
IDAHO PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

For Immediate Release

Case No. UWI-W-04-1

February 10, 2004

Contact: Gene Fadness (208) 334-0339

Website: www.puc.state.id.us

United Water applies for budget-billing program

Boise - United Water, which has about 74,000 customers in the Boise metropolitan area, is seeking approval from the Idaho Public Utilities Commission to implement a budget billing program for residential customers who want to make a levelized monthly payment.

United Water customers currently receive six bi-monthly bills, including two summer bills that are based on a rate 25 percent higher than the company's winter rate. The summer bills can create a financial hardship because, for some customers, they total more than 60 percent of the total annual bill.

Customers who enroll in the proposed budget-billing plan would receive monthly bills instead of bi-monthly statements, although meters would continue to be read bi-monthly. An average would be calculated based on consumption at the residence for the previous 12 months. An annual reconciliation would be performed with negative or positive balances rolled forward into the next budget bill. If extreme weather conditions or other unforeseen circumstances like a major leak cause a significant change in consumption the company would be allowed to make mid-term adjustments. Customers who do not want to participate would continue to be billed as they are now.

In its application to the commission, United Water claims there is significant customer demand for the program. The company estimates it will cost \$72,000 to implement the program and is asking the commission to defer that amount for recovery from customers when United Water files its next general rate case.

The commission has determined that public interest in the matter may not require a hearing, but can be processed by written comments instead. Customers may comment through March 3.

Persons wishing to submit comments can do so via e-mail by accessing the commission's homepage at www.puc.state.id.us and clicking on "Comments & Questions." Fill in the case number (UWI-W-04-1) and enter your comments. Comments can also be mailed to P.O. Box 83720, Boise, ID 83720-0074 or faxed to (208) 334-3762.

END