



Indiana Office of Utility Consumer Counselor

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Prairie Utilities case: Public hearing set for August 16

The Indiana Office of Utility Consumer Counselor (OUCC) is encouraging Prairie Utilities, Inc. customers to comment on the utility's pending sewer rate case, through both written comments and the case's upcoming field hearing in Tipton County.

The OUCC – which represents consumer interests in cases before the Indiana Utility Regulatory Commission (IURC) – is accepting written consumer comments for the case record through August 31, 2012.

In addition, an Indiana Utility Regulatory Commission (IURC) **public field hearing** will be held on **Thursday, August 16, 2012** in the Tri-Central High School Auditorium (2115 West 500 North, Sharpsville, Ind.). The hearing's public comment portion will begin at 6:00 p.m.

- Sworn oral and written comments regarding the case will be accepted during the field hearing.
- Oral and written consumer comments carry equal weight and will become part of the official evidentiary record considered by the IURC in reaching its final decision.
- Commissioners are not allowed to answer consumer questions during the formal field hearing. (However, OUCC and IURC staff will be available before, during and after the hearing.)

An OUCC informational session on the regulatory process and public field hearing procedures will precede the hearing, starting at 5:30 p.m.

Prairie Utilities provides sewage disposal service to more than 50 customers in northern Tipton County and is seeking to raise its flat, monthly residential sewer rate from \$40.00 to \$118.80. According to its owners who purchased the utility's assets in 2009, the current rates have been in effect since the 1970s. In its written testimony, the utility details the infrastructure improvements it has made, including an ultraviolet disinfection system, a new flow meter, improvements to the collection system, and the addition of regular monitoring by certified operators. In addition, the utility is requesting IURC authority to provide service over a 1.52 million acre area to the west and northwest of Sharpsville.

The OUCC – the state agency representing consumer interests in cases before the Indiana Utility Regulatory Commission (IURC) – is reviewing the utility's request and has not yet taken a position in this case. The OUCC anticipates filing testimony with the Commission on September 6, 2012.

(Continued)

Consumers who are unable to attend the field hearing but wish to submit written comments in this case 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

Written comments should include the consumer's **name, mailing address**, and a reference to "**IURC Cause No. 44158.**" Comments received by August 31, 2012 will be filed with the IURC for inclusion in the case's formal record.

Consumers with questions about submitting written comments can contact the OUCC's consumer services staff toll-free at 1-888-441-2494. For additional information on this case, including a copy of the utility's testimony, please visit the OUCC Website at www.in.gov/oucc/2706.htm.

The OUCC's Website also offers a number of utility consumer publications at no charge, including tips for saving water and energy.

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(IURC Cause No. 44158)

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.

To learn more, visit www.IN.gov/OUCC or follow us at www.twitter.com/IndianaOUCC.