

**From:** [PUCWeb Notification](#)  
**To:** [Jan Noriyuki](#)  
**Subject:** Notice: A comment was submitted to PUCWeb  
**Date:** Saturday, August 6, 2022 8:00:07 AM

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The following comment was submitted via PUCWeb:

Name: John Balbi  
Submission Time: Aug 6 2022 7:58AM  
Email: [johnb@webeefelting.com](mailto:johnb@webeefelting.com)  
Telephone: 208-623-2587  
Address: 31772 N. Kelso Dr.  
Spirit Lake, ID 83869

Name of Utility Company: Gem State

Case ID: GSW-W-22-01

Comment: "08/05/2022 John Balbi Lot 102 Spirit lake East 83869 RE: Gem State Rate Increase Dear Sirs, I am in complete disagreement with the increase presented. May I remind PUC that the lots in Spirit Lake East are at a minimum of 10 acres Not the .17 acres average size lots in Coeur 'd Alene 1. Water used for Fire prevention in conjunction with mowing 2. Family's use water for to supply food for their family's 3. Livestock care and feeding 4. Irrigation of plants and vegetation As the notice from Gem State Water states the average proposed rate is \$41.86 This is a mean Number 50% will have much higher number eg higher bill. The lower 50% will be at or below their proposed rate because they do not require the above items. Let's talk real numbers Current Rate is \$25.55 10 CCF = 7480 Gal = \$3.43 per 1,000 Gal Proposed Rate \$35.00 10 CCF = 7480 Gal = \$4.68 per 1000 Gal Base increase \$1.25 per 1000 Gal Current Rate Overage -7480 gallons or 10.7 CCF \$2.33 per 1,000 Gal Proposed Rate Overage -7480 gallons or 10.7 CCF \$5.10 per 1,000 Gal Overage increase \$2.77 per 1000 Gal As we can see the numbers are telling that this increase is beyond realistic. As for combining water system rates I am opposed. "

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**From:** [PUCWeb Notification](#)  
**To:** [Jan Noriyuki](#)  
**Subject:** Notice: A comment was submitted to PUCWeb  
**Date:** Saturday, August 6, 2022 2:00:07 PM

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The following comment was submitted via PUCWeb:

Name: Mark Mecord  
Submission Time: Aug 6 2022 1:14PM  
Email: mark.mecord@gmail.com  
Telephone: 208-639-2002  
Address: 31562 N Spirit Drive  
Spirit Lake, ID 83869

Name of Utility Company: Gem State Water Company

Case ID: GSW-W-22-01

Comment: "I am writing you to express my family's grave concern/s over the water rate increase proposal by Gem State Water Company for Spirit Lake East (SLE). I believe this rate increase is very excessive, this proposed increase will go from \$25.55/month (w/a base of 8000 gallons) to \$35/month (w/a base of 8,000 gallons). This increase constitutes 37% increase for our household for the base & minimum charge. The commodity charge will go from \$2.55 (per 1000 gallons) to \$5.10 (per 1000 gallons). The commodity charge is a 100% increase. Note, these numbers correlate to our 1-inch meter within SLE. After carefully reviewing Gem State Water Company's application, they are lumping all the separate areas together for the base charge. This appears to be a convenience for billing, not for actual costs for each individual area. In our case/area the increase comes just 3 years after the last application. The propose commodity charge for our area (SLE) is significantly more than other area proposals (\$2.26, \$2.85, and \$4.10). Unlike the base charge, Gem State Water Company is charging far less for other areas than SLE without any justification for the disparity. I cannot find any rationale in the application for what I consider unwarranted increases based on their simplified spreadsheets. Additionally, they do not state the actual cost of delivering water in each area, thus making it hard to justify their position. Since there has been only one outage (that I am aware of) in the SLE area that required maintenance in the last year, the cost simply cannot be as high as their proposed rate increases. I would hope that you take my comments and all those from other residents in SLE into consideration when making any decisions concerning the application. If the PUC cannot make changes to the rates in the application to a more realistic cost of business, I would request that you deny the application outright."

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**From:** [PUCWeb Notification](#)  
**To:** [Jan Noriyuki](#)  
**Subject:** Notice: A comment was submitted to PUCWeb  
**Date:** Sunday, August 7, 2022 7:00:08 AM

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The following comments were submitted via PUCWeb:

Name: Kim Ward  
Submission Time: Aug 6 2022 6:44PM  
Email: wa2651@aol.com  
Telephone: 208-818-3812  
Address: 4989 E. Beargrass Ct  
Athol, ID 83801

Name of Utility Company: Gem State Water

Case ID: GSW-W-22-01

Comment: "Please do not allow this company to raise our water rates by 64%. Most of us are living paycheck to paycheck already. To many this have increased already! Please take this into consideration. Thank you for your time."

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**From:** [PUCWeb Notification](#)  
**To:** [Jan Noriyuki](#)  
**Subject:** Notice: A comment was submitted to PUCWeb  
**Date:** Monday, August 8, 2022 7:00:08 AM

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The following comment was submitted via PUCWeb:

Name: Chris Lawson  
Submission Time: Aug 7 2022 9:40PM  
Email: lawsoncl@gmail.com  
Telephone: 208-683-2321  
Address: 31647 North Priest River Drive  
Spirit Lake, ID 83869

Name of Utility Company: Gem State Water

Case ID: GSW-W-22-01

Comment: "Why does Gem State really need to add an additional \$402k revenue, on top of their existing \$543k revenue when they've stated they have no long term debt? Nearly a third of their realized net operating income deficit was the one-time purchase of an \$87k truck. Surely they don't plan on buying a truck every year? This cost should have been amortized out for the service life of the vehicle, not represented as a yearly expected capital cost. Similarly, one-time capital upgrades on many systems are being represented as typical yearly costs. Why is Gem State proposing higher minimum monthly rates for larger meters? This is akin to the electric company charging you a higher minimum because you have a larger breaker panel. Outside of the initial installation, for which they charge significantly more for the larger meter, neither actually incurs a higher cost to the PUC. Gem State also does not have accurate records of what size meters are installed, and many customers received larger meters due to a lack of 1" meters years ago. Personally, I don't know what size mine is and I'm concerned I might suddenly be paying 4x as much under the new rate plan for the exact same amount of water. It's only been 3-years since the last major rate increase in Spirit Lake East. Gem Water used the previous system repairs and upgrades within Spirit Lake East as justification for the prior rate increase. Under this proposal, Spirit Lake East will have the highest per month dollar increase of all the systems, despite our system having the least need for future capital investment It's also concerning that Gem State is proposing more than doubling the rate for in excess usage of the minimum charge. Exhibit 5 calculates the percent increase for excess in a deceptive manner. Excess charges going from \$2.33 to \$5.10 is shown as a %119 increase, and in reality the new cost is %219 percent of the original cost. Similarly, exhibit 6 sent to the customers presents the percent increase with a figure like %102 when in reality it's over twice the previous cost."

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**From:** [PUCWeb Notification](#)  
**To:** [Jan Noriyuki](#)  
**Subject:** Notice: A comment was submitted to PUCWeb  
**Date:** Monday, August 8, 2022 3:00:07 PM

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The following comment was submitted via PUCWeb:

Name: James Gerecke  
Submission Time: Aug 8 2022 2:52PM  
Email: [jgerecke@comcast.net](mailto:jgerecke@comcast.net)  
Telephone: 559-285-2876  
Address: 28170 N. Silver Meadows Loop  
Athol, ID 83801

Name of Utility Company: Gem State Water

Case ID: GSW-W-22-01

Comment: "Re: Gem State Water proposed rate increase as to Bitterroot Water. We are customers and ratepayers of Gem State Water in the (former) Bitterroot Water district in Athol, ID. We object to the proposed rate increase and to the proposed combining of Bitterroot with other water districts owned by Gem State Water as presently filed. The application does not provide sufficient detail for ratepayers to evaluate and comment on the proposed rate increase or the combining of districts. In fact, the notice filed does not even detail all proposed changes to the rate structure, and is silent as to proposed district consolidation. No information is provided as to the nature of the claimed operating income deficiency; i.e., is this a one-time shortfall, or is it recurring? Further, one-time expenses should to be spread over a number of periods (years) so as to accumulate funds for large outlays. Doing so avoids a windfall to the district. No detail is provided to enable evaluation of the alleged benefits of combining Bitterroot with other districts. Merely because combining districts may be of benefit to Gem State Water, it does not necessarily follow that combining will benefit the rate payer. Gem State Water suggests that "consolidating rates" will be beneficial to the customer. However, in doing so, Gem State Water appears to intend to use revenues from the combined districts to pay costs of operating presently individual districts. In other words, revenues from one currently individual district may in the future be utilized for expenses of another district. This seems unfair to ratepayers of a given district. There remain operational issues with Gem State Water as regards Bitterroot as well. Gem State Water is slow to respond to unplanned system (power) outages, more so than was the prior owner. With the frequency of unplanned outages at Bitterroot, Gem State Water should have in place an automatic backup power supply-it does not. Gem State Water has taken no steps to notify its Bitterroot customers of planned service outages. Further, Gem State Water does nothing to notify its Bitterroot customers of complete loss of pressure events, and how to respond in such events. While a modest rate increase may be appropriate, sufficient detail should be provided the ratepayers to adequately evaluate the proposal. As filed, the information provided in the Gem State Water rate increase proposal is more superficial than it is helpful. We oppose the Gem State Water proposed rate increase as to Bitterroot, and we oppose the proposed combining of Bitterroot with other districts. Jim Gerecke Valerie DeValeria "

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RECEIVED

2022 AUG -8 AM 10:14

IDAHO PUBLIC  
UTILITIES COMMISSION

August 2, 2022

Jan Noriyuki  
Commission Secretary  
Idaho Public Utilities Commission  
PO Box 83720  
Boise, ID 83720-0074

RE: GSW-W-22-01, Gem State Water Company, LLC, Authorizing Rates and Charges for Water Service

Dear Commission Secretary Noriyuki:

We received a notice from Gem State Water Company, LLC, of their intentions to consolidate their individually owned water systems, and increase the base rates and charges for customers in the Spirit Lake East Water System. We have read their application and justification on the Public Utilities Commission (PUC) website and see no justification to raise the rates in the amount of 69%. It is our understanding Gem State's parent company is a for profit entity and purchased other less desirable water systems to operate. I don't feel this is justification to raise all the other existing water systems rate payer amounts. If Gem State Water can provide documentation to show that their operating costs for the Spirit Lake East water system is running in a deficit equal or close to the 69% increase, they claim they require, then it could be brought forward for discussion on increasing the base rate and water usage charges. What the company has provided to the commission is not clear on the costs to operate each individual system and how the increases are warranted. It feels like this was done purposefully to cloud the real operating costs for each system. Also, keep in mind that there is little, to no water usage for six (6) months of each year, and rate payers pay a base rate for those months of very little usage, and what we would assume are low employee costs as there would be minimal maintenance during the winter months.

In closing, we do not believe Gem State Water Company, LLC, has shown adequate proof to justify raising the base rate and overage charges in the amount of 69%.

Respectfully,

David & Sherrie Badertscher (Spirit Lake East Homeowners)  
35004 N Hayden Dr  
Spirit Lake, ID 83869

August 3, 2022

Idaho Public Utilities Commission  
PO Box 83720  
Boise, ID 83720

RECEIVED  
2022 AUG -6 AM 10:13  
IDAHO PUBLIC  
UTILITIES COMMISSION

RE Case GSW-W-22-01

I am **OPPOSED** to the proposed rate increase by Gem State Water.

Gem State wants a 69% increase above what I'm now paying.

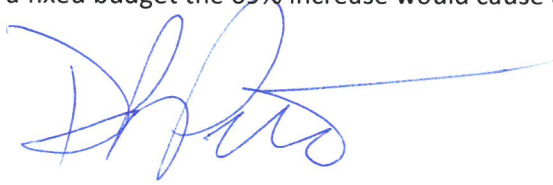
That 69% increase is outrageously high.

An increase of 10-15% would be more appropriate.

As a senior citizen living on a fixed budget the 69% increase would cause a hardship.

David Petersen  
32156 N. Hayden Drive  
Spirit Lake, ID 83869  
425.754.8860

[david@bestrestproducts.com](mailto:david@bestrestproducts.com)



August 3, 2022

Idaho Public Utilities Commission  
PO Box 83720  
Boise, ID 83720

RE Case GSW-W-22-01

I am **OPPOSED** to the proposed rate increase by Gem State Water.

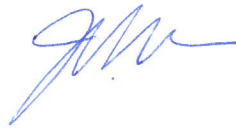
Gem State wants a 69% increase above what I'm now paying.

That 69% increase is outrageously high.

An increase of 10-15% would be more appropriate.

As a senior citizen living on a fixed budget the 69% increase would cause a hardship.

Judy Petersen  
32156 N. Hayden Drive  
Spirit Lake, ID 83869  
425.754.2139  
[jmhosta@hotmail.com](mailto:jmhosta@hotmail.com)



RECEIVED

2022 AUG -8 AM 10:14

IDAHO PUBLIC  
UTILITIES COMMISSION