNTY OF LEON)

I, DEBRA KRICK, Court Reporter, do hereby
certify that the foregoing proceeding was heard at the
time and place herein stated.

IT IS FURTHER CERTIFIED that I
stenographically reported the said proceedings; that the
same has been transcribed under my direct supervision;
and that this transcript constitutes a true
transcription of my notes of said proceedings.

I FURTHER CERTIFY that I am not a relative,
employee, attorney or counsel of any of the parties, nor
am I a relative or employee of any of the parties'
attorney or counsel connected with the action, nor am I
financially interested in the action.

DATED this 19th day of March, 2026.



DEBRA R. KRICK
NOTARY PUBLIC
COMMISSION #HH575054
EXPIRES AUGUST 13, 2028