

# UPDATE ON OHIO AMERICAN WATER COMPANY RATE INCREASE REQUEST

The last 30 days have been busy with the application for Ohio American Water Company's (OAWC) rate increase. The Ohio Consumers' Counsel (OCC) was in attendance at the Huber Ridge Area Association's (HRAA) monthly meeting on May 1 to discuss the increase process and answer questions. Approximately 60 residents were present, and several representatives from the OCC were busy answering questions for approximately 2 hours.

Since the application for a rate increase on October 12, 2007, 102 residents from Huber Ridge (Blendon Township), Prairie Township, Ashtabula County, and Marion have sent in letters of opposition. We have also accumulated about 300 signatures on petitions opposing this increase from the Ridge. (As a reminder, there are 1,623 households just in Huber Ridge.)

On May 28, 2008, the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio (PUCO) filed its staff report on the OAWC case. This is a 214-page report and can be viewed online by using [huberridge.org](http://huberridge.org) in the Community Links section (click on PUCO). When the link opens, in the upper left corner type in 07-1112-WS-AIR in the case number box. From there, you can scroll down all the entries and view any entry just by clicking on the entry.

**This PUCO staff report is not as favorable as I thought it could be for us.** The PUCO is recommending increases in areas the OAWC is not asking for—like activation and reconnection fees. The increase the PUCO is recommending is fairly high, but please note that this is a PUCO recommendation. The OCC, OAWC, and any intervening attorney can challenge any part of the staff report. Also, there will be 5 public hearings for the residents to oppose this increase. We are trying to have a hearing here in Blendon Township. Please watch our website and kiosks for a date, time, and location. **We need a huge turnout to be effective.**

There is still time for letters and petitions. **If you can circulate a petition, give me a call at 882-8959.** Again, there are 1,623 households in Huber Ridge. We can make and have made a difference.

Again, there will be some arguments for and against the staff report and 5 public hearings. From there, the parties to the increase will meet to come to some kind of agreement, or the PUCO will decide on the increase. I expect this to be finalized in late September to November of this year (2008).

Your letters can be mailed to both of these addresses:

PUCO  
Attention: Docketing Division  
180 East Broad Street  
Columbus, OH 43215

Honorable Ted Strickland  
Governor's Office  
Riffe Center, 30th Floor  
77 South High Street  
Columbus, OH 43215

**Please include our case number, 07-1112-WS-AIR, on your letters.**

We cannot petition or write to make any difference in the gasoline prices, grocery prices, etc.; but we can make a little difference in our water bill increase. **When most residents and businesses buckle down to cope with the inflation, OAWC keeps going to the bottomless money pit—you! It's time OAWC makes cuts to bonuses, expenses, etc. Enough is enough!**

—Jim Welch, HRAA President