



For Immediate Release

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Van Buren Water Rate Case: Consumer Comments Invited

If you want to comment on the water rate increase requested by Van Buren Water Inc., you are invited 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 its report and recommendations on April 14, 2025.

Current base rates for Van Buren Water – a not-for-profit utility providing service to approximately 2,500 residential customers in Monroe County – received IURC approval in 2015. However, rates have since been adjusted to account for changes in wholesale water costs.

According to its filing, the utility is requesting financing authority and seeking the rate increase due to higher operating and maintenance costs, and the need for infrastructure repairs and replacements. Monthly rates for a residential customer using 4,000 gallons would increase from \$31.60 to \$43.86 under the utility's request.

The utility has filed this case through the IURC's Small Utility Filing Procedure, which is designed to reduce the time and expense involved with regulatory filings for utilities with fewer than 8,000 customers. Savings are gained by allowing utility staff to use standardized forms and forego a technical evidentiary hearing. This is designed to result in utilities needing less assistance from rate consultants or attorneys, leading to fewer expenses to be passed on to customers.

The OUCC uses the same standard to review a utility's operations and records whether it seeks a rate increase through the Small Utility Filing Procedure or a traditional case. Conducting its analysis on behalf of all utility consumers, the OUCC will present the results of its review through a report to the IURC, including formal testimony. The IURC's review is conducted on behalf of the public interest (a balancing of utility and customer interests); it is responsible for resolving any factual disputes that may arise and issuing a final order establishing new rates.

A settlement agreement is possible in any legal proceeding; such an agreement, if reached, would require IURC approval.

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

Public Comments
Indiana Office of Utility Consumer Counselor (OUCC)
115 W. Washington St., Suite 1500 SOUTH
Indianapolis, IN 46204

Consumer comments will be included in the formal case record for IURC review. Comments **should not** contain sensitive or personal information as comments will become viewable and searchable online once posted to the IURC's online case file. Consumers with questions about commenting can contact the OUCC's consumer services staff at 1-888-441-2494.

The OUCC needs to receive all written consumer comments **no later than April 7, 2025**, 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, city, and zip code** and a reference to either **IURC Cause No. 46185-U** or **Van Buren Water**. Consumers with questions about submitting written comments can contact the OUCC's consumer services staff toll-free at 1-888-441-2494.

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

(IURC Cause No. 46185-U)

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.