

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND AND PROVIDENCE PLANTATIONS
PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

IN RE: THE CITY OF NEWPORT, UTILITIES :
DIVISION, WATER DEPARTMENT : DOCKET NO. 4533

ORDER

On October 31, 2014, the City of Newport, Utilities Division, Water Department (Newport Water) filed with the Public Utilities Commission (PUC) a Tariff Advice titled, Notice of Changes in Terms and Conditions, specifically related to Newport Water's shutoff procedures. According to Newport Water, the result of its proposed change would be to reduce the time between billing and termination of service by 15 days, from 90 days to 75 days. The reduction would be achieved by including a reminder notice on the next month's bill sent after non-payment rather than a separate reminder notice, called a "shutoff statement." The customer would continue to be sent a 15-day shutoff notice, but it would be sent after 60 days of non-payment from the billing date rather than after 75 days. Newport Water indicated that its proposal was related to the change from quarterly to monthly billing.¹ A notice was published in the Newport Daily News on November 15, 2014 and stating that the an effective date of the change would be December 15, 2014.

On November 17, 2014, the Division of Public Utilities and Carriers (Division) filed a memorandum authored by Alberico Mancini, summarizing the proposed change and noted that he had discussed the proposed change with Newport Water's Director, Julia Fogue, particularly with regard to the payment reminder message that would appear on bills. Mr. Mancini stated that after receiving a second bill, a customer would still have 30 days to pay or make payment arrangements with Newport Water before a shutoff notice is issued. He stated that the Division

¹ Newport Water Tariff Advice. http://www.ripuc.org/eventsactions/docket/4533-NWD-TariffAdvice_10-31-14.pdf.

found that Newport Water's proposed changes comply with both the Division's Rules and Regulations Prescribing Standards for Water Utilities and the PUC's Rules and Regulations Governing the Termination of Residential Electric, Gas and Water Utility Service.²

At an Open Meeting held on November 24, 2014, the PUC reviewed Newport Water's filing and the Division's memorandum. The PUC was concerned that implementing the change to the shutoff procedures so close to the transition to monthly billing could cause customer confusion. Accordingly, the PUC voted to delay Newport Water's proposed change to its Terms and Conditions until July 1, 2015. Newport Water is not required to make any further filings with the PUC to comply with this order.

Accordingly, it is hereby

(21778) ORDERED:

The City of Newport, Utilities Division, Water Department's proposed changes to its Terms and Conditions is hereby approved for effect July 1, 2015.

EFFECTIVE AT WARWICK, RHODE ISLAND ON JULY 1, 2015 PURSUANT TO AN OPEN MEETING DECISION ON NOVEMBER 24, 2014. WRITTEN ORDER ISSUED DECEMBER 16, 2014.

PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION



Margaret E. Curran, Chairperson

Paul J. Roberti, Commissioner

Herbert F. DeSimone, Jr., Commissioner

² Division's Memorandum. [http://www.ripuc.org/eventsactions/docket/4533-DPU-Memo\(11-17-14\).pdf](http://www.ripuc.org/eventsactions/docket/4533-DPU-Memo(11-17-14).pdf).

Notice of Right of Appeal: Pursuant to R.I. Gen. Laws § 39-5-1, any person aggrieved by a decision or order of the PUC may, within 7 days from the date of the Order, petition the Supreme Court for a Writ of Certiorari to review the legality and reasonableness of the decision or Order.