



For Immediate Release

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Citizens Water of Westfield Rates: Public Comments Invited

IURC Hearing June 17 in Westfield

The Indiana Office of Utility Consumer Counselor (OUCC) is inviting public comments on Citizens Water of Westfield's pending rate request through June 19, 2024.

In addition, the Indiana Utility Regulatory Commission (IURC) will hold a public field hearing in Westfield on June 17, 2024.

The OUCC – the state agency representing consumer interests in cases before the IURC – is using its technical and legal resources to review the utility's proposal. Formal testimony from the OUCC is due June 21, 2024.

Written Consumer Comments

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

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

The OUCC needs to receive all written consumer comments **no later than Wednesday, June 19, 2024**, so that it can: 1) Consider comments in preparing its testimony and 2) File them with the Commission to be included in the case's formal evidentiary record. Comments should include the consumer's name and a reference to either "**IURC Cause No. 46020**" or "**Citizens Water of Westfield rates**". Consumers with questions about submitting written comments can contact the OUCC's consumer services staff toll-free at 1-888-441-2494.

Public Field Hearing

In addition, the IURC has scheduled a public field hearing in this case for Monday, June 17, 2024, at the Westfield City Services Center in the Main Level Media Room (2728 E. 171st St.).

The hearing will begin at **6:00 p.m.** Consumers are encouraged to arrive by 5:45 p.m. for an overview of field hearing procedures and the rate case process. Attendees are required to comply with all local health and safety regulations. No final decisions about the case will be made at the hearing.

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The sole purpose of a field hearing is to receive public testimony. A final decision is expected later this year.

- Consumers can speak directly to the Commission under oath and on the record.
- Oral comments presented during the field hearing will become part of the case record. They will carry the same weight as written consumer comments submitted to the OUCC by June 19, 2024.
- Utilities do not make presentations or answer questions during field hearings. The focus, again, is on public input. In this case, the utility filed testimony and exhibits in March.
- Commissioners are not allowed to answer questions about the case. They will ultimately render a decision after weighing evidence from the utility, the OUCC, and intervening parties. OUCC staff will be available to answer questions at the hearing.

Case Overview

Citizens Water of Westfield is seeking a two-step, \$3.8 million increase in its annual operating revenues.

According to its filings, the utility's request would raise the monthly water rate for a residential customer using 4,000 gallons from \$29.14 to \$36.42. In its testimony, the utility states it is seeking the increase due to higher operating and maintenance costs, along with infrastructure improvements.

Citizens Water of Westfield provides service to more than 21,000 customers in and around the city of Westfield. Citizens Energy Group operates the utility as an investor-owned entity; its purchase of Westfield's water utility from the city received IURC approval in 2013.

A settlement agreement is possible in any legal proceeding. If an agreement is reached, the settling parties are required to present evidence showing it to be in the public interest. The IURC may approve, deny, or modify any settlement it considers.

This case's scope is limited to water rates and charges in Westfield. Sewer and natural gas rates are not at issue. Rates and charges for Citizens Energy Group's Marion County utilities are also not at issue in this case.

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

(IURC Cause No. 46020)

The Indiana Office of Utility Consumer Counselor (OUCC) represents Indiana consumer interests before state and federal bodies that regulate utilities. As a state agency, the OUCC's mission is to represent all Indiana consumers to ensure quality, reliable utility services at the most reasonable prices possible through dedicated advocacy, consumer education, and creative problem solving.