



For Immediate Release

July 20, 2021

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Evansville Water Rate Case: OUCC Invites Consumer Comments

If you are an Evansville municipal water customer and would like to comment on the utility's pending rate request, you have the chance to do so.

The Indiana Office of Utility Consumer Counselor (OUCC), the state agency representing consumer interests in cases before the Indiana Utility Regulatory Commission (IURC), is reviewing the utility's request and is scheduled to file testimony on Aug. 20, 2021.

Written consumer comments

While using its legal and technical resources to review Evansville's request, including examining the water utility's books and operations, the OUCC is inviting written comments from customers through Aug. 13, 2021.

Consumers who wish to submit comments for the case record are encouraged to do so in writing. Comments are welcome via the OUCC's website at www.in.gov/oucc/2361.htm, by email at uccinfo@oucc.IN.gov, or by mail at:

Public Comments

Indiana Office of Utility Consumer Counselor

115 W. Washington St., Suite 1500 South

Indianapolis, IN 46204

The OUCC needs to receive all written consumer comments no later than Aug. 13, 2021, 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 either "**IURC Cause No. 45545**" or Evansville Municipal Water. Consumers with questions about submitting written comments can contact the OUCC's consumer services staff toll-free at 1-888-441-2494.

Public field hearing

The IURC is currently scheduled to hold a public field hearing on Wednesday, Aug. 4, 2021, at the University of Southern Indiana's Health Professions Center (8600 University Blvd.). The hearing is scheduled to begin at 6:00 p.m., local time, in the Mitchell Auditorium and is statutorily required in this case. Its sole purpose will be to receive public testimony.

- Consumers can speak directly to the Commission under oath and on the record.
- Oral comments during the hearing will become part of the case record. They will carry the same weight as written consumer comments submitted to the OUCC by Aug. 13.
- Utilities do not make presentations or answer questions during field hearings. The focus, again, is on public input. In this case, Evansville filed testimony and exhibits in May 2021.
- Commissioners are not allowed to answer questions about the case. They will ultimately render a decision after weighing evidence from the utility and the OUCC.
- No final decisions will be made at the Aug. 4 hearing.

For more information on the process, please see the OUCC's video at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zR-7ZlqzeLg> or <https://www.facebook.com/IndianaOUCC/videos/1145368209319592>.

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Case overview

Evansville's water utility is proposing a \$15.6 million rate increase to be implemented in five phases. The across-the-board increase would raise rates by nearly 36 percent when fully implemented in 2026. The city is also seeking IURC authority to issue up to approximately \$238 million in long-term debt.

According to the city's testimony, the rate and financing request would cover increases in operating and maintenance costs, along with a long-term capital improvement plan addressing aging infrastructure throughout its water treatment and distribution system.

The city's request includes construction of a new water treatment plant. Additional projects include main replacements, valve replacements, booster station improvements, road relocations, new hydrants, and a new city garage. According to its testimony, Evansville's water distribution system includes about 1,000 miles of water mains. Approximately 600 miles of those are cast iron mains with an estimated average age of about 90 years.

In its last rate case in 2018, Evansville received IURC approval for a three-phase water rate increase, implemented in 2019, 2020, and 2021.

The city's pending proposal would raise monthly residential water charges for 5,000 gallons as follows:

	Current Rates	Proposed Rates, Effective Apr. 1 Each Year				
		2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
Without fire protection surcharge	\$39.94	\$42.96	\$45.99	\$49.01	\$52.04	\$54.29
With fire protection surcharge	\$45.12	\$48.53	\$51.95	\$55.36	\$58.78	\$61.32

Only the city's *water* rates are at issue in this case. The IURC does not have jurisdiction over municipal *sewer* utility rates, which are set by locally elected city and town councils throughout the state.

A settlement agreement is possible in any legal proceeding. If an agreement is reached, the settling parties are required to present evidence showing it to be in the public interest. The IURC may approve, deny, or modify any settlement it considers.

A final Commission order is currently expected in March 2022.

The OUCC is posting case updates online at www.in.gov/oucc/watersewer/key-cases-by-utility/evansville-municipal-water-rates. Case updates are also available through the agency's monthly electronic newsletter. Consumers can subscribe at www.in.gov/oucc/news.

(IURC Cause No. 45545)

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.