

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA WATER AND SEWER
AUTHORITY (D.C. WATER)

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PUBLIC HEARING ON
PROPOSED RETAIL RATES, CHARGES & FEES, CUSTOMER
METERING FEES AMEND CAP CRIAC DISCOUNT AND
AMENDMENT TO CAP2 REGULATIONS FOR FISCAL YEAR
2021 & FISCAL YEAR 2022

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WEDNESDAY
AUGUST 5, 2020

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The meeting convened via
Videoconference at 6:30 p.m. EDT, Tommy Wells,
Chairman, presiding.

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA MEMBERS PRESENT:

TOMMY WELLS

CHAIRMAN

ELLEN O. BOARDMAN	PRINCIPAL MEMBER
KRYSTAL BRUMFIELD	PRINCIPAL MEMBER
RACHNA BUTANI BHATT	PRINCIPAL MEMBER
DAVID FRANCO	PRINCIPAL MEMBER
EMILE THOMPSON	PRINCIPAL MEMBER
KENDRICK E. CURRY	ALTERNATE MEMBER
ANTHONY GIANCOLA	ALTERNATE MEMBER
HOWARD C. GIBBS	ALTERNATE MEMBER
JOE LEONARD	ALTERNATE MEMBER

WASA STAFF PRESENT:

DAVID GADIS CEO & GENERAL MANAGER

MATTHEW BROWN

CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER

GREGORY HOPE

INTERIM EVP, LEGAL AFFAIRS

LINDA MANLEY

BOARD SECRETARY

CONTENTS

Opening Statement - Tommy Wells, Chairman.	3
Roll Call - Linda Manley, Board Secretary.	6
CEO's Testimony - David Gadis.13
CEO/General Manager	
DC Water Management Presentation20
- Matthew Brown	
Presentation by Independent Consultant43
- Amawalk Consulting	
Public Witnesses	
Preregistered Speakers55
Other Comments (time permitting)86
Closing Remarks - Tommy Wells, Chairman.89
Adjournment - Tommy Wells, Chairman.94

P R O C E E D I N G S

6:30 p.m.

CHAIR WELLS: All right. Good evening, everyone. My name is Tommy Wells. I am the Chairman of the Board of Directors of the District of Columbia Water and Sewer Authority.

Like many people, the staff and board members at DC Water have had to adjust to virtual meetings in order to share the work we're doing with the community.

I believe strongly in full transparency of our processes at DC Water and my fellow board members are heartened to learn that DC Water staff had more than 4,000 people -- 4,000 people join the recent series of town hall meetings convened in all eight wards of the District. More residents attended this year for the town hall meetings than in any other year.

Moreover, DC Water staff organized a special online briefing -- okay. Somebody needs to mute, because I'm being repeated, okay?

DC Water staff organized a special

1 online briefing for the business community last
2 week that was hosted by at least a half dozen
3 economic organizations in the city.

4 The town halls and targeted business
5 outreach display a sincere level of participation
6 and speaks well to the movement to engage
7 District residents and businesses in our rate-
8 setting process.

9 The virus known as COVID-19 is a daily
10 burden on all of us and DC Water is no different.
11 I know from my conversations with our general
12 manager that the safety of his employees and the
13 uninterrupted service to the millions of people
14 who rely on water and wastewater services here in
15 the District are his top priorities.

16 While the pandemic has impacted the
17 global economy, we have not escaped its impact
18 closer to home. Water consumption and revenue at
19 DC Water is down, a result of people staying
20 home, and many of our businesses, hotels,
21 offices, restaurants and sports arenas are
22 closed. As a result, DC Water brings in less

1 revenue, and so we are working to counter that by
2 containing costs.

3 Yet, the needs of our system are
4 great. We have an obligation to provide the
5 District with reliable water and wastewater
6 services. And unless we make critical
7 investments in our infrastructure, we risk
8 failure with some of our systems.

9 Our hearing tonight is to review
10 comments on the proposed fiscal year 2021 and
11 fiscal year '22 retail customer rates, charges
12 and fees, and then to make a recommendation to
13 the full board where the board will take action
14 on any of the changes. The board undertakes this
15 process every two years or whenever we adjust
16 rates.

17 Following the hearing, in September,
18 the board will vote on this proposal amending
19 rates for Fiscal Year 2021. Then it will start
20 October 1, 2020, throughout the year through
21 Fiscal Year 2022.

22 Once complete, the full schedule will

1 be posted on the DC Water website and shared
2 broadly with the community.

3 We have other board members joining
4 us. I stated we've got Tony Giancola. I'm sure
5 we've got Howard Gibbs.

6 In fact, I cannot see everyone on my
7 screen. So, I'm going to have Ms. Manley call
8 the roll to see, A, that we have a quorum, but
9 also so that all the board members can let you
10 know that they're here.

11 Ms. Manley.

12 MS. MANLEY: Chairman Wells.

13 CHAIR WELLS: I'm here.

14 MS. MANLEY: Krystal Brumfield.

15 MEMBER BRUMFIELD: Present.

16 MS. MANLEY: Emile Thompson.

17 MEMBER THOMPSON: Present.

18 MS. MANLEY: David Franco.

19 (Pause.)

20 MS. MANLEY: Ellen Boardman.

21 MEMBER BOARDMAN: Here.

22 MS. MANLEY: Howard Gibbs.

1 MEMBER GIBBS: Here.

2 MS. MANLEY: Anthony Giancola.

3 MEMBER GIANCOLA: Here.

4 MS. MANLEY: Ivan Frishberg.

5 (Pause.)

6 MS. MANLEY: Jed Ross.

7 (Pause.)

8 MS. MANLEY: Rachna Bhatt.

9 MEMBER BUTANI BHATT: Here.

10 MS. MANLEY: Reverend Kendrick Curry.

11 MEMBER CURRY: Here.

12 MS. MANLEY: And Joe Leonard.

13 MEMBER LEONARD: Present.

14 MS. MANLEY: We have a quorum,

15 Chairman.

16 MEMBER FRANCO: Ms. Manley.

17 MS. MANLEY: Yes.

18 MEMBER FRANCO: This is David Franco.

19 I didn't hear my name, but I am here.

20 MS. MANLEY: Okay. Thank you.

21 MEMBER FRANCO: You're welcome.

22 CHAIR WELLS: Great. Thank you,

1 everybody.

2 And, for the record, DC Water was
3 established by the Council of the District of
4 Columbia in 1996 as an independent authority with
5 a separate legal existence apart from the DC
6 Government.

7 DC Water operates the world's largest
8 advanced wastewater treatment plant at Blue
9 Plains and provides water and sewer services to
10 all residents, visitors, institutions and
11 businesses in DC. Our drinking water comes from
12 the Potomac River.

13 All of the proposed changes to our
14 rates were published in the DC Register, were
15 announced via social media and traditional media,
16 and shared broadly with community groups and
17 other stakeholders, including all ANCs, and of
18 course with the mayor and council.

19 I want to commend the staff at DC
20 Water for working so hard to share these rates,
21 the proposed rates, with the general public.

22 I want to take this moment to remind

1 the public that among our many goals for the
2 environment of the District of Columbia is making
3 the Anacostia River safe once again for swimming.

4 Reducing combined sewer overflows as
5 part of the Clean Rivers project is the single
6 largest capital project and one of the most
7 important steps in that direction. I'm proud to
8 be involved with it.

9 The legacy of our work protecting the
10 District's waterways and cleaning up our
11 waterways will be enjoyed by our children in
12 generations to come.

13 DC Water is a nonprofit, essentially
14 an agency of the District Government, yet
15 independent. Unlike for-profit utilities in the
16 electric or gas fields, the money that is
17 available to DC Water is only the amount of money
18 that we need to carry out our mission. And in
19 proposing the new budget to continue and, in
20 fact, expand our customer assistance programs,
21 we're proud of the various ways we help customers
22 to afford their water service.

1 Those efforts include a menu of steps
2 responding to the pandemic from ending
3 disconnections, restoring service, providing
4 lenient payment plans and partnering with Mayor
5 Muriel Bowser and the Council on a new program to
6 cover the arrearage of some of our neediest
7 customers.

8 Before we begin and hear from the
9 public and DC Water's management, I'll review the
10 ground rules for the hearing:

11 Individuals presenting testimony have
12 up to five minutes to speak. Representatives of
13 organizations or a group have a total of ten
14 minutes to address the committee.

15 Those testifying should clearly state
16 their name, name of the organization they
17 represent, if there is one, and their address.
18 Witnesses representing an organization should
19 give a brief description of that organization,
20 its services and location.

21 We ask that everyone mute your phones
22 until you need to speak. Please keep in mind

1 that we are here to listen to comments pretty
2 much only on the new rates.

3 If there are individual questions or
4 concerns about a particular service or billing
5 matter, you can call the Customer Care Department
6 at 202-354-3600 -- 202-354-3600 -- and our staff
7 will assist you.

8 The Board gives equal consideration
9 and weight to written comments that will be
10 reviewed as we receive them.

11 Written comments can be submitted to
12 the Office of the Board Secretary. That's at DC
13 Water, 5000 Overlook Avenue, S.W., Washington, DC
14 20032. So again, that's at DC Water, 5000
15 Overlook Avenue, S.W., Washington, DC 20032.

16 You may also email your comments to
17 lmanley@dcwater.com. L-M-A-N-L-E-Y at DC Water
18 dot com.

19 The Board will accept and consider
20 comments until Monday, August 10th, at 5:00 p.m.
21 We will vote on the new rate structure, which I
22 expect to happen in September.

1 A final decision on the proposed rate
2 increases will be made only by the members of the
3 Board who represent the District of Columbia at
4 the Board's regularly scheduled meeting.

5 DC Water CEO David Gadis will provide
6 his testimony on the proposed rate adjustments
7 and then our chief financial officer, Matthew
8 Brown, will provide the management's
9 presentation.

10 Then we'll hear a presentation from
11 our independent financial consultant regarding
12 Fiscal Year '21 and '22 rates.

13 Afterward, we will hear public
14 comments on the proposal. Individuals who
15 preregistered will speak first and, time
16 permitting, we'll hear from others here tonight
17 who wish to testify.

18 If you did not preregister to speak
19 and wish to speak tonight, please email Ms.
20 Manley now at L-M-A-N-L-E-Y --
21 lmanley@dcwater.com or call 202-787-2330. 202-
22 787-2330. We ask you to please state your name

1 and address for the record.

2 Okay. So, I believe we -- I think we
3 hear from our consultants first. Is that right,
4 Mr. Gadis? Who speaks next?

5 MS. MANLEY: Mr. Gadis speaks next.

6 CHAIR WELLS: Okay. My instructions
7 are wrong. All right. Mr. Gadis, let's move on
8 to you. Welcome our general manager David Gadis.

9 And you're on mute.

10 MR. GADIS: I tried to follow your rule
11 and stay on mute. I apologize.

12 Good evening -- and, Chairman Wells,
13 first of all, thank you very much for the
14 introduction and good evening to our board
15 members and members of the community who are
16 joining us virtually here tonight.

17 My name is David L. Gadis and I have
18 spent the past few years leading DC Water, one of
19 the finest and the most innovative water
20 authorities in the world.

21 Meeting virtually is not my
22 preference, but it is the only safe and

1 responsible way to conduct business of the
2 authority in the era of COVID-19.

3 This terrible and deadly health
4 pandemic has reverberated in every corner of the
5 city and throughout the world. There is
6 virtually no aspect of life that has not been
7 touched by COVID-19.

8 The men and women of DC Water are
9 still maintaining the water and wastewater system
10 for the District of Columbia, but they're doing
11 it while practicing safe social distancing and
12 wearing masks.

13 We stagger our crews and minimize risk
14 and space our vehicles out and all for our
15 workers to avoid unnecessary contact.

16 We limit our work to emergencies, but
17 we still have trucks responding all over the city
18 at all times day and night.

19 Meanwhile, our office workers and
20 customer service employees are primarily working
21 from home per the mayor's order.

22 The work of the authority goes on

1 uninterrupted, but we do most of it via an
2 internet platform or phone calls or emails as
3 well.

4 We're not just coping with this health
5 pandemic, we're also finding ways to get better
6 here at DC Water.

7 For example, DC Water has one of the
8 first -- was one of the first utilities to
9 announce that we were offering all of our
10 customers flexible payment plans for the duration
11 of the pandemic, that we would turn off no water
12 service -- we would not turn off anyone's water
13 service for anyone during the pandemic regardless
14 of how much money you owe us, and that we'd
15 actually reconnect anyone for free if they didn't
16 have water.

17 Internally, we've found ways to avoid
18 furloughs and layoffs for all of our staff. We
19 have placed immediate freezes on hiring and
20 restricted travel and other spending also, which
21 are -- all these moves have allowed us to shield
22 our workers from the economic insecurity that has

1 arrived alongside the COVID-19 crisis.

2 No job losses at DC Water is something
3 that we are very, very proud of. And that is why
4 tonight we find ourselves discussing rates for
5 the coming fiscal year during this virtual forum.

6 Since March, DC Water has held more
7 than 20 board meetings, committee meetings and
8 local ward town hall meetings that Chairman Wells
9 talked about earlier on virtual platforms.

10 While there is still a health
11 emergency outside, inside we are committed to
12 working with complete transparency and in a way
13 where the public can still observe and
14 participate in every aspect of our deliberation.

15 Our proposal to the Board tonight
16 would increase rates by 6.6 percent, less than
17 the 8.1 percent increase that would have been
18 required if we had not taken many cost-cutting
19 steps like refinancing debt, controlling
20 operating cost and growth, and also withdrawing
21 \$13 million from our Rate Stabilization Fund.

22 The 6.6 percent increase that I have

1 proposed for the average household to our board
2 was not a decision that I made lightly.

3 This entire city and region is
4 laboring under the economic and social impact of
5 the pandemic and asking the 700,000 residents of
6 the District to pay more for services this fall
7 is not something that I relish doing. On the
8 other hand, we literally had no other
9 alternatives before us.

10 The infrastructure needs of our system
11 are far too great to punt action for a year while
12 we climb out of the pandemic.

13 We must make investments now in our
14 water and sewer infrastructure so that we can
15 still provide reliable, safe services to the
16 people of the nation's capital.

17 Under my proposal, the average
18 household will pay about \$7 more each month in
19 their water bill. This includes an increase in
20 water and sewer rates, an increase in meter fees
21 and a decrease in the Clean Rivers Impervious
22 Area Charge.

1 We are continuing to shift a portion
2 of the Clean Rivers costs from the Impervious
3 Area Charge to the sewer rate. We are doing this
4 to allow customers to manage their bills by using
5 less water though we were also responding to
6 complaints that some customers using little or no
7 water had a high CRIAC charge.

8 The new formula is working well and so
9 is the larger program. Clean Rivers is paying
10 huge dividends for the District's environment.

11 Since March 2018 when the tunnel
12 opened, our system has captured 8 billion gallons
13 of combined sewage and wastewater along with 4
14 million tons of trash. Our capture rate on
15 overflows is higher than 90 percent.

16 Consider those numbers for a moment.
17 This project is making the Anacostia and the
18 Potomac River and, by extension, the entire
19 Chesapeake Bay cleaner each day.

20 As we move ahead with this process, I
21 want to restate for a moment something that I
22 told DC Council last week during a hearing where

1 we discussed ways to improve the lead replacement
2 legislation that was approved in 2018.

3 Everything we do here at DC Water, as
4 we provide water and wastewater services to
5 customers, is going to be anchored by our
6 commitment to our six distinct values that we
7 will demonstrate: accountability, trust,
8 teamwork, customer focus, safety and well-being.

9 I encourage you to watch us and the
10 exciting things that we are going to do here at
11 DC Water and here in the District.

12 I appreciate the work of the DC Water
13 Board of Directors and their dedication to the
14 authority. I could not do my job well without
15 the guidance of this board. So, thank you to
16 each and every one of you.

17 Thank you for your time and I look
18 forward to hearing from our witnesses. Thank
19 you, Chairman Wells.

20 CHAIR WELLS: So, next are we going to
21 hear from our consultants or from Mr. Brown?

22 MR. BROWN: From me.

1 MR. GADIS: It would be Mr. Brown
2 first.

3 CHAIR WELLS: Great.

4 MR. GADIS: Thank you.

5 MR. BROWN: Can I get confirmation that
6 those on the phone can see the presentation?

7 CHAIR WELLS: I can.

8 MR. BROWN: Okay. Great.

9 MS. MANLEY: Yes.

10 MR. BROWN: Thank you. Good evening,
11 everyone. My name is Matthew Brown. I'm the CFO
12 for DC Water.

13 Tonight is to hear from our customers,
14 but I want to provide some information about the
15 rate proposal.

16 First of all --

17 CHAIR WELLS: We lost audio. Matt, we
18 lost audio.

19 MR. BROWN: Can we --

20 CHAIR WELLS: There you are.

21 MR. BROWN: Can you hear me now?

22 CHAIR WELLS: Yes.

1 MR. BROWN: Can you hear me now? Are
2 you on mute?

3 MS. MANLEY: Yes, we can hear you.

4 MR. BROWN: Okay. Great. I apologize.

5 Okay. So, first of all, I want to
6 make sure that anyone who's joined us tonight
7 who's having trouble paying their bill, to please
8 reach out to us.

9 Mr. Wells gave the customer service
10 number. Let me give that again. It's 202-354-
11 3600.

12 If you join us this evening and you're
13 having trouble paying your bill, please give us a
14 call. Let us try to work with you to make
15 payment arrangements.

16 I also want to make sure that you're
17 aware of our customer assistance programs that
18 have been referenced this evening. There are
19 three.

20 The first is the CAP program. It
21 provides a monthly discount of \$77 a month.
22 There's CAP2, which our board, as part of this

1 proposal, has managed to make permanent. That
2 provides customers a discount of about \$50 a
3 month for higher incomes. And then there's CAP3.

4 For any information on these customer
5 assistance programs, please go to our website
6 dcwater.com/customer-assistance.

7 There's also some emergency
8 residential relief programs in partnership with
9 the District. There's a new program for
10 households that have been negatively impacted by
11 COVID. You may receive up to \$2,000. It's a
12 onetime emergency benefit. So, please contact us
13 to see if you're eligible for that benefit.

14 There's also a program that's
15 administered by the Greater Washington Urban
16 League. It's funded by donations from customers,
17 the community and DC Water employees and many of
18 our board members.

19 And then there's the nonprofit relief
20 program that provides eligible organizations with
21 discounts in the Clean Rivers Impervious Area
22 Charge. For any of those programs, please visit

1 us on our website.

2 So, let me talk a little bit about the
3 rate proposal. And the rate proposal doesn't
4 stand alone. The rate proposal allows us to
5 spend money in the operating budget and our
6 capital budget to make infrastructure
7 improvements.

8 The budget that is before the Board of
9 Directors that they approved in March, and
10 supported by the rates that we're here to talk to
11 you about tonight, fully funds our Clean Rivers
12 program that's been referenced by two speakers.

13 It increases our investments in our
14 water and our sewer infrastructure to help reduce
15 the risk of failures for our customers.

16 It increases funds for fleet purchases
17 to make sure that our crews have the equipment
18 that they need when they arrive on a site to do
19 work for you, our customers.

20 It continues to shift a portion of the
21 Clean Rivers costs from the Impervious Area
22 Charge to the sewer volumetric rate to help bring

1 more equity to the Clean Rivers funding formula.

2 As I mentioned earlier, it makes that
3 CAP2 program permanent. It had been a pilot
4 program. It makes the program permanent.

5 And this proposal before us tonight
6 extends the CAP2 -- I'm sorry, the CAP benefits
7 for the Clean Rivers Impervious Area Charge from
8 50 percent to 75 percent. So, the benefit is
9 increased for our CAP customers.

10 It takes advantage of low interest
11 rates. We've been able to refinance some of our
12 debt. That's one of the reasons why, as Mr.
13 Gadis mentioned, the rates -- the rate increase
14 is smaller than what we had previously
15 forecasted.

16 And we're withdrawing \$13 million from
17 the Rate Stabilization Fund, applying it over the
18 next two years to the benefit of you, our
19 customers.

20 Mr. Gadis touched on this a little
21 bit; during COVE-19, obviously we've been
22 impacted as a utility. We've tried to focus on

1 our customers. Mr. Gadis mentioned that we
2 reconnected customers, suspended late fees,
3 partnered with District agencies, suspended
4 placing liens.

5 There has been an overall decline.
6 Residential, multifamily and DC Housing Authority
7 consumption is up, but the commercial, municipal,
8 including our schools, and federal consumption is
9 down. And that's had an impact on our cash.

10 There's also been an increase in
11 delinquent payments and been some negative impact
12 on our other revenues like permit fees and waste
13 hauling fees.

14 Because of COVID, we made aggressive
15 efforts to outreach to you, our customers. We
16 delayed the ratemaking process to ensure that
17 there's a time and a venue to hear from our
18 customers.

19 Tonight's hearing was originally
20 scheduled for June 10th and it's moved to tonight
21 so that we can have this virtual meeting.

22 Our ward town halls were also made

1 virtual. These numbers were mentioned earlier.
2 We're really proud of the participation that we
3 had in the town halls. We also had a business
4 town hall on the 29th.

5 We are always working to increase
6 transparency. And one of the things that we've
7 done this year, we posted all of the materials
8 related to the ratemaking materials at
9 dcwater.com/ratemaking-process.

10 So, all of the materials that our
11 board used to discuss the proposed budgets over
12 the months of January and February are all
13 available to you, our customers.

14 We've also refreshed the rate
15 calculator. This was first introduced a year
16 ago. Everybody's bill is different. Everyone
17 uses a different amount of water, different meter
18 size, a different impervious area.

19 With your bill, you could go to the
20 rate calculator, put in information from your
21 bill, like the information I just mentioned, and
22 really understand the impact of this proposal on

1 you.

2 The participation in our Customer
3 Assistance Programs, as we anticipated during
4 COVID, has increased. It's also increased
5 because of some aggressive outreach that we've
6 done. And, again, if you'd like to take
7 advantage of these programs, please contact us
8 here at DC Water.

9 CAP, we've served almost as many
10 customers through June this year as we served all
11 of last year.

12 The CAP2 participation has increased
13 substantially, again, because of aggressive
14 outreach. And CAP3 the same. There's that new
15 emergency relief program where customers can
16 receive up to a \$2,000 credit.

17 I mentioned this before, CAP2 has been
18 made permanent and the CAP program has been
19 expanded. And then the SPLASH program is
20 available for onetime assistance.

21 Again, for any information on these
22 customer assistance programs, please visit us at

1 dcwater.com/customer-assistance.

2 So, let me talk a little bit about the
3 budget proposal and the rates that it supports.
4 This is the operating budget sources and uses for
5 Fiscal Year '21. And, again, Fiscal Year '21
6 begins on October 1st.

7 Our rate revenue is from a variety of
8 customers, anyone in the District of Columbia who
9 uses water, residential customers, commercial
10 customers, multifamily customers, the federal
11 government, the municipal government.

12 There's also wholesale revenue that we
13 receive from our regional partners because we
14 treat their -- the wastewater here at Blue
15 Plains.

16 The way we spend that money is
17 presented on the right. I'm not going to call on
18 every pie piece, but just a couple places that I
19 want to point out.

20 No. 1 clockwise from about 10 -- I'm
21 sorry, from about 12 to 3 o'clock are personnel.
22 We've got 1200 DC Water employees continuing to

1 work, deliver services during COVID. They're a
2 substantial portion of our budget.

3 Another piece of the pie I want to
4 show you is opposite of personnel, and it's debt
5 service. A growing portion of our budget pays for
6 debt service. And that's to repay a debt that we
7 issue in order to build our capital program.

8 Most people buy a house once and pay
9 it off over 30 years. We buy the equivalent of a
10 house every single year because we're making
11 investments in our water and our sewer
12 infrastructure.

13 The other places we spend our money
14 are contractual services. So, that includes
15 things like contractors who kind of help us with
16 electric work, pump rehab, those kinds of things.

17 We purchase our water from the
18 Washington Aqueduct. We treat the wastewater
19 with chemicals and supplies and then we are one
20 of the largest users of electricity in the
21 District of Columbia.

22 So, there's a substantial portion of

1 our budget, almost \$28 million, that pays for
2 utilities, including electricity.

3 On the capital budget -- and see, this
4 is where we make our infrastructure investments -
5 - the sources for that mainly come from debt. I
6 mentioned earlier that we buy the equivalent of a
7 house every year. Our revenue bonds, that lower
8 half of the pie chart on the left, is the source
9 for -- source of funds to pay for our -- pay for
10 the infrastructure.

11 And then we pay back those bonds in
12 debt service over sometimes 30 years. Some of
13 the debt that we issued for the Clean Rivers
14 program is paid back as long as a hundred years.

15 We spend that money improving our
16 infrastructure. One of the biggest portions is
17 the lower left-hand side, and that's the Clean
18 Rivers program that we've talked so much about
19 tonight. Nearly 30 percent -- 29.1 percent of
20 our infrastructure spending next year will be on
21 the Clean Rivers program.

22 We're also making investments in sewer

1 lines that serve our customers, wastewater
2 treatment at the Blue Plains plant, and water
3 services that deliver clean water to your homes
4 and businesses.

5 So, let me give you an overview of the
6 rate proposal. This rate proposal is for Fiscal
7 Years '21 and '22. Fiscal Year '21 begins in
8 October and Fiscal Year '22 begins a year from
9 now in October.

10 We advanced our Cost of Service study
11 in order to align it with the rate proposal.
12 Previously the Cost of Service study was on a
13 different scheduling cycle and we have aligned
14 that this year so that the rate proposal and the
15 Cost of Service study line up.

16 As Mr. Gadis said, the average
17 household customer bill would have increased by
18 8.1 percent.

19 We were able to use those actions,
20 including refinancing our debt and withdrawing
21 funds from the Rate Stabilization Fund, to bring
22 that down to 6.6 percent for Fiscal Year '21.

1 Now, that's the average for a
2 household. There are many different components
3 of the charge and I want to go through those just
4 to make sure that those are on the record.

5 First of all, the proposed annual
6 water and sewer rate increase is 9.9 percent for
7 Fiscal Year '21 and 7.8 percent for Fiscal Year
8 '22.

9 We're continuing the shift to the
10 Clean Rivers Impervious Area Charge that began
11 last year with 18 percent of those costs. In
12 Fiscal Year '21 it will be 28 percent. And in
13 Fiscal Year '22 it will be 37 percent.

14 And so, the ERU charge that we use for
15 the Clean Rivers Impervious Area Charge will be
16 \$19.52 in Fiscal Year '21 and \$18.40 in Fiscal
17 Year '22.

18 The water system replacement fee stays
19 the same. The customer metering fee increases to
20 cover customer service costs. The PILOT Fee, the
21 fees that are paid to the District of Columbia,
22 will increase per Ccf. And then the discount for

1 CAP customers, the Clean Rivers Impervious Area
2 Charge discount, increases from 50 to 75 percent
3 and CAP2 is made permanent.

4 Sorry, there's a delay on my slides.

5 Okay. So, one aspect of the rate proposal is the
6 metering fee. In 2019 it recovered about \$11.6
7 million and it is being increased, per
8 recommendation from the Cost of Service study, to
9 recover the costs of our customer service
10 organization.

11 So, over the next two years, as
12 detailed in the rate proposal, this will
13 increase. This includes the costs associated
14 with metering and billing, customer service. So,
15 we don't (telephonic interference) to recover
16 \$15.4 million in customer service organization in
17 Fiscal Year '21 and then the full amount of \$24.1
18 million in Fiscal Year '22.

19 As I mentioned, there's a proposed
20 withdrawal from the Rate Stabilization Fund.
21 That comes from two sources: debt service savings
22 that we've accumulated in the fiscal year, plus

1 repaying a 5 million withdrawal from the Rate
2 Stabilization Fund in Fiscal Year 2020.

3 Those amounts, that \$13 million, is
4 going to be applied over the next two years with
5 \$2-1/2 million in Fiscal Year '21 and \$10-1/2
6 million in Fiscal Year '22.

7 This is how our revenues compare by
8 customer class. This -- the rate proposal in
9 front of you on retail revenue will generate an
10 additional \$35 million for DC Water to continue
11 the work that we've talked about this evening.

12 We're also showing, for the record,
13 the wholesale revenue that we receive for the
14 Potomac Interceptor from Loudon County, from WSSC
15 in Fairfax County.

16 All of these added together make up
17 our total revenues that are proposed to be \$733
18 million in Fiscal Year '21 and \$766 million in
19 Fiscal Year '22.

20 These are the details of the various
21 water and sewer rates. Some of which depend on
22 the amount of water customers use, and some of

1 them are fixed and do not depend on the amount of
2 water the customers use.

3 There are four tiers for our retail
4 rates; residential less than 4 Ccfs, residential
5 greater than 4 Ccfs, multifamily, nonresidential.

6 There is a single sewer rate for all
7 of our customers. The Clean Rivers Impervious
8 Area Charge mentioned earlier will actually
9 decrease over the next two years as we shift a
10 portion of the Clean Rivers cost from the
11 Impervious Area Charge to the sewer volumetric
12 rate. So, it will be \$19.52 in Fiscal Year '21
13 and \$18.40 the following year.

14 The customer metering fee increases in
15 order to cover the costs of the customer service
16 organization. The system -- the DC Water system
17 replacement fee remains the same. And then the
18 District of Columbia fees are shown in the bottom
19 portion of the table.

20 So, this is what it looks like on a
21 customer bill. So, an average residential
22 customer who uses 5.42 Ccfs for 4,054 gallons a

1 month will see, with the combination of these
2 charges, an increase of 6.6 percent for next
3 fiscal year and 6.7 percent the following fiscal
4 year.

5 We do offer discounts for our low-
6 income CAP customers. And I'll just point out
7 the bottom yellow line for CAP customers who use
8 that 5.42 Ccfs, they could see their bills go
9 down from \$36.44 in the current fiscal year to
10 \$33.81.

11 The ratemaking at DC Water is done by
12 the Retail Rates Committee. Municipalities
13 across the country rely on best practices to make
14 determinations about how best to recover costs.

15 Our board had adopted a rate-setting
16 strategy in 2011 that indicates that revenue
17 sources cover the costs as set by the Board; that
18 rates should yield a reliable and predictable
19 stream of revenues; rates based on annually
20 updated forecasts of operating and capital
21 budgets; rates must be legally defensible based
22 on objective criteria and transparently designed;

1 they need to be rate structures that customers
2 can understand; and that rate increases require
3 transparency and predictability.

4 Again, our responsibility to our Board
5 is to make -- to propose rates that are just and
6 reasonable, sufficient, equitable and consistent
7 in their application to the customer classes and
8 we believe that we've done that, and that our
9 expenditures that the rates support have been
10 discussed in the Board's budget workshop in
11 January and at various committee meetings of the
12 Board. Our most recent Cost of Service study was
13 conducted by Raftelis.

14 I mentioned earlier that in Fiscal
15 Year '20 we conducted a Cost of Service study to
16 align the budget proposal and the rate proposal
17 with the Cost of Service study.

18 We do Cost of Service studies
19 periodically. They will be done going forward
20 every two years. The last one was done in March
21 2018 by Raftelis Consultants. They were the
22 prior Cost of Service studies that laid the

1 groundwork for the rate structure that we have in
2 place today.

3 This year, we also brought in an
4 independent consultant to review our rates and
5 our rate structure.

6 We wanted to make sure that we were
7 employing best practices from across the country
8 and there were a lot of findings. Some of them
9 are listed here.

10 We asked them to look at the rate
11 classes. They determined that they were
12 appropriate. We wanted to make sure that four
13 Ccf of water lifeline threshold was appropriate
14 and they looked at it in comparison with other
15 utilities and found that it was. They believe
16 our Cost of Service study was generally
17 consistent with industry standards for
18 ratemaking.

19 They did have some recommendations.
20 They recommended that we expand the metering fee
21 to better recover our fixed costs, and that's
22 part of the rate proposal that you have before

1 you.

2 They looked at the Clean Rivers
3 Impervious Area Charge as a basis for consent
4 decree-related capital costs and they believe
5 that was appropriate, as is the way that we
6 charge for the Clean Rivers Impervious Area
7 Charge in the ERU.

8 They have asked us to look forward at
9 some additional work on the ERUs and we have that
10 planned. And they also looked at the suburban
11 cost allocation for Clean Rivers and understood
12 the technical basis for allocating those costs.

13 We produced a ten-year plan that
14 produces a ten-year forecast of our revenues. We
15 wanted to make sure that any action that we're
16 taking today doesn't have a negative impact on
17 our future. So, there are several items that we
18 do on our finances.

19 No. 1, maintaining debt service as a
20 percentage of revenue of 33 percent or less.
21 That's best practice. Maintain and combine
22 coverage of 160 percent. Maintain 250 days of

1 cash, that's something that our rating agencies
2 have recognized us for.

3 We're also diligent about projecting
4 consumption. Water consumption in the District
5 of Columbia, and in cities all across the United
6 States, decreases over the years as efficient
7 (telephonic interference) are installed.

8 So, in Fiscal Year '19 it declined by
9 1.8 percent. So, we projected a 1-1/2 percent
10 decline for conservation for '21 and '22, and 1
11 percent in '22 and onwards and that's built into
12 the rate proposal.

13 And then one of the reasons why our
14 financial plan is as it is, is because debt
15 service in '19 was lower as compared to the
16 budget. And so, the amounts from that savings
17 are included in the Rate Stabilization Fund
18 deposit withdrawal at \$13 million.

19 This is one of the outputs of the
20 financial model. This is the projection we make
21 available to our customers to give them an idea
22 of what rate increases might be over the next ten

1 years.

2 Obviously, the years that are closer
3 to today we can see more clearly than those days
4 that are farther out, but we review this every
5 year and we we're proud. The orange line is last
6 year's financial plan. The green line is this
7 year's.

8 And so, for the next three years, what
9 we're doing is we're proposing -- well, first,
10 we're proposing two-year rates that are less than
11 what had previously been forecasted and we
12 anticipate that that will continue for Fiscal
13 Year '23.

14 This is what the average user charge
15 equates to given those projected increases. So,
16 for Fiscal Year '22 the average household charge
17 would be \$118 and will grow to \$180 at Fiscal
18 Year '29.

19 We also project this information for
20 other customers. Residential customers make up a
21 large number of our customers, but multifamily
22 customers and commercial customers use a lot of

1 water.

2 And so, we started providing this
3 information in addition to that rate calculator
4 to help our board have an understanding of the
5 rate increase proposals.

6 So, that concludes the presentation
7 tonight. We will receive public comments and
8 we're happy that so many of you have joined us.

9 All of those comments will be posted
10 on the website so that the public can see the
11 comments that are made for us.

12 There will be a Retail Rates Committee
13 discussion on August 25th and we will be asking
14 them to make a recommendation to the Board on the
15 rate adoption. That board meeting will be held
16 on September 3rd.

17 The October 1 rates for the Fiscal
18 Year '21 will be implemented October 1, 2020.
19 And then the Fiscal Year '22 rates will be
20 implemented October 1 Fiscal Year '21.

21 Mr. Chairman, that concludes my
22 presentation.

1 CHAIR WELLS: Thank you very much, Mr.
2 Brown, as always.

3 Are we next going to hear from our
4 financial advisors? And if you'll introduce
5 yourselves?

6 MR. MARKUS: Yes. Good evening, Mr.
7 Chairman and members of the Board. I'm Edward
8 Marcus of Amawalk Consulting Group.

9 Joining me this evening is my
10 colleague, Shan Lin, and we would like to take
11 the opportunity to summarize briefly the results
12 of our independent review of the proposed
13 revision in DC Water's rates.

14 Our presentation spends a few moments
15 on recent performance, but then focuses primarily
16 on the proposed changes and rates, the potential
17 impacts of COVID-19 and the affordability of
18 rates, at least comparisons with other utilities,
19 in our presentation.

20 We will be pleased to answer any
21 questions as we go along either during the
22 presentation or at the end at the discretion of

1 the Board.

2 We'd like to also note that this is
3 the 11th year that we've had the pleasure of
4 providing this review for DC Water and it's
5 something that we conduct for other utilities,
6 including New York Water and other utilities.

7 Now, Shan Lin would like to begin the
8 presentation and then I'll be back a little bit
9 later to talk about COVID-19 and other issues.

10 (Pause.)

11 MS. LIN: Hi. Can everyone see the
12 slideshow pics?

13 CHAIR WELLS: Yes.

14 MR. GADIS: Yes.

15 MS. LIN: Okay. Great.

16 So, slide two provides an overview of
17 DC Water's financial performance from 2014 to
18 2019.

19 As the chart illustrates, in each year
20 actual cash receipts were above that budget and
21 actual expenditures were below budget.

22 While it's not a guarantee of future

1 results, this track record offers a degree of
2 comfort that the expenditures and revenue
3 estimates, including those for 2021 and 2022, are
4 prudently developed.

5 So, next slide. Now, slide three are
6 a previous finding regarding the
7 quality/efficiency of DC Water's performance were
8 unchanged from the prior year.

9 DC Water continues to meet or exceed
10 the board's operating goals. Strong operating
11 and capital performance helps manage the cost of
12 providing service and mitigates risks.

13 Slide four lists some factors that are
14 driving the rate increase. So, in short, capital
15 and operating expenditures are increasing while
16 long-term water use is decreasing. In addition,
17 DC Water receives no subsidies. These are the
18 same reasons that are driving rates up in other
19 cities as well.

20 Slide five outlines some of the
21 financial impacts of the COVID-19. There are
22 reductions in water sales especially in -- for

1 nonresidential customers. Water systems in
2 Boston, New York and Philadelphia are also seeing
3 increases in residential sales and decreases in
4 nonresidential water sales.

5 In addition, there may be changes in
6 operating expenses and some ability of certain
7 customers to afford their bills may be affected.
8 So that will lead to net impact on DC Water cash
9 flow. DC Water is effectively managing the
10 financial impacts through June 30, 2020.

11 Slide six summarizes the proposed 2021
12 and 2022 rates. And as Matt has already
13 mentioned, the proposed rates represents a
14 continuation of this three-year phase-in shift in
15 revenue needs from CRIAC to sewer rates.

16 The proposed rates also incorporates
17 an increase in customer metering fees, as well as
18 an increase in CRIAC discount provided under the
19 CAP program from 50 percent to 75 percent. The
20 average monthly residential charges for 2021 and
21 2022 will be \$110.71 and \$118.11 respectively.

22 Slide seven. The table summarizes the

1 potential billing impact of the proposed revision
2 on average single-family residential customers,
3 average multifamily customers, and some select
4 nonresidential customers.

5 And the table illustrates that
6 customers with a high ERU and low usage may see a
7 reduction in their bills. And CAP customers will
8 likely see a decrease in their bills in 2021 due
9 to the increased CRIAC discount to 75 percent.

10 Slide eight. In each year, we compare
11 DC Water rates against that of its peers. DC
12 Water bills with and without District fees are
13 represented by the red and green bar in the
14 chart.

15 As shown in the chart, DC Water
16 charges are relatively comparable to other CSO
17 utilities. However, unlike other utilities, DC
18 Water receives no property tax revenue or other
19 subsidies to reduce its user charges.

20 Slide nine. We also assess the
21 affordability of DC Water's usage charges based
22 on average single-family charge and median

1 household income.

2 Again, DC Water bills are represented
3 by the red and green bars as a percentage of the
4 median household income. DC Water, sewer,
5 stormwater and District charges as a percent of
6 median household income are affordable at 1.46
7 percent and competitive with its peers.

8 And I'll let Ed take over for our
9 slide ten.

10 MR. MARKUS: A few slides ago, Shan
11 mentioned the impacts of COVID-19 on DC Water and
12 its customers.

13 Our next two slides address, first,
14 the response of DC Water in terms of customer
15 assistance and then, second, in mitigating the
16 financial impacts on the authority.

17 As shown in slide ten, and as also
18 mentioned previously by the Chairman, DC Water
19 has taken a number of steps to assist its
20 customers. And these steps are consistent with
21 the practices of other large and regional
22 utilities, including steps such as suspending

1 shut-offs, waiving late fees and expanding, in
2 cooperation with the District, assistance
3 programs for customers.

4 Slide 11 is a bit busy, but there's a
5 lot to talk about and I'll just mention a few
6 things.

7 COVID-19 is impacting utilities, as
8 mentioned by Matt Brown, throughout the United
9 States. Our discussions with utilities in
10 Boston, Philadelphia, New York, as well as DC
11 Water, everyone is kind of in the same boat in
12 that revenues are being affected by significant
13 reductions in nonresidential consumption as
14 restaurants, hotels and other establishments are
15 not able to open and basically that's going to be
16 an impact on revenue.

17 It's starting perhaps a little bit
18 later than we originally envisioned -- instead of
19 seeing the effects in March and April, it seems
20 to be more May, June, July -- but it's
21 unfortunately not going to go away very quickly.

22 DC Water is taking a number of steps

1 to mitigate those impacts including trying to
2 reduce the actual expenses out of its operating
3 budget as well as reducing the actual outlays in
4 the capital budget in 2020.

5 It is also taking steps in 2021 to do
6 the same thing as well as tapping the
7 stabilization fund and providing some dollars
8 into the operating budget.

9 We wish we had a crystal ball in terms
10 of where things are headed in terms of next year
11 and the year after, but, again, every utility is
12 in the same situation. What we have seen with DC
13 Water is that it's taking prudent steps
14 consistent with the practices of other utilities
15 to address COVID-19.

16 The next couple of slides address the
17 affordability of user charges. And as mentioned
18 in Matt's presentation as well, too, the
19 assistance that is provided through CAP is very
20 significant. And this particular slide, slide
21 12, shows a difference between a single-family
22 average residential bill with and without the CAP

1 credits.

2 The next slide, slide 13, compares the
3 assistance level provided under the DC Water CAP
4 program with peers. And we think this is very
5 striking in that the affordability assistance
6 that is provided by DC Water is robust compared
7 to other utilities and really provides a
8 meaningful impact on customer bills.

9 Matt also discussed the affordability
10 programs, the current and new initiatives,
11 including increasing the impervious area discount
12 from 50 percent to 75 percent and making the CAP2
13 program permanent in 2021. So, I will not repeat
14 these.

15 But, again, we find that the
16 assistance programs offered by DC Water are
17 excellent in comparison to peers and very
18 effective in assisting and reducing the customer
19 bills.

20 I'd like to move now to our
21 conclusions beginning on slide 16. It is our
22 conclusions that DC Water's proposed 2021 and

1 2022 rates have been reasonably developed,
2 reflect the anticipated revenue requirements of
3 the system, adhere to board policy and are
4 comparable to other utilities.

5 We always note that if water usage
6 declines at a faster rate than the assumed rate
7 or interest rates are higher than expected or
8 unforeseen major expenses are encountered, then
9 the actual financial results could of course
10 differ from the current projections.

11 One of the things that is very
12 significant and a significant advantage with DC
13 Water is that the rate structure has a number of
14 features that are not tied to consumption and it
15 does help to mitigate the risks of lower usage.

16 But, again, as Matt Brown pointed out,
17 throughout the United States, water consumption
18 at large utilities is continuing to decline and
19 that COVID-19 is providing a significant short-
20 term decline as well.

21 The potential for some underspending
22 in 2021 and 2022 and the availability of the Rate

1 Stabilization Fund also provides flexibility and
2 risk mitigation in circumstances that may arise.

3 The third point, COVID-19 presents
4 significant challenges to the industry as a
5 whole. The potential effects are subject to
6 change not only in this year, but in future years
7 as well.

8 In addition to the measures noted
9 above, DC Water initiatives for targeting
10 potential operating and capital savings,
11 prioritizing capital spending, modifying the use
12 of cash-financed construction are significant
13 tools for addressing the potential COVID-19
14 impacts on revenues and the reserve funds provide
15 liquidity and help support strong credit ratings.

16 Two additional points I'd like to make
17 is that affordability is a concern in the
18 District, it's a concern throughout the water and
19 wastewater industry as the cost of providing
20 service continues to increase.

21 Again, the programs -- DC Water's CAP
22 programs, the original as well as 2 and 3 and

1 SPLASH, and the use of a lifeline rate as well,
2 are not only consistent with industry practices,
3 but are progressive in providing assistance to
4 low-income bill payers.

5 The further increase in the Impervious
6 Area Charge discount will help low-income bill
7 payers. And the District assistance to customers
8 and DC Water initiatives in response to COVID-19
9 are in addition to the affordability assistance
10 outlined above.

11 We note again that the potential
12 outcomes of COVID-19 as presented are subject to
13 change. DC Water is monitoring the effects of
14 COVID-19 on usage and revenues closely. We have
15 discussions with DC Water basically on a monthly
16 basis as to how things are going and keeping an
17 eye on things and comparing it with other
18 utilities, but it's something that will require
19 monitoring for quite an extended period of time.

20 And, again, we note that major water
21 utilities throughout the country are experiencing
22 similar impacts.

1 That concludes our presentation and
2 we'd be happy to answer any questions of the
3 Board.

4 CHAIR WELLS: Well, thank you very
5 much. Thank you for the presentation. We will
6 share your presentation with board members, but,
7 in particular, this evening what I want to focus
8 on are our witnesses.

9 And, Ms. Manley, I may need some
10 assistance on how we call witnesses. And I think
11 you are my partner in this. And, Ms. Manley, can
12 you tell me how many witnesses there are and the
13 process of how they will be called?

14 MS. MANLEY: Okay. We have seven
15 witnesses that preregistered on the list that was
16 emailed. If you don't have it in front of you, I
17 can call the names. And once we're done with
18 those, I --

19 CHAIR WELLS: I'm going to have you
20 partner with me on that, Ms. Manley.

21 MS. MANLEY: Okay.

22 CHAIR WELLS: You've also had people

1 probably contact you to be added to the list.
2 And so, in all fairness to everyone in terms of
3 timing, let's -- Ms. Manley, I will have you call
4 -- help me call the witnesses.

5 MS. MANLEY: Okay. Our first witness
6 is Fred Carney as an individual.

7 CHAIR WELLS: Okay. Mr. Carney.

8 (Pause.)

9 CHAIR WELLS: Mr. Carney, if you are
10 there, you are on mute because we cannot hear
11 you.

12 MR. CARNEY: I'm sorry, I was on mute.

13 CHAIR WELLS: That's all right. We're
14 all trying to get used to this.

15 MR. CARNEY: Can you hear me now?

16 CHAIR WELLS: Yes, we can. Go ahead.

17 MR. CARNEY: Okay. Greetings, Mr.
18 Chairman Wells and Board members and staff of DC
19 Water. My name is Fred D. Carney, Jr. and I live
20 at 1666 Varnum Place, Northeast, Washington, D.C.
21 20017. I've lived here for the past 24 years.

22 I am a native Washingtonian and I

1 understand that DC Water was established in 1996,
2 the year I moved to this address. So, I am, I've
3 lived at this address, I purchased this property
4 at the same time DC Water was established.

5 My experience with DC Water has been
6 that DC Water is the meanest, nastiest and least
7 user friendly utility provider I have ever known.
8 And for that reason I feel it should not be
9 allowed a rate increase.

10 Your propaganda says, unless you make
11 critical investments in the infrastructure,
12 failure is a likely income. Well, so is my
13 house. It is needed critical investment in the
14 infrastructure.

15 And a few years back, in 2018, I
16 received a water bill for \$895. I did not get a
17 regular bill, but I got a notice of intent to
18 assess a property lien. I did not get any first,
19 second and third notices.

20 Now, that notice to intent, to put a
21 lien on my house informed me that I owed
22 approximately \$800 plus for my water use. And

1 this was the first contact I had concerning this
2 issue.

3 The notice said that my water bill was
4 delinquent in over 60 days. And, again, I had
5 not received any prior warning. That the full
6 payment was due within ten days or arrangements
7 would be made to sell my house.

8 Now, to take such action as to
9 threaten to sell someone's home, to me, is the
10 worst possible technique to collect the debt. It
11 is a capital punishment to a homeowner.

12 I called the number on the bill to
13 make arrangements on this \$895 bill and the
14 representative told me that no arrangements could
15 be made and that I need to check and see if there
16 was a leak in my house.

17 I did check. I had a contractor come
18 and look. And certainly enough there was a leak
19 in several pipes inside the walls. I had to have
20 the drywalls torn out in the basement and have
21 the pipes replaced. Multiple pipes had just
22 rotted because this is an old house. The bill

1 came to about \$1,500.

2 So, having to pay the contractor and
3 pay a \$800 plus water bill I was financially
4 challenged. I called DC Water to try to make
5 payment arrangements in this dilemma. I sent a
6 copy of the contractor's bill, I took pictures.
7 And I sent all this on the internet as the
8 customer service representative told me.

9 Within a few days I got an email back
10 saying that no arrangements could be made and
11 that I had to pay the money or my house would be
12 put up for sale. I struggled and paid the \$800
13 plus dollars and made arrangements with the
14 contractor, which took me about a year and a
15 half.

16 I have still not received any regular
17 bills from DC Water. And though you say during
18 the time of the COVID-19 you are making, you were
19 the first utility, what was your advertise, your
20 propaganda?

21 DC Water was one of the first
22 utilities announced that they're offering all

1 customers flexible payment plans for the duration
2 of the pandemic, that they would not turn off
3 water service to anyone during the pandemic.

4 Yet, on June 1st, 2020 I got another
5 notice of intent to assess property lien. In
6 which they threatened to sell my property for a
7 water bill of \$414 for, once again, no prior
8 bill, no prior warning.

9 For these reasons I think that there
10 needs to be a complete revamping of how DC Water
11 does business. And up until then I do not
12 support or recommend a rate increase.

13 I think that I've spent my time, five
14 minutes, and I'm done.

15 CHAIR WELLS: So, sir, do you
16 currently have a billing dispute?

17 MR. CARNEY: No. I paid my bills.

18 CHAIR WELLS: Okay. Okay. Okay,
19 thank you very much.

20 MR. CARNEY: Thank you.

21 CHAIR WELLS: Okay. All right. Next
22 Ms. Manley.

1 MS. MANLEY: Okay, our next witness is
2 Loretta Nappier.

3 CHAIR WELLS: Last name again?

4 MS. MANLEY: Nappier, N-A-P-P-I-E-R.

5 CHAIR WELLS: Ms. Nappier, if you're
6 here you are on mute because we cannot hear you.

7 MS. MANLEY: Okay, I'll go on to the
8 next one, we'll come back.

9 CHAIR WELLS: Okay.

10 MS. MANLEY: Kendrick West.

11 CHAIR WELLS: Kendrick West? All
12 right. If Kendrick West is here you may be on
13 mute or you're not there.

14 MS. MANLEY: Okay, our next witness is
15 Karen Austin.

16 CHAIR WELLS: Ms. Austin? Karen
17 Austin, are you there? Okay, next Ms. Manley.

18 MS. MANLEY: Okay, next we'll hear
19 from Eric Jones, Apartment and Office Building
20 Association.

21 MR. JONES: Good afternoon.

22 CHAIR WELLS: Well, let me assure you,

1 Eric Jones is here. Mr. Jones, good to see you
2 again. Welcome to DC Water hearing and we look
3 forward to your testimony.

4 MR. JONES: Thanks.

5 CHAIR WELLS: And I recognize that you
6 recognize an organization so, while you're not,
7 you don't have to take a full ten minutes, and
8 rarely, as you know, in front of the Counsel you
9 never get ten minutes, but I'm sure you'll be
10 efficient and judicious with your time.

11 MR. JONES: Thank you very much. Good
12 evening, I am Eric Jay Jones, Vice President of
13 Government Affairs DC Commercial appearing on
14 behalf of the Apartment and Office Building
15 Association of Metropolitan Washington, or AOBA.

16 AOBA is composed of organizations that
17 own and/or manage commercial and multi-family
18 residential property as well as companies
19 providing products and services to the real
20 estate industry.

21 Currently, the combined portfolio of
22 AOBA membership is approximately 185 million

1 square feet of commercial office space and
2 250,000 residential units in the District of
3 Columbia, Maryland and Virginia.

4 Within the District, AOBA members own
5 and/or manage nearly 140,000 apartment units,
6 which comprises more than one-third of the
7 Districts private rental housing stock.

8 They also own and manage more than 80
9 billion square feet of commercial space in the
10 District, which constitutes two-thirds of the
11 total private inventory.

12 Prior to utility (technical
13 difficulties) before I directly address the
14 proposed rate increases I would first like to
15 provide a brief overview of the current economic
16 outlook for our commercial and multi-family
17 tenants.

18 Since the beginning of the COVID-19
19 pandemic, property owners and managers have seen
20 a major decrease in the amounts of rents
21 collected. In commercial buildings, many retails
22 and other tenants impacted by COVID-19 are unable

1 to pay and attempting to renegotiate leases and
2 payment terms.

3 As a residential market based on
4 recent numbers from the national multi-housing
5 council's rent payment tracker, housing providers
6 have seen a decrease in full and partial rental
7 payments during every month of the pandemic.

8 Notably, residential Class C
9 properties have been disproportionately impacted
10 with many experiencing lower rent collection
11 rate. Unfortunately, as we are aware, many of
12 those residential tenants who maintain (audio
13 interference) because the \$600 enhanced
14 unemployment benefits provided as part of the
15 Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security
16 Act, or CARES Act, which expired on July 31st, or
17 last Friday.

18 Prior to the expiration of the CARES
19 Act, one of our AOBA members informed the D.C.
20 Council that they expected to have to write off
21 more than \$1 million of uncollected rent by the
22 end of 2020.

1 Compounding the impact of Congressman
2 extending the enhanced unemployment benefits are
3 the mandatory rent payment plan required by the
4 District of Columbia. As you may be aware, Mayor
5 Muriel Bowser signed an executive order declaring
6 a public health emergency starting on March 11th
7 of this year.

8 The most recent order extended the
9 CARES period through at least October 9th, 2020.
10 As part of the Council's legislative response to
11 the COVID-19 pandemic and subject to a public
12 health emergency, the Council passed legislation
13 requiring BID building owners to enter into
14 mandatory rent payment plans for commercial and
15 multi-family tenants who have been negatively
16 impacted by COVID-19.

17 As part of these requirements,
18 building owners are prevented from collecting the
19 gross rent due during the declared public health
20 emergency and for 30 days thereafter. This means
21 that building owners and managers potentially
22 will not be able to collect rent for no less than

1 nine months from impacted tenants without the
2 ability to charge late fees or interest.

3 In addition, both commercial and
4 residential building owners have been prevented
5 from increasing the cost of rent for the duration
6 of 2020. All while, landlords have seen their
7 operating cost increase due to enhanced mandatory
8 cleaning requirements in compliance with CDC
9 standards as well as increased public safety,
10 security and utility costs.

11 As an organization, we are pleased to
12 read the proposed FY 2021 rate increase would be
13 less than previously projected. As an industry
14 we truly understand the fiscal hardships that all
15 businesses are facing and appreciate the
16 utilities is able to withdraw additional funding
17 from the rent stabilization fund over the next
18 two years to help lower fees.

19 We are, however, still concerned that
20 rates are increasing during a time when water
21 usage was already projected to decrease prior to
22 the declared public health emergency.

1 Considering the District still has not
2 fully reopened, the average daytime population of
3 the majority of the District continues to be down
4 significantly as a result of the Mayor's stay at
5 home order.

6 Furthermore, we have reservations due
7 to the fact that the proposed budget numbers
8 continue to be estimated at a four percent cost
9 of inflation. Which continue to be higher than
10 the consumer price index.

11 For these reasons we believe that
12 rates should be flat as opposed to increasing, as
13 was shared during the July 29th business
14 community town hall meeting hosted by DC Water.

15 In addition, I would like to briefly
16 address two issues highlighted during our
17 testimony from the last hearing. First, we still
18 do not believe that DC Water has presented
19 sufficient support -- the Act ship -- value
20 mentorship, nor has DC Water explained how these
21 calls will not have a significant financial
22 impact on retail store customers.

1 We would ask that DC Water consider
2 addressing these issues as part of their 2021
3 study.

4 Secondly, we still continue to believe
5 that businesses who are hit the hardest by
6 increases in their DC Water bills are also those
7 hit hardest by the economic downturn and
8 decrease, which has only been exacerbated by the
9 pandemic.

10 We truly believe that these factors
11 are being taken, are not taken into consideration
12 and would like that the DC Water do more to
13 consider these factors when creating their budget
14 for next year.

15 In closing, I thank you for the time
16 to provide testimony this evening. I'm available
17 for any questions you may have.

18 CHAIR WELLS: Thank you very much.
19 Certainly AOBA is a very important partner in the
20 District of Columbia and a very respected
21 organization, so thank you very much.

22 I will open that up to any questions

1 from any of our other Board Members. Okay, thank
2 you very much for your testimony, and it will be
3 considered by the Board, it's in the record.

4 Thanks, Eric.

5 Next, Ms. Manley.

6 MS. MANLEY: We have a Joanne Capper,
7 C-A-P-P-E-R.

8 CHAIR WELLS: Okay, Ms. Capper.

9 MS. CAPPER: Can you hear me?

10 CHAIR WELLS: I can hear you.

11 MS. CAPPER: Okay. Yes. I'm not
12 providing a testimony, I just have a lot of
13 questions. And my property is in Northwest D.C.
14 on Van Ness Street.

15 And one, I was doing some
16 calculations, comparing a bill that I had from
17 2017 to 2020 and the, most of your presentation
18 has been about water fees and comparisons with
19 other Districts regarding water, but what I found
20 was that from 2017 to 2020 there was a 64 percent
21 increase in the rate of sewer, charges for sewer
22 services.

1 So, the thought of having an
2 additional six percent increase on top of a 64
3 percent increase sounds ludicrous to me. You
4 haven't really talked about the water, the sewer
5 rates. They also are a greater part of my bills.

6 The other thing, when you were showing
7 your charts about comparing with other areas,
8 Fairfax Counties were about, let's see. I've
9 made a lot of notes here, just a second.

10 They were something like 50 on their
11 chart. I think this is a bar graph. Fairfax
12 County was at about 50 percent and D.C. was at
13 about 150 percent.

14 So, while there were a few
15 municipalities where the rates were higher, most
16 of them were quite a bit lower than D.C.'s. And
17 also, D.C.'s was twice that of New York City.
18 Which I find very questionable because I know you
19 had raised the issue quite a bit about our old
20 pipes, but I would suspect that the pipes are
21 even older in New York City.

22 And I have a question. I'm actually

1 quite ignorant about a lot of these things.

2 I know that you talk about replacing
3 the lead pipes but who pays for that?

4 Does the individual homeowner or
5 property owner pay for it or does DC Water pay
6 for it?

7 CHAIR WELLS: So, what I'll have to
8 have you do is call, Joanne, to, I think the
9 number was presented earlier. But there is a
10 program to help lead pipe replacement to
11 customers. Or our rate payers.

12 And there's a lot of things like how
13 do you arrange it and a lot of things about that
14 that the Board is not going to necessarily know
15 all the ins and outs about that.

16 But the lead pipe replacement program
17 is funded through the City. And if you call into
18 the number that I gave earlier, and we can get
19 that number posted again, you can get information
20 about the lead pipe replacement program.

21 MS. CAPPER: Well, my point is, I
22 attended one of your town hall meetings,

1 virtually, and to me it seemed like primarily PR
2 and talking about all the wonderful things that
3 DC Water does.

4 And one of those things included
5 replacing all the lead pipes, as though you
6 needed, you were the ones who had to pay for it.
7 And what you're suggesting to me now is that we
8 pay for it and maybe the City pays for some of
9 it.

10 So, that doesn't seem like a very
11 sincere argument for you, part of your argument
12 for increasing rates.

13 Let me see. There was a study done in
14 2016, '17 for the U.S. Department of Energy and
15 they compared rates and rate increases in 63
16 localities across the U.S. And there were, out
17 of 63 localities, there were only nine others
18 that were equal to, or higher than, DC Water.

19 I mean, basically my points are I
20 really don't see the justification for your high
21 rates.

22 One other question I have, I really

1 don't know the answer to this is, well, two
2 questions. One is, I know there is no oversight
3 body other than the Board.

4 Does Pepco and DC Gas both have, are
5 regulated and the DC Government has quite a bit
6 of influence over their rates. But DC Water has
7 no oversight or regulation other than the Board.

8 And of course, we don't know who the
9 Board is or how they represent us as users of
10 your service. So --

11 CHAIR WELLS: That's a great question.
12 You have no input onto who the board is for
13 Pepco, Exelon, for Washington Gas. Those are
14 private individuals that are on their board.

15 The Board for DC Water, we have to,
16 we're appointed by the Mayor and then we have to
17 go through approval by the City Council. And
18 then our terms are up after a period of time and
19 we're either reappointed or we go through another
20 process.

21 So unlike Pepco or other utilities
22 where you have no saying who their board is, our

1 Board is selected by the Mayor, approved by the
2 Council. And we have term limits. Or we have
3 terms and then we can be reappointed.

4 That's why the Board sets the rates.
5 And again, because we're answerable to the
6 political bodies when we're up for appointment.

7 MS. CAPPER: Well, the boards may be
8 but the DC Water is not. Whereas --

9 CHAIR WELLS: DC Water is, the Board,
10 just like WMATA, just like the subway system, the
11 entity is subject to the Board of Directors. The
12 Board of Directors oversees, hires and fires the
13 general manager and the board sets the rates.
14 Just like WMATA.

15 We're very similar to that as an
16 independent entity carrying out a government
17 function but we're a public entity, we're not
18 privately owned.

19 MS. CAPPER: You're public, but the DC
20 Government has no say over your rates or how you
21 function other than selecting the board members?

22 CHAIR WELLS: Very similar to WMATA.

1 It's the same type of entity.

2 MS. CAPPER: Well, but not to DC Gas
3 or not to Pepco?

4 CHAIR WELLS: Those are private
5 entities.

6 MS. CAPPER: They're utilities --

7 CHAIR WELLS: They're for-profit
8 entities. So we're going to have to move along
9 to hear from others, but we're not a for-profit
10 entity.

11 The only funds that we raise are put
12 back into DC Water. We don't have shareholders
13 that make a profit off your bills. Like you do
14 with Pepco and Washington Gas.

15 So with that, we're going to move on.
16 But please, in terms of, do you have any
17 questions around lead pipe replacement, we're
18 happy to help you with that. And with that, Ms.
19 Manley, let's move on to the next witness.

20 MS. MANLEY: Next we have Grace
21 Soderberg representing the Office of People's
22 Counsel.

1 CHAIR WELLS: Okay. And, Grace, you
2 are currently on mute but welcome. And we
3 appreciate the Office of People's Counsel and
4 welcome.

5 MS. SODERBERG: Thank you.

6 CHAIR WELLS: And you have at least
7 ten minutes.

8 MS. SODERBERG: Okay, thank you, Chair
9 Wells. Can you all hear me?

10 CHAIR WELLS: Yes, we can.

11 MS. SODERBERG: Okay, wonderful. So
12 good evening, Chair Wells, Members of the Board
13 of Directors, stakeholders and members of the
14 viewing public.

15 I am Grace Soderberg, Assistant
16 People's Counsel at the Office of the People's
17 Counsel for the District of Columbia.

18 I am appearing on behalf of the
19 People's Counsel, Sandra Mattavous-Frye. Also
20 appearing with me is Robert Rosenkoetter, the
21 managing partner with SAGE Management
22 Consultants, and David Vondle, a lead consultant

1 with SAGE.

2 The People's Counsel, and Deputy
3 People's Counsel Karen Sistrunk, are joining us
4 in the audience of this virtual public hearing.

5 We thank you for the opportunity to
6 appear before you this evening on this important
7 matter. The purpose of my testimony is to offer
8 OPC's comments in response to the notice of
9 proposed rulemaking regarding the proposal for
10 Fiscal Year 2021 and 2022 and the amendment to
11 the rules for the customer assistance programs.

12 This oral testimony is a summary of
13 the key points from the written comments that OPC
14 will be following in this proceeding.

15 OPC has been a steadfast advocate as
16 the statutory representative of District of
17 Columbia's rate payers and consumers of natural
18 gas, electric and local telephone service for
19 many decades.

20 With the passage of the DC Water
21 Consumer Protection Amendment Act of 2018, OPC is
22 the statutory representative of District of

1 Columbia rate payers in proceedings related to
2 products, services and rates over water and sewer
3 products of the District of Columbia Water and
4 Sewer Authority.

5 OPC's primary mission in all matters
6 pertaining to utility services and rates,
7 including water, is to zealously advocate for the
8 provision of safe, reliable and high-quality
9 utility services for all District of Columbia
10 consumers at equitable and affordable rates.

11 OPC has worked to ensure that District
12 residents in all eight wards have access to
13 clean, affordable and reliable water services.
14 Our mandate to protect and assist District water
15 customers is especially relevant in the midst of
16 the COVID-19 pandemic.

17 As a result of OPC's advocacies for
18 greater transparency in DC Water's rate making
19 process, DC Water now posts material supporting
20 its proposed rate adjustment on its website.
21 Certainly, this is an important and initial step
22 towards improving the transparency of DC Water's

1 rate cutting process.

2 In addition, the DC Water Consumer
3 Protection Amendment Act of 2018 states that DC
4 Water shall provide OPC access to any accounts,
5 books, papers and documents considered necessary
6 to carry out OPC's functions under the act.

7 Accordingly, OPC reviewed the publicly
8 available materials on DC Water's website and
9 asked questions of DC Water. Regarding their
10 cost of service study and other data inputs that
11 affect rates.

12 Based on our careful review of the
13 proposal and DC Water's responsiveness to our
14 questions, OPC provides the following
15 recommendations on behalf of DC Water consumers.
16 Number one, DC Water should take a measured
17 approach in its pending rate adjustment to
18 reflect the negative economic impacts and
19 financial uncertainty resulting from the COVID-19
20 pandemic.

21 Number two, the NOPR proposals must
22 meet the long established just and reasonable

1 legal standard for public utility rates.

2 Number three, the FY 2022 rate
3 proposal should be postponed until after the FY
4 2022 financial planning process concludes in
5 2021.

6 Number four, DC Water should establish
7 additional lifelines tiers similar to the water
8 lifeline tier for residential customers.

9 Number five, DC Water should change
10 the actual combined debt service coverage ratios
11 from 1.75 for Fiscal Year 2021 and 1.71 for
12 Fiscal Year 2022 to a debt service coverage ratio
13 of 1.6 or less.

14 And finally, the enhancements to the
15 CAP programs are a positive development to assist
16 low and middle income consumers. All of these
17 points will be covered in OPC's written comments.
18 But in the interest of time, I will be discussing
19 only some of these points this evening.

20 DC Water should take a measured
21 approach to its pending adjustment of rates to
22 reflect and account for the negative economic

1 impacts on DC Water customers and the overall
2 financial uncertainty resulting from the COVID-19
3 pandemic as reflected in the current state of
4 both the national and local District economies.

5 While the ultimate depth and duration
6 of the economic crisis is unknown, the initial
7 impact of the economic crisis has been severe
8 resulting in closed businesses, disruption to the
9 economy and millions unemployed. Many of whom
10 are struggling to meet basic needs such as buying
11 food and medical, paying for shelter and paying
12 for vital utility services.

13 The end of the COVID-19 public health
14 emergency, however defined, will not result in
15 the immediate end of the economic crisis for DC
16 Water consumers.

17 In the District, its residents have
18 experienced the loss of employment and
19 corresponding income, consequently decreasing the
20 amount of household income available to pay for
21 utility services. At the same time, the
22 consumption of water has increased due to the

1 number of residents staying home.

2 In addition, a large number of
3 businesses are also impacted putting into
4 question their ability to return to full
5 operations, if it all. Therefore, both
6 residential and commercial customers must face
7 difficulty paying for essential water services.

8 As you know, access to water and sewer
9 service is essential for health, safety and
10 welfare of all people. Especially during this
11 unparalleled crisis. It is against this economic
12 and financial backdrop that OPC presents its
13 recommendations.

14 The FY 2022 rate proposal should be
15 postponed until after the FY 2022 financial
16 planning process concludes in 2021. While the
17 NOPR includes proposals for 20 -- for Fiscal Year
18 2022, it is based on incomplete information.

19 The budget process for FY 2022 -- for
20 the rate adjustment for 2022 has just begun. In
21 a response to OPC's questions about the projected
22 2022 budget, DC Water responded that it will

1 begin the development of its FY 2022 proposed
2 budget in the summer of 2020 and will conclude
3 with a D.C. Board adoption in the Winter of 2021.

4 In addition, the budget process
5 addresses only a portion of the development of
6 the total revenue requirement and resulting rates
7 that cover those costs.

8 Other components, such as policy
9 decisions and revenue offsets that will have a
10 substantial impact on the total revenue
11 requirement, are developed in multiple decision-
12 making processes throughout the year. Indeed,
13 the cost of service study recommends that DC
14 Water revisit budget escalation estimates
15 annually as part of its financial planning
16 process due to the commodity intensive nature of
17 the water and sewer industry.

18 For the above reasons, FY 2022 rate
19 proposal should be postponed until 2021. This
20 will provide a much more accurate and complete
21 information on the actual revenue requirement for
22 Fiscal Year 2022.

1 Also, this will allow the public and
2 OPC to participate more fully in the processes
3 that develop and affect the 2022 revenue
4 requirement. Public input can only be meaningful
5 when all stakeholders work from the same basic
6 set of facts, data and analyses.

7 Finally, postponing the FY 2022 rate
8 proposal is prudent in light of the current
9 economic environment.

10 Should the projected FY 2022 rates
11 prove to be higher and necessary, customers will
12 be paying higher rates during a challenging
13 economic period.

14 DC Water should change the actual
15 combined debt service coverage ratios to a debt
16 service coverage ratio of 1.6 or less. As per
17 the cost of service study, DC Water's debt
18 service coverage is 1.75 for Fiscal Year 2021 and
19 is 1.71 for Fiscal Year 2022.

20 In the same cost of service study, it
21 noted that D.C. management set a debt service
22 coverage ratio at 1.6. Using the 1.6 ratio will

1 result in lowering the revenue requirement and,
2 in turn, lowering the average customer's bills.

3 The Office notes that its
4 recommendation is at the highest range of
5 reasonable debt service coverage ratios. For
6 example, while OPC is recommending a ratio of
7 1.6, there is a basis for additional savings to
8 residential customs by using a debt service ratio
9 of 1.4, as per DC Board policy, or a debt service
10 ratio of 1.2 as prescribed by the DC Water Master
11 Indenture of Trusts.

12 In conclusion, OPC presents these
13 recommendations in furtherance of our common goal
14 of ensuring reasonable rates and tangible
15 benefits to all DC Water rate payers and
16 consumers. Again, thank you for the opportunity
17 to present OPC's testimony this evening.

18 CHAIR WELLS: Thank you, very much, as
19 always, from the Office of People's Counsel. We
20 greatly appreciate your partnership with us. Ms.
21 Manley, next?

22 MS. MANLEY: Mr. Chairman, there are

1 no other witnesses that signed up through email
2 or by phone on tonight.

3 CHAIR WELLS: Is there any, so there
4 is no others that came in later, okay.

5 All right. Is there any comments from
6 the Board Members that have joined us this
7 evening that would like to say anything?

8 All right, hearing none, let me say
9 that, first to the witnesses, thank you very much
10 for participating in this process. And I know
11 that we have Board Members, some that are
12 probably a little bit more sensitive to the
13 individual residential rate payers and some that
14 are more representative or more aware of and have
15 background for commercial properties and such.

16 And that it's, the Board is fairly
17 well balanced in that way and we greatly
18 appreciate the input. But also, all rates, and
19 any rate increase is really taken with a lot of
20 consideration, thought, and has to be defended
21 very well, and strongly, by DC Water and our
22 Staff.

1 The presentation from Matt Brown, and
2 also from our consultants, should be available,
3 not just to our Board Members obviously, but to
4 all the public. And that you can go over those
5 even further.

6 We also say that, in my experience on
7 the Board this is one of the best managed
8 entities in the region. You don't have to look
9 much further than the Silver Spring public
10 transit.

11 Not to make light of our misfortunes
12 of our neighbors, but major capital projects are
13 difficult. Whether you're putting a metro out to
14 Dulles Airport with catastrophes along the way,
15 that my experience on the Board is then that our
16 projects, especially the Clean Water project and
17 the other projects that are undertaken by DC
18 Water are on budget and on time.

19 I've not seen one go over budget since
20 I've been on the Board. And so, I think in
21 comparison to some other entities, and again, not
22 to unduly use the misfortunes of other entities,

1 I'm very proud that DC Water is not only able to
2 be on budget on time, but also, in our
3 experience, in general they go, I want to assure
4 everyone that the Staff at DC Water go through a
5 very rigorous process of questioning every fee
6 and every rate increase by the Board and try to
7 justify that.

8 This is a particularly difficult time
9 because of the commercial challenges, and
10 economic challenges, that are here due to the
11 pandemic and the loss of revenue for the City,
12 and it also will impact DC Water.

13 That's why it was important for the
14 outside consultants to look at other entities to
15 try to help tell the public and the Board whether
16 we're about to blow a budget, whether we're
17 underfunded and can we continue to provide the
18 services that we provide at the rate that we do.

19 And we also again say that we, we
20 sometimes do have to shave funds off of the
21 public infrastructure. But we cannot afford to
22 allow our sewers to collapse, our sewers to not

1 work. We cannot allow for clean water to not be
2 delivered. And so it's a balance.

3 And so with that, let me invite the
4 general manager. Do you have any final comments
5 before we close out?

6 And I want to thank you for the public
7 meetings you've been having. And hopefully not
8 just this hearing but the impact you, the
9 feedback you've been getting.

10 Please tells us, you were recently at
11 a City Council hearing where you heard from the
12 Council and public witnesses at the council, that
13 you've received a lot of public feedback on the
14 job that we're doing along with the cost of that.
15 David?

16 MR. GADIS: Chairman Wells, thank you
17 for the opportunity to give some closing
18 comments. You know, first of all I want to thank
19 each and every witness for their time this
20 evening, for coming out.

21 We love to hear feedback. That's the
22 only way that you get better as an organization

1 is to take that feedback and process it and see
2 if there is anything that you can do to get
3 better with it. So we do appreciate each of the
4 witnesses.

5 And we also especially appreciate the
6 people, the Office of the People's Counsel and
7 their statement as well. We do appreciate the
8 partnership that we have.

9 And as I, and last but not least, we
10 do appreciate our Board. Our Board holds us
11 accountable every single day. And we hold
12 ourselves accountable as well.

13 As I spoke to earlier, when I talked
14 about here at DC Water, our culture and looking
15 at how we get things done on a day-to-day basis
16 is one in which we are very proud of. And we
17 work in that collaborative way.

18 And also, we also work with our
19 customers. I will say that any customer that
20 does have an issue, Chairman Wells has given you
21 the number.

22 I will say, we want people to call us.

1 We want our customers to call us. We are not
2 turning water off, we're turning water on.

3 If there is an issue, we want to help
4 you. If you want to setup a plan, we will help
5 you. I will say that we are also not liening
6 properties any longer.

7 We do not sell properties. I want to
8 make sure that everyone knew that. First of all,
9 we do not sell properties.

10 When we put a lien on a property we
11 are placed in line in case that home does sell.
12 But we are not currently liening any properties
13 from the DC Water standpoint. So I wanted to
14 make sure that everyone knew that and that we did
15 change that aspect of our daily business.

16 But we do want to work with all of our
17 customers. And we do care. We understand that
18 what we have before us today in COVID-19 is a
19 very, very serious issue for all of our
20 customers. And we do want to work with all of
21 them as well.

22 The rate increase is very important to

1 us here at DC Water. I think, Chairman Wells,
2 you explained it very, very well, that we are a
3 not for-profit.

4 We use the dollars for all the
5 projects that we have and that we feel that we
6 need to execute in order to keep the system
7 going.

8 And that is our key piece, is that we
9 continue to discharge the highest quality of
10 water back out into the river. And that we also,
11 at that point in time, also give the highest
12 quality of water to our customers to consume,
13 bathe or whatever way they would like to use the
14 water.

15 And we only do that by not having
16 uninterrupted services. And also, quality of
17 water being the highest that it can be.

18 So, I would say, Chairman Wells, we
19 appreciate the opportunity to serve here in D.C.
20 and we will continue to serve and provide every
21 one of our customers the service that they
22 deserve as well.

1 As I spoke to as well, and again, I
2 just want to make sure because the first witness
3 talked about the liens, I just want to make sure
4 everyone does know, that liens are on hold during
5 COVID. And so, we are stepping back and taking
6 that off the table as far as that goes.

7 And we are also still turning people
8 on and we're not turning people off. So we do
9 feel that we have been very, very cooperative
10 during COVID. And we do thank our rate payers
11 though for working with us on a day-to-day basis.

12 That concludes my closing remarks,
13 Chairman Wells, and thank you very, very much.

14 CHAIR WELLS: Thank you, David. I
15 also want to just commend DC Water. We just went
16 through a very, through a storm, after a long
17 period of high heat, and want to note the
18 millions and millions of gallons of sewage that
19 was diverted from the Anacostia River from the
20 tunnel project, congratulations.

21 And then also, one of the first times
22 ever, this much rain and Bloomingdale did not

1 flood. And again, these investments make a
2 difference to our residents that can't
3 continually to afford to clean and repair their
4 homes from things like internal flooding.

5 And the investment of DC Water to put
6 in the tunnel for Bloomingdale has made an
7 incredible difference for that community. And
8 so, we're tested by storms and events like this,
9 but I'm glad to see DC Water continually to not
10 only get stronger, able to handle them, but to
11 protect our residents.

12 So thank you very much. Thank you
13 everyone, and everybody be safe.

14 MR. GADIS: Thank you. Take care
15 everyone.

16 (Whereupon, the above-entitled matter
17 went off the record at 8:10 p.m.)
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ability 46:6 66:2 82:4	78:13	application 37:7	14:2,22 19:14 25:6
able 24:11 31:19 49:15	afternoon 61:21	applied 34:4	48:16 78:4
65:22 66:16 88:1	Afterward 12:13	applying 24:17	availability 52:22
94:10	agencies 25:3 40:1	appointed 73:16	available 9:17 26:13
above-entitled 94:16	agency 9:14	appointment 74:6	27:20 40:21 68:16
accept 11:19	aggressive 25:14 27:5	appreciate 19:12 66:15	79:8 81:20 87:2
access 78:12 79:4 82:8	27:13	76:3 85:20 86:18 90:3	Avenue 11:13,15
account 80:22	ago 26:16 48:10	90:5,7,10 92:19	average 17:1,17 31:16
accountability 19:7	ahead 18:20 56:16	approach 79:17 80:21	32:1 35:21 41:14,16
accountable 90:11,12	Aid 64:15	appropriate 38:12,13	46:20 47:2,3,22 50:22
accounts 79:4	Airport 87:14	39:5	67:2 85:2
accumulated 33:22	align 31:11 37:16	approval 73:17	avoid 14:15 15:17
accurate 83:20	aligned 31:13	approved 19:2 23:9	aware 21:17 64:11 65:4
act 64:16,16,19 67:19	allocating 39:12	74:1	86:14
77:21 79:3,6	allocation 39:11	approximately 57:22	
action 5:13 17:11 39:15	allow 18:4 84:1 88:22	62:22	B
58:8	89:1	April 49:19	back 30:11,14 44:8
actions 31:19	allowed 15:21 57:9	Aqueduct 29:18	57:15 59:9 61:8 75:12
actual 44:20,21 50:2,3	allows 23:4	area 17:22 18:3 22:21	92:10 93:5
52:9 80:10 83:21	alongside 16:1	23:21 24:7 26:18	backdrop 82:12
84:14	ALTERNATE 1:16,17	32:10,15 33:1 35:8,11	background 86:15
added 34:16 56:1	1:17,18	39:3,6 51:11 54:6	balance 89:2
addition 42:3 45:16	alternatives 17:9	areas 70:7	balanced 86:17
46:5 53:8 54:9 66:3	Amawalk 2:7 43:8	arenas 4:21	ball 50:9
67:15 79:2 82:2 83:4	AMEND 1:4	argument 72:11,11	bar 47:13 70:11
additional 34:10 39:9	amending 5:18	arrange 71:13	bars 48:3
53:16 66:16 70:2 80:7	amendment 1:5 77:10	arrangements 21:15	based 36:19,21 47:21
85:7	77:21 79:3	58:6,13,14 59:5,10,13	64:3 79:12 82:18
address 10:14,17 13:1	amount 9:17 26:17	arreage 10:6	basement 58:20
48:13 50:15,16 57:2,3	33:17 34:22 35:1	arrive 23:18	basic 81:10 84:5
63:13 67:16	81:20	arrived 16:1	basically 49:15 54:15
addresses 83:5	amounts 34:3 40:16	asked 38:10 39:8 79:9	72:19
addressing 53:13 68:2	63:20	asking 17:5 42:13	basis 39:3,12 54:16
adhere 52:3	Anacostia 9:3 18:17	aspect 14:6 16:14 33:5	85:7 90:15 93:11
Adjournment 2:11	93:19	91:15	bathe 92:13
adjust 3:8 5:15	analyses 84:6	assess 47:20 57:18	Bay 18:19
adjustment 78:20 79:17	anchored 19:5	60:5	began 32:10
80:21 82:20	ANCs 8:17	assist 11:7 48:19 78:14	beginning 51:21 63:18
adjustments 12:6	and/or 62:17 63:5	80:15	begins 28:6 31:7,8
administered 22:15	announce 15:9	assistance 9:20 21:17	begun 82:20
adopted 36:15	announced 8:15 59:22	22:5 27:3,20,22 48:15	behalf 62:14 76:18
adoption 42:15 83:3	annual 32:5	49:2 50:19 51:3,5,16	79:15
advanced 8:8 31:10	annually 36:19 83:15	54:3,7,9 55:10 77:11	believe 3:11 13:2 37:8
advantage 24:10 27:7	answer 43:20 55:2 73:1	Assistant 76:15	38:15 39:4 67:11,18
52:12	answerable 74:5	assisting 51:18	68:4,10
advertise 59:19	Anthony 1:17 7:2	associated 33:13	benefit 22:12,13 24:8
advisors 43:4	anticipate 41:12	Association 61:20	24:18
advocacies 78:17	anticipated 27:3 52:2	62:15	benefits 24:6 64:14
advocate 77:15 78:7	anyone's 15:12	assumed 52:6	65:2 85:15
Affairs 1:21 62:13	AOBA 62:15,16,22 63:4	assure 61:22 88:3	best 36:13,14 38:7
affect 79:11 84:3	64:19 68:19	attempting 64:1	39:21 87:7
afford 9:22 46:7 88:21	apart 8:5	attended 3:17 71:22	better 15:5 38:21 89:22
94:3	apartment 61:19 62:14	audience 77:4	90:3
affordability 43:17	63:5	audio 20:17,18 64:12	Bhatt 1:15 7:8,9
47:21 50:17 51:5,9	apologize 13:11 21:4	August 1:8 11:20 42:13	BID 65:13
53:17 54:9	appear 77:6	Austin 61:15,16,17	biggest 30:16
affordable 48:6 78:10	appearing 62:13 76:18	authorities 13:20	bill 17:19 21:7,13 26:16
	76:20	authority 1:1 3:6 8:4	26:19,21 31:17 35:21

50:22 54:4,6 57:16,17
58:3,12,13,22 59:3,6
60:7,8 69:16
billing 11:4 33:14 47:1
60:16
billion 18:12 63:9
bills 18:4 36:8 46:7 47:7
47:8,12 48:2 51:8,19
59:17 60:17 68:6 70:5
75:13 85:2
bit 23:2 24:21 28:2 44:8
49:4,17 70:16,19 73:5
86:12
Bloomington 93:22
94:6
blow 88:16
Blue 8:8 28:14 31:2
board 1:22 2:3 3:5,7,13
5:13,13,14,18 6:3,9
11:8,12,19 12:3 13:14
16:7,15 17:1 19:13,15
21:22 22:18 23:8
26:11 36:15,17 37:4
37:12 42:4,14,15 43:7
44:1 52:3 55:3,6
56:18 69:1,3 71:14
73:3,7,9,12,14,15,22
74:1,4,9,11,12,13,21
76:12 83:3 85:9 86:6
86:11,16 87:3,7,15,20
88:6,15 90:10,10
board's 12:4 37:10
45:10
Boardman 1:14 6:20,21
boards 74:7
boat 49:11
bodies 74:6
body 73:3
bonds 30:7,11
books 79:5
Boston 46:2 49:10
bottom 35:18 36:7
Bowser 10:5 65:5
brief 10:19 63:15
briefing 3:20 4:1
briefly 43:11 67:15
bring 23:22 31:21
brings 4:22
broadly 6:2 8:16
brought 38:3
Brown 1:21 2:6 12:8
19:21,22 20:1,5,8,10
20:11,19,21 21:1,4
43:2 49:8 52:16 87:1
Brumfield 1:14 6:14,15
budget 9:19 23:5,6,8
28:3,4 29:2,5 30:1,3
37:10,16 40:16 44:20

44:21 50:3,4,8 67:7
68:13 82:19,22 83:2,4
83:14 87:18,19 88:2
88:16
budgets 26:11 36:21
build 29:7
building 61:19 62:14
65:13,18,21 66:4
buildings 63:21
built 40:11
burden 4:10
business 4:1,4 14:1
26:3 60:11 67:13
91:15
businesses 4:7,20 8:11
31:4 66:15 68:5 81:8
82:3
busy 49:4
BUTANI 1:15 7:9
buy 29:8,9 30:6
buying 81:10

C

C 1:17 3:1 64:8
C-A-P-P-E-R 69:7
calculations 69:16
calculator 26:15,20
42:3
call 2:3 6:7 11:5 12:21
21:14 28:17 55:10,17
56:3,4 71:8,17 90:22
91:1
called 55:13 58:12 59:4
calls 15:2 67:21
CAP 1:4 21:20 24:6,9
27:9,18 33:1 36:6,7
46:19 47:7 50:19,22
51:3 53:21 80:15
CAP2 1:5 21:22 24:3,6
27:12,17 33:3 51:12
CAP3 22:3 27:14
capital 9:6 17:16 23:6
29:7 30:3 36:20 39:4
45:11,14 50:4 53:10
53:11 58:11 87:12
Capper 69:6,8,9,11
71:21 74:7,19 75:2,6
capture 18:14
captured 18:12
care 11:5 91:17 94:14
careful 79:12
CARES 64:16,18 65:9
Carney 56:6,7,9,12,15
56:17,19 60:17,20
carry 9:18 79:6
carrying 74:16
case 91:11
cash 25:9 40:1 44:20

46:8
cash-financed 53:12
catastrophes 87:14
Ccf 32:22 38:13
Ccfs 35:4,5,22 36:8
CDC 66:8
CEO 1:20 12:5
CEO's 2:4
CEO/General 2:4
certain 46:6
certainly 58:18 68:19
78:21
CFO 20:11
Chair 3:3 6:13 7:22 13:6
19:20 20:3,7,17,20,22
43:1 44:13 55:4,19,22
56:7,9,13,16 60:15,18
60:21 61:3,5,9,11,16
61:22 62:5 68:18 69:8
69:10 71:7 73:11 74:9
74:22 75:4,7 76:1,6,8
76:10,12 85:18 86:3
93:14
Chairman 1:11,13 2:2
2:10,11 3:5 6:12 7:15
13:12 16:8 19:19
42:21 43:7 48:18
56:18 85:22 89:16
90:20 92:1,18 93:13
challenged 59:4
challenges 53:4 88:9
88:10
challenging 84:12
change 53:6 54:13 80:9
84:14 91:15
changes 5:14 8:13
43:16 46:5
charge 17:22 18:3,7
22:22 23:22 24:7 32:3
32:10,14,15 33:2 35:8
35:11 39:3,6,7 41:14
41:16 47:22 54:6 66:2
charges 1:4 5:11 36:2
46:20 47:16,19,21
48:5 50:17 69:21
chart 30:8 44:19 47:14
47:15 70:11
charts 70:7
check 58:15,17
chemicals 29:19
Chesapeake 18:19
chief 1:21 12:7
children 9:11
circumstances 53:2
cities 40:5 45:19
city 4:3 14:5,17 17:3
70:17,21 71:17 72:8
73:17 88:11 89:11

class 34:8 64:8
classes 37:7 38:11
clean 9:5 17:21 18:2,9
22:21 23:11,21 24:1,7
30:13,17,21 31:3
32:10,15 33:1 35:7,10
39:2,6,11 78:13 87:16
89:1 94:3
cleaner 18:19
cleaning 9:10 66:8
clearly 10:15 41:3
climb 17:12
clockwise 28:20
close 89:5
closed 4:22 81:8
closely 54:14
closer 4:18 41:2
closing 2:10 68:15
89:17 93:12
collaborative 90:17
collapse 88:22
colleague 43:10
collect 58:10 65:22
collected 63:21
collecting 65:18
collection 64:10
Columbia 1:1,12 3:6
8:4 9:2 12:3 14:10
28:8 29:21 32:21
35:18 40:5 63:3 65:4
68:20 76:17 78:1,3,9
Columbia's 77:17
com 11:18
combination 36:1
combine 39:21
combined 9:4 18:13
62:21 80:10 84:15
come 9:12 30:5 58:17
61:8
comes 8:11 33:21
comfort 45:2
coming 16:5 89:20
commend 8:19 93:15
comments 2:9 5:10
11:1,9,11,16,20 12:14
42:7,9,11 77:8,13
80:17 86:5 89:4,18
commercial 25:7 28:9
41:22 62:13,17 63:1,9
63:16,21 65:14 66:3
82:6 86:15 88:9
commitment 19:6
committed 16:11
committee 10:14 16:7
36:12 37:11 42:12
commodity 83:16
common 85:13
community 3:10 4:1 6:2

8:16 13:15 22:17
67:14 94:7
companies 62:18
comparable 47:16 52:4
compare 34:7 47:10
compared 40:15 51:6
72:15
compares 51:2
comparing 54:17 69:16
70:7
comparison 38:14
51:17 87:21
comparisons 43:18
69:18
competitive 48:7
complaints 18:6
complete 5:22 16:12
60:10 83:20
compliance 66:8
components 32:2 83:8
composed 62:16
Compounding 65:1
comprises 63:6
concern 53:17,18
concerned 66:19
concerning 58:1
concerns 11:4
conclude 83:2
concludes 42:6,21 55:1
80:4 82:16 93:12
conclusion 85:12
conclusions 51:21,22
conduct 14:1 44:5
conducted 37:13,15
confirmation 20:5
congratulations 93:20
Congressman 65:1
consent 39:3
consequently 81:19
conservation 40:10
consider 11:19 18:16
68:1,13
consideration 11:8
68:11 86:20
considered 69:3 79:5
Considering 67:1
consistent 37:6 38:17
48:20 50:14 54:2
constitutes 63:10
construction 53:12
consultant 2:7 12:11
38:4 76:22
consultants 13:3 19:21
37:21 76:22 87:2
88:14
Consulting 2:7 43:8
consume 92:12
consumer 67:10 77:21

79:2
consumers 77:17 78:10
79:15 80:16 81:16
85:16
consumption 4:18 25:7
25:8 40:4,4 49:13
52:14,17 81:22
contact 14:15 22:12
27:7 56:1 58:1
containing 5:2
CONTENTS 2:1
continually 94:3,9
continuation 46:14
continue 9:19 34:10
41:12 67:8,9 68:4
88:17 92:9,20
continues 23:20 45:9
53:20 67:3
continuing 18:1 28:22
32:9 52:18
contractor 58:17 59:2
59:14
contractor's 59:6
contractors 29:15
contractual 29:14
controlling 16:19
convened 1:10 3:16
conversations 4:11
cooperation 49:2
cooperative 93:9
coping 15:4
copy 59:6
corner 14:4
Coronavirus 64:15
corresponding 81:19
cost 16:20 31:10,12,15
33:8 35:10 37:12,15
37:17,18,22 38:16
39:11 45:11 53:19
66:5,7 67:8 79:10
83:13 84:17,20 89:14
cost-cutting 16:18
costs 5:2 18:2 23:21
32:11,20 33:9,13
35:15 36:14,17 38:21
39:4,12 66:10 83:7
council 8:3,18 10:5
18:22 64:20 65:12
73:17 74:2 89:11,12
89:12
council's 64:5 65:10
Counsel 62:8 75:22
76:3,16,17,19 77:2,3
85:19 90:6
counter 5:1
Counties 70:8
consume 36:13 38:7
54:21

County 34:14,15 70:12
couple 28:18 50:16
course 8:18 52:9 73:8
COVE-19 24:21
cover 10:6 32:20 35:15
36:17 83:7
coverage 39:22 80:10
80:12 84:15,16,18,22
85:5
covered 80:17
COVID 22:11 25:14
27:4 29:1 93:5,10
COVID-19 4:9 14:2,7
16:1 43:17 44:9 45:21
48:11 49:7 50:15
52:19 53:3,13 54:8,12
54:14 59:18 63:18,22
65:11,16 78:16 79:19
81:2,13 91:18
creating 68:13
credit 27:16 53:15
credits 51:1
crews 14:13 23:17
CRIAC 1:4 18:7 46:15
46:18 47:9
crisis 16:1 81:6,7,15
82:11
criteria 36:22
critical 5:6 57:11,13
crystal 50:9
CSO 47:16
culture 90:14
current 36:9 51:10
52:10 63:15 81:3 84:8
currently 60:16 62:21
76:2 91:12
Curry 1:16 7:10,11
customer 1:4 5:11 9:20
11:5 14:20 19:8 21:9
21:17 22:4 27:2,22
31:17 32:19,20 33:9
33:14,16 34:8 35:14
35:15,21,22 37:7
46:17 48:14 51:8,18
59:8 77:11 90:19
customer's 85:2
customers 9:21 10:7
15:10 18:4,6 19:5
20:13 22:2,16 23:15
23:19 24:9,19 25:1,2
25:15,18 26:13 27:10
27:15 28:8,9,10,10
31:1 33:1 34:22 35:2
35:7 36:6,7 37:1
40:21 41:20,20,21,22
41:22 46:1,7 47:2,3,4
47:6,7 48:12,20 49:3
54:7 60:1 67:22 71:11

78:15 80:8 81:1 82:6
84:11 90:19 91:1,17
91:20 92:12,21
customs 85:8
cutting 79:1
cycle 31:13

D

D 3:1 56:19
D.C 1:1 56:20 64:19
69:13 70:12 83:3
84:21 92:19
D.C.'s 70:16,17
daily 4:9 91:15
data 79:10 84:6
David 1:15,20 2:4 6:18
7:18 12:5 13:8,17
76:22 89:15 93:14
day 14:18 18:19 90:11
day-to-day 90:15 93:11
days 39:22 41:3 58:4,6
59:9 65:20
daytime 67:2
dcwater.com/custom...
22:6 28:1
dcwater.com/ratema...
26:9
deadly 14:3
debt 16:19 24:12 29:4,6
29:6 30:5,12,13 31:20
33:21 39:19 40:14
58:10 80:10,12 84:15
84:15,17,21 85:5,8,9
decades 77:19
decision 12:1 17:2
decision- 83:11
decisions 83:9
declared 65:19 66:22
declaring 65:5
decline 25:5 40:10
52:18,20
declined 40:8
declines 52:6
decrease 17:21 35:9
47:8 63:20 64:6 66:21
68:8
decreases 40:6 46:3
decreasing 45:16 81:19
decree-related 39:4
dedication 19:13
defended 86:20
defensible 36:21
defined 81:14
degree 45:1
delay 33:4
delayed 25:16
deliberation 16:14
delinquent 25:11 58:4

deliver 29:1 31:3
delivered 89:2
demonstrate 19:7
Department 11:5 72:14
depend 34:21 35:1
deposit 40:18
depth 81:5
Deputy 77:2
description 10:19
deserve 92:22
designed 36:22
detailed 33:12
details 34:20
determinations 36:14
determined 38:11
develop 84:3
developed 45:4 52:1
 83:11
development 80:15
 83:1,5
differ 52:10
difference 50:21 94:2,7
different 4:10 26:16,17
 26:17,18 31:13 32:2
difficult 87:13 88:8
difficulties 63:13
difficulty 82:7
dilemma 59:5
diligent 40:3
direction 9:7
directly 63:13
Directors 3:5 19:13
 23:9 74:11,12 76:13
discharge 92:9
disconnections 10:3
discount 1:4 21:21 22:2
 32:22 33:2 46:18 47:9
 51:11 54:6
discounts 22:21 36:5
discretion 43:22
discuss 26:11
discussed 19:1 37:10
 51:9
discussing 16:4 80:18
discussion 42:13
discussions 49:9 54:15
display 4:5
disproportionately
 64:9
dispute 60:16
disruption 81:8
distancing 14:11
distinct 19:6
District 1:1,12 3:6,17
 4:7,15 5:5 8:3 9:2,14
 12:3 14:10 17:6 19:11
 22:9 25:3 28:8 29:21
 32:21 35:18 40:4

47:12 48:5 49:2 53:18
 54:7 63:2,4,10 65:4
 67:1,3 68:20 76:17
 77:16,22 78:3,9,11,14
 81:4,17
District's 9:10 18:10
Districts 63:7 69:19
diverted 93:19
dividends 18:10
documents 79:5
doing 3:9 14:10 17:7
 18:3 41:9 69:15 89:14
dollars 50:7 59:13 92:4
donations 22:16
dot 11:18
downturn 68:7
dozen 4:2
drinking 8:11
driving 45:14,18
drywalls 58:20
due 47:8 58:6 65:19
 66:7 67:6 81:22 83:16
 88:10
Dulles 87:14
duration 15:10 60:1
 66:5 81:5

E

E 1:16 3:1,1
earlier 16:9 24:2 26:1
 30:6 35:8 37:14 71:9
 71:18 90:13
economic 4:3 15:22
 17:4 63:15 64:15 68:7
 79:18 80:22 81:6,7,15
 82:11 84:9,13 88:10
economies 81:4
economy 4:17 81:9
Ed 48:8
EDT 1:10
Edward 43:7
effective 51:18
effectively 46:9
effects 49:19 53:5
 54:13
efficient 40:6 62:10
efforts 10:1 25:15
eight 3:16 47:10 78:12
either 43:21 73:19
electric 9:16 29:16
 77:18
electricity 29:20 30:2
eligible 22:13,20
Ellen 1:14 6:20
email 11:16 12:19 59:9
 86:1
emailed 55:16
emails 15:2

emergencies 14:16
emergency 16:11 22:7
 22:12 27:15 65:6,12
 65:20 66:22 81:14
Emile 1:16 6:16
employees 4:12 14:20
 22:17 28:22
employing 38:7
employment 81:18
encountered 52:8
encourage 19:9
Energy 72:14
engage 4:6
enhanced 64:13 65:2
 66:7
enhancements 80:14
enjoyed 9:11
ensure 25:16 78:11
ensuring 85:14
enter 65:13
entire 17:3 18:18
entities 75:5,8 87:8,21
 87:22 88:14
entity 74:11,16,17 75:1
 75:10
environment 9:2 18:10
 84:9
envisioned 49:18
equal 11:8 72:18
equates 41:15
equipment 23:17
equitable 37:6 78:10
equity 24:1
equivalent 29:9 30:6
era 14:2
Eric 61:19 62:1,12 69:4
ERU 32:14 39:7 47:6
ERUs 39:9
escalation 83:14
escaped 4:17
especially 45:22 78:15
 82:10 87:16 90:5
essential 82:7,9
essentially 9:13
establish 80:6
established 8:3 57:1,4
 79:22
establishments 49:14
estate 62:20
estimated 67:8
estimates 45:3 83:14
evening 3:3 13:12,14
 20:10 21:12,18 34:11
 43:6,9 55:7 62:12
 68:16 76:12 77:6
 80:19 85:17 86:7
 89:20
events 94:8

everybody 8:1 94:13
Everybody's 26:16
EVP 1:21
exacerbated 68:8
example 15:7 85:6
exceed 45:9
excellent 51:17
exciting 19:10
execute 92:6
executive 65:5
Exelon 73:13
existence 8:5
expand 9:20 38:20
expanded 27:19
expanding 49:1
expect 11:22
expected 52:7 64:20
expenditures 37:9
 44:21 45:2,15
expenses 46:6 50:2
 52:8
experience 57:5 87:6
 87:15 88:3
experienced 81:18
experiencing 54:21
 64:10
expiration 64:18
expired 64:16
explained 67:20 92:2
extended 54:19 65:8
extending 65:2
extends 24:6
extension 18:18
eye 54:17

F

face 82:6
facing 66:15
fact 6:6 9:20 67:7
factors 45:13 68:10,13
facts 84:6
failure 5:8 57:12
failures 23:15
Fairfax 34:15 70:8,11
fairly 86:16
fairness 56:2
fall 17:6
far 17:11 93:6
farther 41:4
faster 52:6
features 52:14
February 26:12
federal 25:8 28:10
fee 32:18,19,20 33:6
 35:14,17 38:20 88:5
feedback 89:9,13,21
 90:1
feel 57:8 92:5 93:9

fees 1:4,4 5:12 17:20
 25:2,12,13 32:21
 35:18 46:17 47:12
 49:1 66:2,18 69:18
feet 63:1,9
fellow 3:13
fields 9:16
final 12:1 89:4
finally 80:14 84:7
finances 39:18
financial 1:21 12:7,11
 40:14,20 41:6 43:4
 44:17 45:21 46:10
 48:16 52:9 67:21
 79:19 80:4 81:2 82:12
 82:15 83:15
financially 59:3
find 16:4 51:15 70:18
finding 15:5 45:6
findings 38:8
finest 13:19
fires 74:12
first 12:15 13:3,13 15:8
 15:8 20:2,16 21:5,20
 26:15 32:5 41:9 48:13
 56:5 57:18 58:1 59:19
 59:21 63:14 67:17
 86:9 89:18 91:8 93:2
 93:21
fiscal 1:5,5 5:10,11,19
 5:21 12:12 16:5 28:5
 28:5 31:6,7,8,22 32:7
 32:7,12,13,16,16
 33:17,18,22 34:2,5,6
 34:18,19 35:12 36:3,3
 36:9 37:14 40:8 41:12
 41:16,17 42:17,19,20
 66:14 77:10 80:11,12
 82:17 83:22 84:18,19
five 10:12 45:20 60:13
 80:9
fixed 35:1 38:21
flat 67:12
fleet 23:16
flexibility 53:1
flexible 15:10 60:1
flood 94:1
flooding 94:4
flow 46:9
focus 19:8 24:22 55:7
focuses 43:15
follow 13:10
following 5:17 35:13
 36:3 77:14 79:14
food 81:11
for-profit 9:15 75:7,9
 92:3
forecast 39:14

forecasted 24:15 41:11
forecasts 36:20
formula 18:8 24:1
forum 16:5
forward 19:18 37:19
 39:8 62:3
found 15:17 38:15
 69:19
four 35:3 38:12 45:13
 67:8 80:6
Franco 1:15 6:18 7:16
 7:18,18,21
Fred 56:6,19
free 15:15
freezes 15:19
Friday 64:17
friendly 57:7
Frishberg 7:4
front 34:9 55:16 62:8
full 3:11 5:13,22 33:17
 58:5 62:7 64:6 82:4
fully 23:11 67:2 84:2
function 74:17,21
functions 79:6
fund 16:21 24:17 31:21
 33:20 34:2 40:17 50:7
 53:1 66:17
funded 22:16 71:17
funding 24:1 66:16
funds 23:11,16 30:9
 31:21 53:14 75:11
 88:20
furloughs 15:18
further 54:5 87:5,9
furtherance 85:13
Furthermore 67:6
future 39:17 44:22 53:6
FY 66:12 80:2,3 82:14
 82:15,19 83:1,18 84:7
 84:10

G

G 3:1
Gadis 1:20 2:4 12:5
 13:4,5,7,8,10,17 20:1
 20:4 24:13,20 25:1
 31:16 44:14 89:16
 94:14
gallons 18:12 35:22
 93:18
gas 9:16 73:4,13 75:2
 75:14 77:18
general 1:20 4:11 8:21
 13:8 74:13 88:3 89:4
generally 38:16
generate 34:9
generations 9:12
getting 89:9

Giancola 1:17 6:4 7:2,3
Gibbs 1:17 6:5,22 7:1
give 10:19 21:10,13
 31:5 40:21 89:17
 92:11
given 41:15 90:20
gives 11:8
glad 94:9
global 4:17
goal 85:13
goals 9:1 45:10
government 8:6 9:14
 28:11,11 62:13 73:5
 74:16,20
Grace 75:20 76:1,15
graph 70:11
greater 22:15 35:5 70:5
 78:18
greatly 85:20 86:17
green 41:6 47:13 48:3
Greetings 56:17
GREGORY 1:21
gross 65:19
ground 10:10
groundwork 38:1
group 10:13 43:8
groups 8:16
growing 41:17
growth 29:5
guarantee 44:22
guidance 19:15

H

half 4:2 30:8 59:15
hall 3:15,18 16:8 26:4
 67:14 71:22
halls 4:4 25:22 26:3
hand 17:8
handle 94:10
happen 11:22
happy 42:8 55:2 75:18
hard 8:20
hardest 68:5,7
hardships 66:14
hauling 25:13
headed 50:10
health 14:3 15:4 16:10
 65:6,12,19 66:22
 81:13 82:9
hear 7:19 10:8 12:10,13
 12:16 13:3 19:21
 20:13,21 21:1,3 25:17
 43:3 56:10,15 61:6,18
 69:9,10 75:9 76:9
 89:21
heard 89:11
hearing 1:3 5:9,17
 10:10 18:22 19:18
 25:19 62:2 67:17 77:4
 86:8 89:8,11
heartened 3:13
heat 93:17
held 16:6 42:15
help 9:21 23:14,22
 29:15 42:4 52:15
 53:15 54:6 56:4 66:18
 71:10 75:18 88:15
 91:3,4
helps 45:11
Hi 44:11
high 18:7 47:6 72:20
 93:17
high-quality 78:8
higher 18:15 22:3 52:7
 67:9 70:15 72:18
 84:11,12
highest 85:4 92:9,11,17
highlighted 67:16
hires 74:12
hiring 15:19
hit 68:5,7
hold 90:11 93:4
holds 90:10
home 4:18,20 14:21
 58:9 67:5 82:1 91:11
homeowner 58:11 71:4
homes 31:3 94:4
HOPE 1:21
hopefully 89:7
hosted 4:2 67:14
hotels 4:20 49:14
house 29:8,10 30:7
 57:13,21 58:7,16,22
 59:11
household 17:1,18
 31:17 32:2 41:16 48:1
 48:4,6 81:20
households 22:10
housing 25:6 63:7 64:5
Howard 1:17 6:5,22
huge 18:10
hundred 30:14

I

idea 40:21
ignorant 71:1
illustrates 44:19 47:5
immediate 15:19 81:15
impact 4:17 17:4 25:9
 25:11 26:22 39:16
 46:8 47:1 49:16 51:8
 65:1 67:22 81:7 83:10
 88:12 89:8
impacted 4:16 22:10
 24:22 63:22 64:9

65:16 66:1 82:3
impacting 49:7
impacts 43:17 45:21
 46:10 48:11,16 50:1
 53:14 54:22 79:18
 81:1
impervious 17:21 18:2
 22:21 23:21 24:7
 26:18 32:10,15 33:1
 35:7,11 39:3,6 51:11
 54:5
implemented 42:18,20
important 9:7 68:19
 77:6 78:21 88:13
 91:22
improve 19:1
improvements 23:7
improving 30:15 78:22
include 10:1
included 40:17 72:4
includes 17:19 29:14
 33:13 82:17
including 8:17 25:8
 30:2 31:20 44:6 45:3
 48:22 50:1 51:11 78:7
income 36:6 48:1,4,6
 57:12 80:16 81:19,20
incomes 22:3
incomplete 82:18
incorporates 46:16
increase 16:16,17,22
 17:19,20 24:13 25:10
 26:5 32:6,22 33:13
 36:2 42:5 45:14 46:17
 46:18 53:20 54:5 57:9
 60:12 66:7,12 69:21
 70:2,3 86:19 88:6
 91:22
increased 24:9 27:4,4
 27:12 31:17 33:7 47:9
 66:9 81:22
increases 12:2 23:13
 23:16 32:19 33:2
 35:14 37:2 40:22
 41:15 46:3 63:14 68:6
 72:15
increasing 45:15 51:11
 66:5,20 67:12 72:12
incredible 94:7
Indenture 85:11
independent 2:7 8:4
 9:15 12:11 38:4 43:12
 74:16
index 67:10
indicates 36:16
individual 11:3 56:6
 71:4 86:13
individuals 10:11 12:14

73:14
industry 38:17 53:4,19
 54:2 62:20 66:13
 83:17
inflation 67:9
influence 73:6
information 20:14 22:4
 26:20,21 27:21 41:19
 42:3 71:19 82:18
 83:21
informed 57:21 64:19
infrastructure 5:7
 17:10,14 23:6,14
 29:12 30:4,10,16,20
 57:11,14 88:21
initial 78:21 81:6
initiatives 51:10 53:9
 54:8
innovative 13:19
input 73:12 84:4 86:18
inputs 79:10
ins 71:15
insecurity 15:22
inside 16:11 58:19
installed 40:7
institutions 8:10
instructions 13:6
intensive 83:16
intent 57:17,20 60:5
Interceptor 34:14
interest 24:10 52:7 66:2
 80:18
interference 33:15 40:7
 64:13
INTERIM 1:21
internal 94:4
Internally 15:17
internet 15:2 59:7
introduce 43:4
introduced 26:15
introduction 13:14
inventory 63:11
investment 57:13 94:5
investments 5:7 17:13
 23:13 29:11 30:4,22
 57:11 94:1
invite 89:3
involved 9:8
issue 29:7 58:2 70:19
 90:20 91:3,19
issued 30:13
issues 44:9 67:16 68:2
items 39:17
Ivan 7:4

J

January 26:12 37:11
Jay 62:12

Jed 7:6
Joanne 69:6 71:8
job 16:2 19:14 89:14
Joe 1:18 7:12
join 3:15 21:12
joined 21:6 42:8 86:6
joining 6:3 13:16 43:9
 77:3
Jones 61:19,21 62:1,1
 62:4,11,12
Jr 56:19
judicious 62:10
July 49:20 64:16 67:13
June 25:20 27:10 46:10
 49:20 60:4
justification 72:20
justify 88:7

K

Karen 61:15,16 77:3
keep 10:22 92:6
keeping 54:16
Kendrick 1:16 7:10
 61:10,11,12
key 77:13 92:8
kinds 29:16
knew 91:8,14
known 4:9 57:7
Krystal 1:14 6:14

L

L 13:17
L-M-A-N-L-E-Y 11:17
 12:20
laboring 17:4
laid 37:22
landlords 66:6
large 41:21 48:21 52:18
 82:2
larger 18:9
largest 8:7 9:6 29:20
late 25:2 49:1 66:2
layoffs 15:18
lead 19:1 46:8 71:3,10
 71:16,20 72:5 75:17
 76:22
leading 13:18
League 22:16
leak 58:16,18
learn 3:13
leases 64:1
left 30:8
left-hand 30:17
legacy 9:9
legal 1:21 8:5 80:1
legally 36:21
legislation 19:2 65:12
legislative 65:10

lenient 10:4
Leonard 1:18 7:12,13
let's 13:7 56:3 70:8
 75:19
level 4:5 51:3
lien 57:18,21 60:5 91:10
liening 91:5,12
liens 25:4 93:3,4
life 14:6
lifeline 38:13 54:1 80:8
lifelines 80:7
light 84:8 87:11
lightly 17:2
limit 14:16
limits 74:2
Lin 43:10 44:7,11,15
Linda 1:22 2:3
line 31:15 36:7 41:5,6
 91:11
lines 31:1
liquidity 53:15
list 55:15 56:1
listed 38:9
listen 11:1
lists 45:13
literally 17:8
little 18:6 23:2 24:20
 28:2 44:8 49:17 86:12
live 56:19
lived 56:21 57:3
lmanley@dcwater.com
 11:17 12:21
local 16:8 77:18 81:4
localities 72:16,17
location 10:20
long 30:14 79:22 93:16
long-term 45:16
longer 91:6
look 19:17 38:10 39:8
 58:18 62:2 87:8 88:14
looked 38:14 39:2,10
looking 90:14
looks 35:20
Loretta 61:2
loss 81:18 88:11
losses 16:2
lost 20:17,18
lot 38:8 41:22 49:5
 69:12 70:9 71:1,12,13
 86:19 89:13
Loudon 34:14
love 89:21
low 24:10 47:6 80:16
low- 36:5
low-income 54:4,6
lower 30:7,17 40:15
 52:15 64:10 66:18
 70:16

lowering 85:1,2
ludicrous 70:3

M

maintain 39:21,22
64:12
maintaining 14:9 39:19
major 52:8 54:20 63:20
87:12
majority 67:3
making 9:2 18:17 29:10
30:22 51:12 59:18
78:18 83:12
manage 18:4 45:11
62:17 63:5,8
managed 22:1 87:7
management 2:5 10:9
76:21 84:21
management's 12:8
manager 1:20 2:4 4:12
13:8 74:13 89:4
managers 63:19 65:21
managing 46:9 76:21
mandate 78:14
mandatory 65:3,14
66:7
Manley 1:22 2:3 6:7,11
6:12,14,16,18,20,22
7:2,4,6,8,10,12,14,16
7:17,20 12:20 13:5
20:9 21:3 55:9,11,14
55:20,21 56:3,5 60:22
61:1,4,7,10,14,17,18
69:5,6 75:19,20 85:21
85:22
March 16:6 18:11 23:9
37:20 49:19 65:6
Marcus 43:8
market 64:3
MARKUS 43:6 48:10
Maryland 63:3
masks 14:12
Master 85:10
material 78:19
materials 26:7,8,10
79:8
Matt 20:17 46:12 49:8
51:9 52:16 87:1
Matt's 50:18
Mattavous-Frye 76:19
matter 11:5 77:7 94:16
matters 78:5
Matthew 1:21 2:6 12:7
20:11
mayor 8:18 10:4 65:4
73:16 74:1
mayor's 14:21 67:4
mean 72:19

meanest 57:6
meaningful 51:8 84:4
means 65:20
measured 79:16 80:20
measures 53:8
media 8:15,15
median 47:22 48:4,6
medical 81:11
meet 45:9 79:22 81:10
meeting 1:10 12:4
13:21 25:21 42:15
67:14
meetings 3:9,16,18
16:7,7,8 37:11 71:22
89:7
MEMBER 1:14,14,15,15
1:16,16,17,17,18 6:15
6:17,21 7:1,3,9,11,13
7:16,18,21
members 1:12 3:8,13
6:3,9 12:2 13:15,15
22:18 43:7 55:6 56:18
63:4 64:19 69:1 74:21
76:12,13 86:6,11 87:3
membership 62:22
men 14:8
mention 49:5
mentioned 24:2,13 25:1
26:1,21 27:17 30:6
33:19 35:8 37:14
46:13 48:11,18 49:8
50:17
mentorship 67:20
menu 10:1
meter 17:20 26:17
metering 1:4 32:19 33:6
33:14 35:14 38:20
46:17
metro 87:13
Metropolitan 62:15
middle 80:16
midst 78:15
million 16:21 18:14
24:16 30:1 33:7,16,18
34:1,3,5,6,10,18,18
40:18 62:22 64:21
millions 4:13 81:9
93:18,18
mind 10:22
minimize 14:13
minutes 10:12,14 60:14
62:7,9 76:7
misfortunes 87:11,22
mission 9:18 78:5
mitigate 50:1 52:15
mitigates 45:12
mitigating 48:15
mitigation 53:2

model 40:20
modifying 53:11
moment 8:22 18:16,21
moments 43:14
Monday 11:20
money 9:16,17 15:14
23:5 28:16 29:13
30:15 59:11
monitoring 54:13,19
month 17:18 21:21 22:3
36:1 64:7
monthly 21:21 46:20
54:15
months 26:12 66:1
move 13:7 18:20 51:20
75:8,15,19
moved 25:20 57:2
movement 4:6
moves 15:21
multi-family 62:17
63:16 65:15
multi-housing 64:4
multifamily 25:6 28:10
35:5 41:21 47:3
multiple 58:21 83:11
municipal 25:7 28:11
municipalities 36:12
70:15
Muriel 10:5 65:5
mute 3:21 10:21 13:9
13:11 21:2 56:10,12
61:6,13 76:2

N

N 3:1
N-A-P-P-I-E-R 61:4
name 3:4 7:19 10:16,16
12:22 13:17 20:11
56:19 61:3
names 55:17
Nappier 61:2,4,5
nastiest 57:6
nation's 17:16
national 64:4 81:4
native 56:22
natural 77:17
nature 83:16
nearly 30:19 63:5
necessarily 71:14
necessary 79:5 84:11
need 9:18 10:22 23:18
37:1 55:9 58:15 92:6
needed 57:13 72:6
neediest 10:6
needs 3:20 5:3 17:10
46:15 60:10 81:10
negative 25:11 39:16
79:18 80:22

negatively 22:10 65:15
neighbors 87:12
Ness 69:14
net 46:8
never 62:9
new 9:19 10:5 11:2,21
18:8 22:9 27:14 44:6
46:2 49:10 51:10
70:17,21
night 14:18
nine 47:20 66:1 72:17
nonprofit 9:13 22:19
nonresidential 35:5
46:1,4 47:4 49:13
NOPR 79:21 82:17
Northeast 56:20
Northwest 69:13
Notably 64:8
note 44:2 52:5 54:11,20
93:17
noted 53:8 84:21
notes 70:9 85:3
notice 57:17,20 58:3
60:5 77:8
notices 57:19
number 21:10 41:21
48:19 49:22 52:13
58:12 71:9,18,19
79:16,21 80:2,6,9
82:1,2 90:21
numbers 18:16 26:1
64:4 67:7

O

O 1:14 3:1
o'clock 28:21
objective 36:22
obligation 5:4
observe 16:13
obviously 24:21 41:2
87:3
October 5:20 28:6 31:8
31:9 42:17,18,20 65:9
offer 36:5 77:7
offered 51:16
offering 15:9 59:22
offers 45:1
office 11:12 14:19
61:19 62:14 63:1
75:21 76:3,16 85:3,19
90:6
officer 1:21 12:7
offices 4:21
offsets 83:9
old 58:22 70:19
older 70:21
once 5:22 9:3 29:8
55:17 60:7

one-third 63:6
ones 72:6
onetime 22:12 27:20
online 3:20 4:1
onwards 40:11
OPC 77:13,15,21 78:11
 79:4,7,14 82:12 84:2
 85:6,12
OPC's 77:8 78:5,17
 79:6 80:17 82:21
 85:17
open 49:15 68:22
opened 18:12
Opening 2:2
operates 8:7
operating 16:20 23:5
 28:4 36:20 45:10,10
 45:15 46:6 50:2,8
 53:10 66:7
operations 82:5
opportunity 43:11 77:5
 85:16 89:17 92:19
opposed 67:12
opposite 29:4
oral 77:12
orange 41:5
order 3:9 14:21 29:7
 31:11 35:15 65:5,8
 67:5 92:6
organization 10:16,18
 10:19 33:10,16 35:16
 62:6 66:11 68:21
 89:22
organizations 4:3
 10:13 22:20 62:16
organized 3:19,22
original 53:22
originally 25:19 49:18
outcomes 54:12
outlays 50:3
outlined 54:10
outlines 45:20
outlook 63:16
outputs 40:19
outreach 4:5 25:15 27:5
 27:14
outs 71:15
outside 16:11 88:14
overall 25:5 81:1
overflows 9:4 18:15
Overlook 11:13,15
oversees 74:12
oversight 73:2,7
overview 31:5 44:16
 63:15
owe 15:14
owed 57:21
owned 74:18

owner 71:5
owners 63:19 65:13,18
 65:21 66:4

P

P 3:1
p.m 1:10 3:2 11:20
 94:17
paid 30:14 32:21 59:12
 60:17
pandemic 4:16 10:2
 14:4 15:5,11,13 17:5
 17:12 60:2,3 63:19
 64:7 65:11 68:9 78:16
 79:20 81:3 88:11
papers 79:5
part 9:5 21:22 38:22
 64:14 65:10,17 68:2
 70:5 72:11 83:15
partial 64:6
participate 16:14 84:2
participating 86:10
participation 4:5 26:2
 27:2,12
particular 11:4 50:20
 55:7
particularly 88:8
partner 55:11,20 68:19
 76:21
partnered 25:3
partnering 10:4
partners 28:13
partnership 22:8 85:20
 90:8
passage 77:20
passed 65:12
Pause 6:19 7:5,7 44:10
 56:8
pay 17:6,18 29:8 30:9,9
 30:11 59:2,3,11 64:1
 71:5,5 72:6,8 81:20
payers 54:4,7 71:11
 77:17 78:1 85:15
 86:13 93:10
paying 18:9 21:7,13
 81:11,11 82:7 84:12
payment 10:4 15:10
 21:15 58:6 59:5 60:1
 64:2,5 65:3,14
payments 25:11 64:7
pays 29:5 30:1 71:3
 72:8
peers 47:11 48:7 51:4
 51:17
pending 79:17 80:21
people 3:7,14,15 4:13
 4:19 17:16 29:8 55:22
 82:10 90:6,22 93:7,8

People's 75:21 76:3,16
 76:16,19 77:2,3 85:19
 90:6
Pepco 73:4,13,21 75:3
 75:14
percent 16:16,17,22
 18:15 24:8,8 30:19,19
 31:18,22 32:6,7,11,12
 32:13 33:2 36:2,3
 39:20,22 40:9,9,11
 46:19,19 47:9 48:5,7
 51:12,12 67:8 69:20
 70:2,3,12,13
percentage 39:20 48:3
performance 43:15
 44:17 45:7,11
period 54:19 65:9 73:18
 84:13 93:17
periodically 37:19
permanent 22:1 24:3,4
 27:18 33:3 51:13
permit 25:12
permitting 2:9 12:16
personnel 28:21 29:4
pertaining 78:6
phase-in 46:14
Philadelphia 46:2 49:10
phone 15:2 20:6 86:2
phones 10:21
pics 44:12
pictures 59:6
pie 28:18 29:3 30:8
piece 28:18 29:3 92:8
pilot 24:3 32:20
pipe 71:10,16,20 75:17
pipes 58:19,21,21
 70:20,20 71:3 72:5
place 38:2 56:20
placed 15:19 91:11
places 28:18 29:13
placing 25:4
Plains 8:9 28:15 31:2
plan 39:13 40:14 41:6
 65:3 91:4
planned 39:10
planning 80:4 82:16
 83:15
plans 10:4 15:10 60:1
 65:14
plant 8:8 31:2
platform 15:2
platforms 16:9
please 10:22 12:19,22
 21:7,13 22:5,12,22
 27:7,22 75:16 89:10
pleased 43:20 66:11
pleasure 44:3
plus 33:22 57:22 59:3

59:13
point 28:19 36:6 53:3
 71:21 92:11
pointed 52:16
points 53:16 72:19
 77:13 80:17,19
policy 52:3 83:8 85:9
political 74:6
population 67:2
portfolio 62:21
portion 18:1 23:20 29:2
 29:5,22 35:10,19 83:5
portions 30:16
positive 80:15
possible 58:10
posted 6:1 26:7 42:9
 71:19
postponed 80:3 82:15
 83:19
postponing 84:7
posts 78:19
potential 43:16 47:1
 52:21 53:5,10,13
 54:11
potentially 65:21
Potomac 8:12 18:18
 34:14
PR 72:1
practice 39:21
practices 36:13 38:7
 48:21 50:14 54:2
practicing 14:11
predictability 37:3
predictable 36:18
preference 13:22
preregister 12:18
preregistered 2:9 12:15
 55:15
prescribed 85:10
present 1:12,19 6:15,17
 7:13 85:17
presentation 2:5,7 12:9
 12:10 20:6 42:6,22
 43:14,19,22 44:8
 50:18 55:1,5,6 69:17
 87:1
presented 28:17 54:12
 67:18 71:9
presenting 10:11
presents 53:3 82:12
 85:12
President 62:12
presiding 1:11
pretty 11:1
prevented 65:18 66:4
previous 45:6
previously 24:14 31:12
 41:11 48:18 66:13

price 67:10
primarily 14:20 43:15
 72:1
primary 78:5
PRINCIPAL 1:14,14,15
 1:15,16
prior 37:22 45:8 58:5
 60:7,8 63:12 64:18
 66:21
priorities 4:15
prioritizing 53:11
private 63:7,11 73:14
 75:4
privately 74:18
probably 56:1 86:12
proceeding 77:14
proceedings 78:1
process 4:8 5:15 18:20
 25:16 55:13 73:20
 78:19 79:1 80:4 82:16
 82:19 83:4,16 86:10
 88:5 90:1
processes 3:12 83:12
 84:2
produced 39:13
produces 39:14
products 62:19 78:2,3
profit 75:13
program 10:5 18:9
 21:20 22:9,14,20
 23:12 24:3,4,4 27:15
 27:18,19 29:7 30:14
 30:18,21 46:19 51:4
 51:13 71:10,16,20
programs 9:20 21:17
 22:5,8,22 27:3,7,22
 49:3 51:10,16 53:21
 53:22 77:11 80:15
progressive 54:3
project 9:5,6 18:17
 41:19 87:16 93:20
projected 40:9 41:15
 66:13,21 82:21 84:10
projecting 40:3
projection 40:20
projections 52:10
projects 87:12,16,17
 92:5
propaganda 57:10
 59:20
properties 64:9 86:15
 91:6,7,9,12
property 47:18 57:3,18
 60:5,6 62:18 63:19
 69:13 71:5 91:10
proposal 5:18 12:14
 16:15 17:17 20:15
 22:1 23:3,3,4 24:5

26:22 28:3 31:6,6,11
 31:14 33:5,12 34:8
 37:16,16 38:22 40:12
 77:9 79:13 80:3 82:14
 83:19 84:8
proposals 42:5 79:21
 82:17
propose 37:5
proposed 1:4 5:10 8:13
 8:21 12:1,6 17:1
 26:11 32:5 33:19
 34:17 43:12,16 46:11
 46:13,16 47:1 51:22
 63:14 66:12 67:7 77:9
 78:20 83:1
proposing 9:19 41:9,10
protect 78:14 94:11
protecting 9:9
Protection 77:21 79:3
proud 9:7,21 16:3 26:2
 41:5 88:1 90:16
prove 84:11
provide 5:4 12:5,8
 17:15 19:4 20:14
 53:14 63:15 68:16
 79:4 83:20 88:17,18
 92:20
provided 46:18 50:19
 51:3,6 64:14
provider 57:7
providers 64:5
provides 8:9 21:21 22:2
 22:20 44:16 51:7 53:1
 79:14
providing 10:3 42:2
 44:4 45:12 50:7 52:19
 53:19 54:3 62:19
 69:12
provision 78:8
prudent 50:13 84:8
prudently 45:4
public 1:3 2:8 8:21 9:1
 10:9 12:13 16:13 42:7
 42:10 65:6,11,19 66:9
 66:22 74:17,19 76:14
 77:4 80:1 81:13 84:1
 84:4 87:4,9 88:15,21
 89:6,12,13
publicly 79:7
published 8:14
pump 29:16
punishment 58:11
punt 17:11
purchase 29:17
purchased 57:3
purchases 23:16
purpose 77:7
put 26:20 57:20 59:12

75:11 91:10 94:5
putting 82:3 87:13

Q

quality 92:9,12,16
quality/efficiency 45:7
question 70:22 72:22
 73:11 82:4
questionable 70:18
questioning 88:5
questions 11:3 43:21
 55:2 68:17,22 69:13
 73:2 75:17 79:9,14
 82:21
quickly 49:21
quite 54:19 70:16,19
 71:1 73:5
quorum 6:8 7:14

R

R 3:1
Rachna 1:15 7:8
Raffelis 37:13,21
rain 93:22
raise 75:11
raised 70:19
range 85:4
rarely 62:8
rate 11:21 12:1,6 16:21
 18:3,14 20:15 23:3,3
 23:4,22 24:13,17
 26:14,20 28:7 31:6,6
 31:11,14,21 32:6 33:5
 33:12,20 34:1,8 35:6
 35:12 37:1,2,16 38:1
 38:5,10,22 40:12,17
 40:22 42:3,5,15 45:14
 52:6,6,13,22 54:1
 57:9 60:12 63:14
 64:11 66:12 69:21
 71:11 72:15 77:17
 78:1,18,20 79:1,17
 80:2 82:14,20 83:18
 84:7 85:15 86:13,19
 88:6,18 91:22 93:10
rate- 4:7
rate-setting 36:15
ratemaking 25:16 26:8
 36:11 38:18
rates 1:4 5:11,16,19
 8:14,20,21 11:2 12:12
 16:4,16 17:20 23:10
 24:11,13 28:3 34:21
 35:4 36:12,18,19,21
 37:5,9 38:4 41:10
 42:12,17,19 43:13,16
 43:18 45:18 46:12,13
 46:15,16 47:11 52:1,7

66:20 67:12 70:5,15
 72:12,15,21 73:6 74:4
 74:13,20 78:2,6,10
 79:11 80:1,21 83:6
 84:10,12 85:14 86:18
rating 40:1
ratings 53:15
ratio 80:12 84:16,22,22
 85:6,8,10
ratios 80:10 84:15 85:5
reach 21:8
read 66:12
real 62:19
reappointed 73:19 74:3
reason 57:8
reasonable 37:6 79:22
 85:5,14
reasonably 52:1
reasons 24:12 40:13
 45:18 60:9 67:11
 83:18
receipts 44:20
receive 11:10 22:11
 27:16 28:13 34:13
 42:7
received 57:16 58:5
 59:16 89:13
receives 45:17 47:18
recognize 62:5,6
recognized 40:2
recommend 60:12
recommendation 5:12
 33:8 42:14 85:4
recommendations
 38:19 79:15 82:13
 85:13
recommended 38:20
recommending 85:6
recommends 83:13
reconnect 15:15
reconnected 25:2
record 8:2 13:1 32:4
 34:12 45:1 69:3 94:17
recover 33:9,15 36:14
 38:21
recovered 33:6
red 47:13 48:3
reduce 23:14 47:19
 50:2
reducing 9:4 50:3 51:18
reduction 47:7
reductions 45:22 49:13
referenced 21:18 23:12
refinance 24:11
refinancing 16:19
 31:20
reflect 52:2 79:18 80:22
reflected 81:3

refreshed 26:14
regarding 12:11 45:6
 69:19 77:9 79:9
regardless 15:13
region 17:3 87:8
regional 28:13 48:21
Register 8:14
regular 57:17 59:16
regularly 12:4
regulated 73:5
regulation 73:7
REGULATIONS 1:5
rehab 29:16
related 26:8 78:1
relatively 47:16
relevant 78:15
reliable 5:5 17:15 36:18
 78:8,13
relief 22:8,19 27:15
 64:15
relish 17:7
rely 4:14 36:13
remains 35:17
remarks 2:10 93:12
remind 8:22
renegotiate 64:1
rent 64:5,10,21 65:3,14
 65:19,22 66:5,17
rental 63:7 64:6
rents 63:20
reopened 67:2
repair 94:3
repay 29:6
repaying 34:1
repeat 51:13
repeated 3:21
replaced 58:21
replacement 19:1 32:18
 35:17 71:10,16,20
 75:17
replacing 71:2 72:5
represent 10:17 12:3
 73:9
representative 58:14
 59:8 77:16,22 86:14
Representatives 10:12
represented 47:13 48:2
representing 10:18
 75:21
represents 46:13
require 37:2 54:18
required 16:18 65:3
requirement 83:6,11,21
 84:4 85:1
requirements 52:2
 65:17 66:8
requiring 65:13
reservations 67:6

reserve 53:14
residential 22:8 25:6
 28:9 35:4,4,21 41:20
 46:3,20 47:2 50:22
 62:18 63:2 64:3,8,12
 66:4 80:8 82:6 85:8
 86:13
residents 3:17 4:7 8:10
 17:5 78:12 81:17 82:1
 94:2,11
respected 68:20
respectively 46:21
responded 82:22
responding 10:2 14:17
 18:5
response 48:14 54:8
 65:10 77:8 82:21
responsibility 37:4
responsible 14:1
responsiveness 79:13
restate 18:21
restaurants 4:21 49:14
restoring 10:3
restricted 15:20
result 4:19,22 67:4
 78:17 81:14 85:1
resulting 79:19 81:2,8
 83:6
results 43:11 45:1 52:9
retail 1:4 5:11 34:9 35:3
 36:12 42:12 67:22
retails 63:21
return 82:4
revamping 60:10
revenue 4:18 5:1 28:7
 28:12 30:7 34:9,13
 36:16 39:20 45:2
 46:15 47:18 49:16
 52:2 83:6,9,10,21
 84:3 85:1 88:11
revenues 25:12 34:7,17
 36:19 39:14 49:12
 53:14 54:14
reverberated 14:4
Reverend 7:10
review 5:9 10:9 38:4
 41:4 43:12 44:4 79:12
reviewed 11:10 79:7
revision 43:13 47:1
revisit 83:14
rigorous 88:5
risk 5:7 14:13 23:15
 53:2
risks 45:12 52:15
river 8:12 9:3 18:18
 92:10 93:19
Rivers 9:5 17:21 18:2,9
 22:21 23:11,21 24:1,7

30:13,18,21 32:10,15
 33:1 35:7,10 39:2,6
 39:11
Robert 76:20
robust 51:6
roll 2:3 6:8
Rosenkoetter 76:20
Ross 7:6
rotted 58:22
rule 13:10
rulemaking 77:9
rules 10:10 77:11

S

S 3:1
S.W 11:13,15
safe 9:3 13:22 14:11
 17:15 78:8 94:13
safety 4:12 19:8 66:9
 82:9
SAGE 76:21 77:1
sale 59:12
sales 45:22 46:3,4
Sandra 76:19
savings 33:21 40:16
 53:10 85:7
saying 59:10 73:22
says 57:10
schedule 5:22
scheduled 12:4 25:20
scheduling 31:13
schools 25:8
screen 6:7
second 48:15 57:19
 70:9
Secondly 68:4
Secretary 1:22 2:3
 11:12
security 64:15 66:10
seeing 46:2 49:19
seen 50:12 63:19 64:6
 66:6 87:19
select 47:3
selected 74:1
selecting 74:21
sell 58:7,9 60:6 91:7,9
 91:11
sensitive 86:12
sent 59:5,7
separate 8:5
September 5:17 11:22
 42:16
series 3:15
serious 91:19
serve 31:1 92:19,20
served 27:9,10
service 4:13 9:22 10:3
 11:4 14:20 15:12,13
 21:9 29:5,6 30:12
 31:10,12,15 32:20
 33:8,9,14,16,21 35:15
 37:12,15,17,18,22
 38:16 39:19 40:15
 45:12 53:20 59:8 60:3
 73:10 77:18 79:10
 80:10,12 82:9 83:13
 84:15,16,17,18,20,21
 85:5,8,9 92:21
services 4:14 5:6 8:9
 10:20 17:6,15 19:4
 29:1,14 31:3 62:19
 69:22 78:2,6,9,13
 81:12,21 82:7 88:18
 92:16
set 36:17 84:6,21
sets 74:4,13
setting 4:8
setup 91:4
seven 46:22 55:14
severe 81:7
sewage 18:13 93:18
sewer 1:1 3:6 8:9 9:4
 17:14,20 18:3 23:14
 23:22 29:11 30:22
 32:6 34:21 35:6,11
 46:15 48:4 69:21,21
 70:4 78:2,4 82:8
 83:17
sewers 88:22,22
Shan 43:10 44:7 48:10
share 3:9 8:20 55:6
shared 6:1 8:16 67:13
shareholders 75:12
shave 88:20
shelter 81:11
shield 15:21
shift 18:1 23:20 32:9
 35:9 46:14
ship 67:19
short 45:14
short- 52:19
show 29:4
showing 34:12 70:6
shown 35:18 47:15
 48:17
shows 50:21
shut-offs 49:1
side 30:17
signed 65:5 86:1
significant 49:12 50:20
 52:12,12,19 53:4,12
 67:21
significantly 67:4
Silver 87:9
similar 54:22 74:15,22
 80:7

sincere 4:5 72:11
single 9:5 29:10 35:6
 90:11
single-family 47:2,22
 50:21
sir 60:15
Sistrunk 77:3
site 23:18
situation 50:12
six 19:6 46:11 70:2
size 26:18
slide 44:16 45:5,5,13,20
 46:11,22 47:10,20
 48:9,17 49:4 50:20,20
 51:2,2,21
slides 33:4 48:10,13
 50:16
slideshow 44:12
smaller 24:14
social 8:15 14:11 17:4
Soderberg 75:21 76:5,8
 76:11,15
Somebody 3:20
someone's 58:9
sorry 24:6 28:21 33:4
 56:12
sounds 70:3
source 30:8,9
sources 28:4 30:5
 33:21 36:17
space 14:14 63:1,9
speak 10:12,22 12:15
 12:18,19
speakers 2:9 23:12
speaks 4:6 13:4,5
special 3:20,22
spend 23:5 28:16 29:13
 30:15
spending 15:20 30:20
 53:11
spends 43:14
spent 13:18 60:13
SPLASH 27:19 54:1
spoke 90:13 93:1
sports 4:21
Spring 87:9
square 63:1,9
stabilization 16:21
 24:17 31:21 33:20
 34:2 40:17 50:7 53:1
 66:17
staff 1:19 3:7,14,19,22
 8:19 11:6 15:18 56:18
 86:22 88:4
stagger 14:13
stakeholders 8:17
 76:13 84:5
stand 23:4

standard 80:1
standards 38:17 66:9
standpoint 91:13
start 5:19
started 42:2
starting 49:17 65:6
state 10:15 12:22 81:3
stated 6:4
statement 2:2 90:7
states 40:6 49:9 52:17
 79:3
statutory 77:16,22
stay 13:11 67:4
staying 4:19 82:1
stays 32:18
steadfast 77:15
step 78:21
stepping 93:5
steps 9:7 10:1 16:19
 48:19,20,22 49:22
 50:5,13
stock 63:7
store 67:22
storm 93:16
storms 94:8
stormwater 48:5
strategy 36:16
stream 36:19
Street 69:14
striking 51:5
strong 45:10 53:15
stronger 94:10
strongly 3:11 86:21
structure 11:21 38:1,5
 52:13
structures 37:1
struggled 59:12
struggling 81:10
studies 37:18,22
study 31:10,12,15 33:8
 37:12,15,17 38:16
 68:3 72:13 79:10
 83:13 84:17,20
subject 53:5 54:12
 65:11 74:11
submitted 11:11
subsidies 45:17 47:19
substantial 29:2,22
 83:10
substantially 27:13
suburban 39:10
subway 74:10
sufficient 37:6 67:19
suggesting 72:7
summarize 43:11
summarizes 46:11,22
summary 77:12
summer 83:2

supplies 29:19
support 37:9 53:15
 60:12 67:19
supported 23:10
supporting 78:19
supports 28:3
suspect 70:20
suspended 25:2,3
suspending 48:22
swimming 9:3
system 5:3 14:9 17:10
 18:12 32:18 35:16,16
 52:3 74:10 92:6
systems 5:8 46:1

T

table 35:19 46:22 47:5
 93:6
taken 16:18 48:19
 68:11,11 86:19
takes 24:10
talk 23:2,10 28:2 44:9
 49:5 71:2
talked 16:9 30:18 34:11
 70:4 90:13 93:3
talking 72:2
tangible 85:14
tapping 50:6
targeted 4:4
targeting 53:9
tax 47:18
teamwork 19:8
technical 39:12 63:12
technique 58:10
telephone 77:18
telephonic 33:15 40:7
tell 55:12 88:15
tells 89:10
ten 10:13 40:22 48:9,17
 58:6 62:7,9 76:7
ten-year 39:13,14
tenants 63:17,22 64:12
 65:15 66:1
term 52:20 74:2
terms 48:14 50:9,10
 56:2 64:2 73:18 74:3
 75:16
terrible 14:3
tested 94:8
testify 12:17
testifying 10:15
testimony 2:4 10:11
 12:6 62:3 67:17 68:16
 69:2,12 77:7,12 85:17
thank 7:20,22 13:13
 19:15,17,18 20:4,10
 43:1 55:4,5 60:19,20
 62:11 68:15,18,21

69:1 76:5,8 77:5
 85:16,18 86:9 89:6,16
 89:18 93:10,13,14
 94:12,12,14
Thanks 62:4 69:4
things 19:10 26:6 29:15
 29:16 49:6 50:10
 52:11 54:16,17 71:1
 71:12,13 72:2,4 90:15
 94:4
third 53:3 57:19
Thompson 1:16 6:16
 6:17
thought 70:1 86:20
threaten 58:9
threatened 60:6
three 21:19 41:8 45:5
 80:2
three-year 46:14
threshold 38:13
tied 52:14
tier 80:8
tiers 35:3 80:7
times 14:18 93:21
timing 56:3
today 38:2 39:16 41:3
 91:18
told 18:22 58:14 59:8
Tommy 1:10,13 2:2,10
 2:11 3:4
tonight 5:9 12:16,19
 13:16 16:4,15 20:13
 21:6 23:11 24:5 25:20
 30:19 42:7 86:2
Tonight's 25:19
tons 18:14
Tony 6:4
tools 53:13
top 4:15 70:2
torn 58:20
total 10:13 34:17 63:11
 83:6,10
touched 14:7 24:20
town 3:15,18 4:4 16:8
 25:22 26:3,4 67:14
 71:22
track 45:1
tracker 64:5
traditional 8:15
transit 87:10
transparency 3:12
 16:12 26:6 37:3 78:18
 78:22
transparently 36:22
trash 18:14
travel 15:20
treat 28:14 29:18
treatment 8:8 31:2

tried 13:10 24:22
trouble 21:7,13
trucks 14:17
truly 66:14 68:10
trust 19:7
Trusts 85:11
try 21:14 59:4 88:6,15
trying 50:1 56:14
tunnel 18:11 93:20 94:6
turn 15:11,12 60:2 85:2
turning 91:2,2 93:7,8
twice 70:17
two 5:15 23:12 24:18
 33:11,21 34:4 35:9
 37:20 44:16 48:13
 53:16 66:18 67:16
 73:1 79:21
two-thirds 63:10
two-year 41:10
type 75:1

U

U.S 72:14,16
ultimate 81:5
unable 63:22
uncertainty 79:19 81:2
unchanged 45:8
uncollected 64:21
underfunded 88:17
underspending 52:21
understand 26:22 37:2
 57:1 66:14 91:17
understanding 42:4
understood 39:11
undertaken 87:17
undertakes 5:14
unduly 87:22
unemployed 81:9
unemployment 64:14
 65:2
unforeseen 52:8
unfortunately 49:21
 64:11
uninterrupted 4:13
 15:1 92:16
United 40:5 49:8 52:17
units 63:2,5
unknown 81:6
unnecessary 14:15
unparalleled 82:11
updated 36:20
Urban 22:15
usage 47:6,21 52:5,15
 54:14 66:21
use 31:19 32:14 34:22
 35:2 36:7 41:22 45:16
 53:11 54:1 57:22
 87:22 92:4,13

user 41:14 47:19 50:17
 57:7
users 29:20 73:9
uses 26:17 28:4,9 35:22
utilities 9:15 15:8 30:2
 38:15 43:18 44:5,6
 47:17,17 48:22 49:7,9
 50:14 51:7 52:4,18
 54:18,21 59:22 66:16
 73:21 75:6
utility 24:22 50:11 57:7
 59:19 63:12 66:10
 78:6,9 80:1 81:12,21

V

value 67:19
values 19:6
Van 69:14
variety 28:7
various 9:21 34:20
 37:11
Varnum 56:20
vehicles 14:14
venue 25:17
Vice 62:12
Videoconference 1:10
viewing 76:14
Virginia 63:3
virtual 3:8 16:5,9 25:21
 26:1 77:4
virtually 13:16,21 14:6
 72:1
virus 4:9
visit 22:22 27:22
visitors 8:10
vital 81:12
volumetric 23:22 35:11
Vondle 76:22
vote 5:18 11:21

W

waiving 49:1
walls 58:19
wanted 38:6,12 39:15
 91:13
ward 16:8 25:22
wards 3:16 78:12
warning 58:5 60:8
WASA 1:19
Washington 11:13,15
 22:15 29:18 56:20
 62:15 73:13 75:14
Washingtonian 56:22
waste 25:12
wastewater 4:14 5:5
 8:8 14:9 18:13 19:4
 28:14 29:18 31:1
 53:19

watch 19:9
Water's 10:9 43:13
 44:17 45:7 47:21
 51:22 53:21 78:18,22
 79:8,13 84:17
waterways 9:10,11
way 14:1 16:12 28:16
 39:5 86:17 87:14
 89:22 90:17 92:13
ways 9:21 15:5,17 19:1
wearing 14:12
website 6:1 22:5 23:1
 42:10 78:20 79:8

WEDNESDAY 1:7

week 4:2 18:22
weight 11:9
welcome 7:21 13:8 62:2
 76:2,4
welfare 82:10
well-being 19:8
Wells 1:10,13 2:2,10,11
 3:3,4 6:12,13 7:22
 13:6,12 16:8 19:19,20
 20:3,7,17,20,22 21:9
 43:1 44:13 55:4,19,22
 56:7,9,13,16,18 60:15
 60:18,21 61:3,5,9,11
 61:16,22 62:5 68:18
 69:8,10 71:7 73:11
 74:9,22 75:4,7 76:1,6
 76:9,10,12 85:18 86:3
 89:16 90:20 92:1,18
 93:13,14
went 93:15 94:17
West 61:10,11,12
wholesale 28:12 34:13
Winter 83:3
wish 12:17,19 50:9
withdraw 66:16
withdrawal 33:20 34:1
 40:18
withdrawing 16:20
 24:16 31:20
witness 56:5 61:1,14
 75:19 89:19 93:2
witnesses 2:8 10:18
 19:18 55:8,10,12,15
 56:4 86:1,9 89:12
 90:4
WMATA 74:10,14,22
women 14:8
wonderful 72:2 76:11
work 3:9 9:9 14:16,22
 19:12 21:14 23:19
 29:1,16 34:11 39:9
 84:5 89:1 90:17,18
 91:16,20
worked 78:11

workers 14:15,19 15:22
working 5:1 8:20 14:20
 16:12 18:8 26:5 93:11
workshop 37:10
world 13:20 14:5
world's 8:7
worst 58:10
write 64:20
written 11:9,11 77:13
 80:17
wrong 13:7
WSSC 34:14

X

Y

year 1:5,5 3:17,18 5:10
 5:11,19,20,21 12:12
 16:5 17:11 26:7,15
 27:10,11 28:5,5 29:10
 30:7,20 31:7,8,8,14
 31:22 32:7,7,11,12,13
 32:16,17 33:17,18,22
 34:2,5,6,18,19 35:12
 35:13 36:3,4,9 37:15
 38:3 40:8 41:5,13,16
 41:18 42:18,19,20
 44:3,19 45:8 47:10
 50:10,11 53:6 57:2
 59:14 65:7 68:14
 77:10 80:11,12 82:17
 83:12,22 84:18,19
year's 41:6,7
years 5:15 13:18 24:18
 29:9 30:12,14 31:7
 33:11 34:4 35:9 37:20
 40:6 41:1,2,8 53:6
 56:21 57:15 66:18
yellow 36:7
yield 36:18
York 44:6 46:2 49:10
 70:17,21

Z

zealously 78:7

0

1

1-1/2 40:9
1,500 59:1
1.2 85:10
1.4 85:9
1.46 48:6
1.6 80:13 84:16,22,22
 85:7
1.71 80:11 84:19
1.75 80:11 84:18

1.8 40:9
10 28:20
10-1/2 34:5
10th 11:20 25:20
11 49:4
11.6 33:6
110.71 46:21
118 41:17
118.11 46:21
11th 44:3 65:6
12 28:21 50:21
1200 28:22
13 2:4 16:21 24:16 34:3
 40:18 51:2
140,000 63:5
15.4 33:16
150 70:13
16 51:21
160 39:22
1666 56:20
17 72:14
18 32:11
18.40 32:16 35:13
180 41:17
185 62:22
19 40:8,15
19.52 32:16 35:12
1996 8:4 57:1
1st 28:6 60:4

2

2 53:22
2-1/2 34:5
2,000 22:11 27:16
20 2:5 16:7 37:15 82:17
20017 56:21
20032 11:14,15
2011 36:16
2014 44:17
2016 72:14
2017 69:17,20
2018 18:11 19:2 37:21
 57:15 77:21 79:3
2019 33:6 44:18
202- 12:21
202-354- 21:10
202-354-3600 11:6,6
202-787-2330 12:21
2020 1:8 5:20 34:2
 42:18 46:10 50:4 60:4
 64:22 65:9 66:6 69:17
 69:20 83:2
2021 1:5 5:10,19 45:3
 46:11,20 47:8 50:5
 51:13,22 52:22 66:12
 68:2 77:10 80:5,11
 82:16 83:3,19 84:18
2022 1:5 5:21 45:3

46:12,21 52:1,22
 77:10 80:2,4,12 82:14
 82:15,18,19,20,22
 83:1,18,22 84:3,7,10
 84:19
21 12:12 28:5,5 31:7,7
 31:22 32:7,12,16
 33:17 34:5,18 35:12
 40:10 42:18,20
22 5:11 12:12 31:7,8
 32:8,13,17 33:18 34:6
 34:19 40:10,11 41:16
 42:19
23 41:13
24 56:21
24.1 33:17
250 39:22
250,000 63:2
25th 42:13
28 30:1 32:12
29 41:18
29.1 30:19
29th 26:4 67:13

3

3 2:2 28:21 53:22
30 29:9 30:12,19 46:10
 65:20
31st 64:16
33 39:20
33.81 36:10
35 34:10
36.44 36:9
3600 21:11
37 32:13
3rd 42:16

4

4 18:13 35:4,5
4,000 3:14,15
4,054 35:22
414 60:7
43 2:7

5

5 1:8 34:1
5.42 35:22 36:8
5:00 11:20
50 22:2 24:8 33:2 46:19
 51:12 70:10,12
5000 11:13,14
55 2:9

6

6 2:3
6.6 16:16,22 31:22 36:2
6.7 36:3
6:30 1:10 3:2

60 58:4
600 64:13
63 72:15,17
64 69:20 70:2

7

7 17:18
7.8 32:7
700,000 17:5
733 34:17
75 24:8 33:2 46:19 47:9
 51:12
766 34:18
77 21:21
787-2330 12:22

8

8 18:12
8.1 16:17 31:18
8:10 94:17
80 63:8
800 57:22 59:3,12
86 2:9
89 2:10
895 57:16 58:13

9

9.9 32:6
90 18:15
94 2:11
9th 65:9

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In the matter of: Retail Rates Public Meeting

Before: DC WATER

Date: 08-05-20

Place: teleconference

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Court Reporter

NEAL R. GROSS

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