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Public Counsel

State of Missouri

Roger B. Wilson

Governor

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November 30, 2000

Mr. Dale H. Roberts  
Secretary/Chief Regulatory Law Judge  
Public Service Commission  
P. O. Box 360  
Jefferson City, MO 65102

**FILED<sup>3</sup>**

NOV 30 2000

Missouri Public  
Service Commission

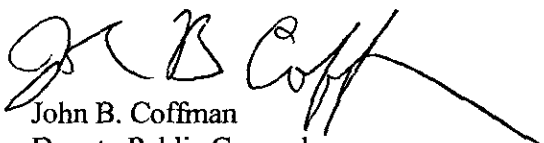
**RE: Osage Water Company**  
**Case No. SR-2000-556**

Dear Mr. Roberts:

Enclosed for filing in the above-referenced case please find the original and eight copies of **Request for Local Public Hearing**. Please "file" stamp the extra-enclosed copy and return it to this office.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

  
John B. Coffman  
Deputy Public Counsel

JBC:jb

cc: Counsel of Record

**BEFORE THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION  
OF THE STATE OF MISSOURI**

**FILED**  
NOV 30 2000  
Missouri Public  
Service Commission

In the Matter of Osage Water Company's )  
Request for a Rate Increase for Water )  
Service Pursuant to the Public Service )  
Commission's Small Company Rate Increase )  
Procedure. )

Case No. SR-2000-556  
Tariff No. 200000346

**REQUEST FOR LOCAL PUBLIC HEARING**

Comes Now the Office of the Public Counsel (Public Counsel) and pursuant to 4 CSR 240-2.200 (1) (F), states as follows:

1. On or about November 14, 2000, Osage Water Company (Company) filed a tariff, which was later received by Public Counsel on November 20, 2000, reflecting a sewer revenue increase of approximately 8.77%.

2. Public Counsel has been receiving numerous complaints from Company's customers for well over a year. The complaints raised by customers include numerous allegations of unsafe and inadequate service, poor customer service, and improper billing practices. A significant number of customers have requested that the Commission hold a local public hearing within Company's service area for the purposes of receiving evidence supporting these allegations as well as comments regarding the proposed rate increases.

3. Public Counsel is investigating the proposed revenue increase and may very well recommend that the Commission reject it as unjustified based upon Company's books and records and appropriate regulatory principles. Public Counsel further believes that it would not

be just nor reasonable for the Commission to approve any rate increase if Company is not currently providing safe and adequate service to its customers. Furthermore, Public Counsel is not likely to recommend any rate increase for this company if it is currently providing unauthorized utility service outside of its lawfully certificated area.

4. On March 10, 2000, Public Counsel requested that the Commission schedule a public hearing, earlier in Case No. WR-2000-557, for the purpose of receiving into the record testimony regarding customer service complaints. Public Counsel made this early request with the expectation that the issues raised by the public would be numerous and complex and would likely require a significant amount of time to resolve. On April 26, 2000, the Commission issued its Order Denying Motion to Schedule Early Public Hearing, stating as follows:

The small company rate procedures (4 CSR 240-2.200) provides a detailed series of events that occur in a specific order. It provides at 4 CSR 240-2.200 (1) (F) that a request for public haring may be filed after tariff sheets are filed by the company requesting an increase. Public Counsel's request for local public hearings during these preliminary states of the small company rate increase process is simply premature, and will be denied. Public Counsel may, of course, request public hearings pursuant to 4 CSR 240-2.200 (1) (F) at the time set forth in that rule. Ibid., p. 2.

Correspondence from customers received subsequent to the second customer notice being issued in this case suggests to Public Counsel that many of the customer service complaints raised in Public Counsel's March 10, 2000, Motion have not yet been resolved.

5. Public Counsel requests that the Commission schedule at least one local public hearing to be held concurrently for Company's water and sewer rate requests, Cases No. WR-2000-557, SR-2000-556 respectively.

6. In order to ensure that the public has adequate notice of the requested local public hearings, Public Counsel suggests that the Commission order the following:

a. Notice of the time, date and location of the local hearing, along with information regarding the amount of the proposed rate increase and the approximate percentage of the proposed increase, should be given to each affected customer, either by an imprint on the customer's monthly billing or a bill insert, or a separate mailing not more than 45 days or less than ten days prior to the date of the public hearing. Additionally, Public Counsel requests that the Commission order the following information be included somewhere within the individual customer notices:

**Office of the Public Counsel**  
**P O Box 7800**  
**Jefferson City, MO 65102**  
**Phone: 573/751-4857**  
**Fax: 573/751-5562**  
**e-mail: mopco@mail.state.mo.us**

**Public Service Commission**  
**Attn: Water & Sewer Department**  
**P O Box 360**  
**Jefferson City, MO 65102**  
**Phone: 573/751-3437 or**  
**800/392-4211**  
**Fax: 573/751-1847**

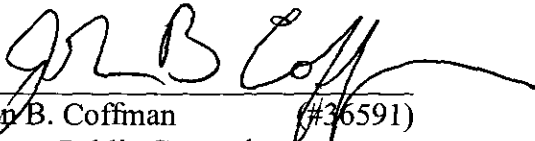
b. The newspapers in the relevant service areas, as listed in the current *Official Manual of the State of Missouri*, should be notified of the proposed increase as well as the date, time and location of the public hearing, not less than ten days before the date scheduled for the hearing, and should be requested to publish such notice seven and three days before the hearing in each newspaper's area;

c. Similar notice should be given to any radio and television stations in each area, not less than three days before the public hearing.

WHEREFORE, Public Counsel respectfully requests that the Commission issue its order scheduling at least one local public hearing within Company's service territory, requiring adequate notice to the public as requested herein and for such other orders as the Commission deems necessary.

Respectfully submitted,

OFFICE OF THE Public Counsel

By:   
John B. Coffman (#36591)

Deputy Public Counsel

P. O. Box 7800

Jefferson City, MO 65102

(573) 751-5560

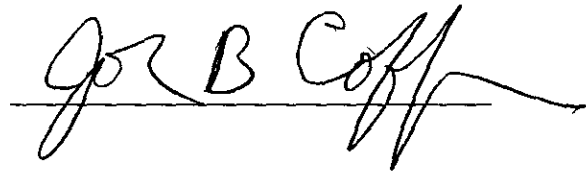
(573) 751-5562 FAX

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I hereby certify that copies of the foregoing have been mailed or hand-delivered to the following this 30<sup>th</sup> day of November 2000:

General Counsel  
Public Service Commission  
P O Box 360  
Jefferson City, MO 65102-0360

Gregory D. Williams  
Osage Water Company  
P O Box 777  
Camdenton, MO 65020

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gregory D. Williams", is written over a horizontal line.