



For Immediate Release

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South Bend Water Rate Case: OUCC Invites Consumer Comments *IURC Hearing October 24 in South Bend*

The Indiana Office of Utility Consumer Counselor (OUCC) continues to encourage public comment in the South Bend municipal water rate case. The OUCC, the state agency representing consumer interests in cases before the Indiana Utility Regulatory Commission (IURC), is reviewing South Bend’s request and is scheduled to file testimony on November 17, 2017.

Consumers may comment either by:

- **Sending written comments** to the OUCC for the formal case record by November 13, 2017, or
- **Speaking at the IURC’s public field hearing in South Bend** on Tuesday, October 24, 2017. The hearing will start at 6:00 p.m. in the Recital Hall at the South Bend Century Center, 120 S. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd.

Consumers are encouraged to arrive by 5:45 p.m. for an overview of field hearing procedures and the rate case process. During the field hearing:

- Consumers will be able to speak directly to the Commission, under oath and on the record, regarding the case.
- Consumers will also be able to submit written comments for the case record.
- Comments will carry equal weight whether they are oral or written.
- Commissioners are not allowed to answer questions during the field hearing. However, OUCC staff will be available before, during, and after the hearing to address questions about the process.

According to its testimony and exhibits, the city is seeking new water rates due to increases in operating and maintenance costs and to fund a number of proposed capital improvements over the next six years. Projects cited in South Bend’s exhibits include water main, hydrant, and valve replacements, well field rehabilitation, filtration plant and booster station improvements, and meter replacements, along with new mains and storage tanks, new vehicles, a new office building, and a new billing system. South Bend’s last water rate increase received IURC approval in 2006.

The city is proposing to implement the requested rates in two phases. Under South Bend’s pending proposal, monthly water charges for a residential customer using 700 cubic feet (approximately 5,230 gallons per month) would rise as follows:

	Current Rates	Phase 1 (When Commission order is issued)	Phase 2 (1 year after Commission order)
In City*	\$15.81	\$18.96	\$22.66
Out of City*	\$18.57	\$21.32	\$25.54

*Amounts include fire protection and water service fund charges.

(Continued)

Consumers who wish to submit written comments for the case record may do so via the OUCC's Website at www.in.gov/oucc/2361.htm, or by mail, email, or fax:

- Mail: Consumer Services Staff
Indiana Office of Utility Consumer Counselor
115 W. Washington St., Suite 1500 South
Indianapolis, IN 46204
- email: uccinfo@oucc.IN.gov
- Fax: (317) 232-5923

The OUCC needs to receive all written consumer comments no later than November 13, 2017 so that it can: 1) Consider them in preparing its testimony and 2) File them with the Commission to be included in the case's formal evidentiary record. Comments should include the consumer's **name, mailing address**, and a reference to "**IURC Cause No. 44951.**" Consumers with questions about submitting written comments can contact the OUCC's consumer services staff toll-free at 1-888-441-2494.

Only South Bend's water rates are at issue in this case. State law restricts the IURC's oversight of municipal water utilities to their rates, charges, and finances.

Indiana law does not give the IURC jurisdiction over municipal sewer utilities, leaving oversight of municipal sewer rates to locally elected city and town councils.

A final order in the case is expected next spring. The OUCC is posting case updates online at www.in.gov/oucc/2789.htm.

(IURC Cause No. 44951)

The Indiana Office of Utility Consumer Counselor (OUCC) represents Indiana consumer interests before state and federal bodies that regulate utilities. As a state agency, the OUCC's mission is to represent all Indiana consumers to ensure quality, reliable utility services at the most reasonable prices possible through dedicated advocacy, consumer education, and creative problem solving.

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