

Tristan Davis

From: Ellen Plendl
Sent: Tuesday, August 4, 2026 12:41 PM
To: Consumer Correspondence
Subject: Docket No 20250052
Attachments: FW: CSWR- Out of State Utility Co. Constituents in Sebring get over 257% price Hike

AttachCount: 1

See attached customer correspondence for Docket 20250052.

Tristan Davis

From: Governor's Office of Citizen Services <EOGCitizenServices@eog.myflorida.com>
Sent: Tuesday, August 4, 2026 12:06 PM
To: Ellen Plendl
Subject: FW: CSWR- Out of State Utility Co. Constituents in Sebring get over 257% price Hike
Attachments: Florida PSC Letter of Hardship.pdf; Letter to FPSC - Docket 20250052.pdf; Approved Interim Rates.pdf

CAUTION: This email originated from outside your organization. Exercise caution when opening attachments or clicking links, especially from unknown senders.

Please find attached email received by the Governor's Office of Citizen Services. This email is forwarded to your office for review and any response or action appropriate.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Martha Lynn
Office of Citizen Services
Executive Office of the Governor

From: Karen J. Wiegand <noreply@flgov.com>
Sent: Monday, August 3, 2026 4:23 PM
To: GovernorRon.DeSantis@eog.myflorida.com
Subject: CSWR- Out of State Utility Co. Constituents in Sebring get over 257% price Hike

Submitted
Mon, 08/03/2026 - 16:14

Sender Information
Karen J. Wiegand
karwieg@outlook.com
906369740

Subject
CSWR- Out of State Utility Co. Constituents in Sebring get over 257% price Hike

Message

Dear Governor DeSantis, Sebring constituents need your help. The FPSC is failing us, approving an intirim sewer-only hike from \$16 to over \$62. This hurts low-income Highlands County families with a \$616/year increase. Local and state representatives have failed to act after multiple contacts. You are our last hope to intervene and restore fairness. I support your initiatives and urge you to review the attached letter—my second sent to the PSC and your office. Please protect us. Sincerely,

IP Address

172.71.31.147

User Agent

Mozilla/5.0 (Windows NT 10.0; Win64; x64) AppleWebKit/537.36 (KHTML, like Gecko) Chrome/150.0.0.0 Safari/537.36

Please note that under Florida law correspondence sent to the Governor's Office, which is not confidential or exempt pursuant to chapter 119 of the Florida Statutes, is a public record made available upon request.

ORDER NO. PSC-2025-0361-PCO-WS
DOCKET NO. 20250052-WS
PAGE 19

ORDERED that the service rates for CSWR-Florida Utility Operating Company in effect as of January 31, 2025, shall be increased as shown below to generate the approved revenue increase for the interim period.

System	% Rate Increase
BFF Corp. - Water	28.29%
C.F.A.T. H2O, Inc. - Water	86.56%
C.F.A.T. H2O, Inc. -Wastewater	31.96%
Neighborhood Utilities, Inc. -Water	70.75%
North Peninsula Utilities, Inc. -Wastewater	32.48%
Rolling Oaks Utilities, Inc. -Water	33.10%
Rolling Oaks Utilities, Inc. -Wastewater	8.54%
Sebring Ridge Utilities, Inc. - Wastewater	256.87%
Sunshine Utilities, Inc.(Unified) - Water	76.04%
Sunshine Utilities, Inc.(Other) - Water	116.40%
TKCB, Inc. - Wastewater	53.48%

Re: FPSC Docket No. 20250052 – CSWR-Florida Utility Operating Company Rate Increase Request

Specifically: Sebring Ridge Interim Rates and Proposed Rate Increase

Dear Commissioners,

I am writing as a customer of the Sebring Ridge utility system to express my concern regarding the rate increases proposed by CSWR-Florida Utility Operating Company and the significant financial burden already being imposed through interim rates.

While I understand that utilities must maintain infrastructure and recover prudent and reasonable costs, I respectfully urge the Commission to consider the unique circumstances facing Sebring Ridge customers. According to testimony in this proceeding, Sebring Ridge had not received a significant rate increase since approximately 1996. Current residents did not make the decisions that resulted in decades without rate adjustments, nor did they have any role in the utility's historical management. It seems inequitable for today's customers to bear the full financial consequences of those past decisions through sudden and dramatic rate increases.

Many Sebring Ridge residents are retirees, seniors, and individuals living on low or fixed incomes. For these households, wastewater services are essential necessities. Increases reported to exceed 267 percent are not merely inconvenient; they can create significant financial hardship and force residents to reconsider other basic household expenses.

The impact is not theoretical. The interim rates currently in effect are already affecting customers. Residents are experiencing substantially higher monthly bills before a final determination has been made in this case. For many households, these increased costs are creating financial uncertainty and concerns regarding long-term affordability.

In my own case, I chose to purchase a home in this area in part because it was affordable for a single homeowner. My monthly CSWR wastewater bill has increased from approximately \$16 to approximately \$60. While some may argue that customers benefited from historically low rates, that assumption does not reflect the circumstances of all current residents. Many customers moved to the community long after those historical decisions were made and should not be viewed as having received decades of financial benefit that must now be repaid through extraordinary rate increases.

I respectfully request that the Commission carefully consider the affordability of any final rate decision and evaluate measures that could reduce the immediate impact on customers, including:

- A multi-year phase-in of any approved rate increases.
- Annual caps on customer bill increases to minimize rate shock.
- Special consideration for senior citizens and low-income households.
- Recognition that current customers should not be required to absorb decades of deferred rate adjustments through a single rate case.
- Evaluation of opportunities for customer growth and system expansion to increase revenue and spread fixed costs across a broader customer base.
- A thorough review of all requested expenses to ensure that only prudent, necessary, and well-supported costs are passed on to customers.

I am not asking the Commission to disregard the utility's responsibility to operate and maintain its system. Rather, I am asking that any necessary rate increases be implemented in a fair and reasonable manner that recognizes the realities faced by the residents who depend on these services every day.

CSWR knowingly acquired the Sebring Ridge utility system, including its infrastructure needs, existing rate structure, and relatively small customer base. These factors were known or should have been known at the time of acquisition. As a result, customers should be protected from bearing a disproportionate share of the financial consequences associated with that business decision.

The Commission's decision in this matter will have a significant impact on families throughout Sebring Ridge. I respectfully urge you to protect customers from excessive rate shock and to ensure that any approved increases are implemented gradually and fairly.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments and for your service to the citizens of Florida.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen J. Wiegand
2019 Clam Dr., Sebring, FL 33870
Account Number- 158853-1
906-361-9740

cc: Highlands Co. Commissioners, Docket 20250052 OPC Representatives

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

August 3, 2026

RE: Formal Customer Financial Hardship Statement and Post-Hearing Comments
Docket No. 20250052-WS (CSWR-Florida Utility Operating Company, LLC Rate Case)
Service Area: Sebring, Highlands County (The Crossings Neighborhood)

Dear Commission Clerk,

I am writing as an affected ratepayer under the CSWR-Florida utility system in Sebring to formally document an unmanageable financial hardship resulting from the 287% utility rate increase approved under interim rates. My household's wastewater costs have spiked immediately from \$16.00 per month (\$128.00 annually) to \$62.00 per month (\$744.00 annually). As an Engineering Assistant Professional residing in Highlands County—one of the economically challenged regions in the state—this sudden, \$616.00 annual operational cost increase directly threatens household stability. Wastewater service is a non-discretionary utility essential to public health; consumers have no functional option to opt out or downsize service to mitigate these expenses.

The current rate structure relies on an inequitable volumetric model. Because wastewater discharge is not independently metered, residential customers are billed for wastewater based entirely on their total freshwater consumption. Consequently, non-discretionary outdoor water usage—such as lawn irrigation, deck rinsing, and vehicle washing—is billed as wastewater despite returning directly to the ground rather than entering the utility's waste collection infrastructure.

Furthermore, current considerations to establish a standard flat rate for the Sebring Bluffs Apartments, while excluding single-family neighborhoods like The Crossings from similar consideration, constitutes undue rate discrimination. An investor-owned utility acquires underperforming municipal systems with full regulatory awareness of the capital and temporal requirements needed to recover positive revenue. Inherited infrastructure deficits should not be offset by imposing a sudden, disproportionate financial shock on captured residential consumers.

While the June 2026 evidentiary hearings have concluded, I request that the Commission explicitly consider the regressive impact of these steep interim structures on low- and fixed-income households as it deliberates the Final Order for 2027. I specifically urge the Commission to apply the following consumer protections in its final ruling:

1. **Implement Localized Rate Caps:** Consider regional county economics and restrict final Sebring rate adjustments to a cap aligned with historic inflation indexes rather than the current astronomical baseline.
2. **Reject the Interim Threshold:** Formally deny any standard rate adjustments that maintain or exceed the current \$62.00 interim rate threshold for the Sebring wastewater system.

3. **Mandate Relief Frameworks:** Require CSWR-Florida to establish local utility hardship waiver frameworks, tiered low-income rate structures, or deferred payment arrangements for verified hardship cases.
4. **Order Retroactive Refunds:** Order immediate, retroactive customer refunds with interest if final revenue audits prove that the interim rate collection exceeded actual minimum operating requirements.

Tracking the public data indicates that CSWR's Sebring collections are rapidly closing the approved Annual Revenue Requirement gap. Forcing residential consumers to bear this financial strain indefinitely without a designated hardship relief mechanism creates an unnecessary household crisis. I urge you to take action for the people.

Thank you for entering this formal statement into the official regulatory record for Docket No. 20250052-WS.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen J. Wiegand

2019 Clam Dr

Sebring, FL 33870

karwieg@outlook.com

906-361-9740

cc: Highlands Co. Commissioners, Office of Governor Ron DeSantis