



For Immediate Release: 11/14/19

John B. Rhodes, Chair

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19099 / 19-W-0498

PSC Approves Sharing of Water Consumption Data with 10 Westchester County Municipalities

Access to Water Consumption Data Will Allow Municipalities to More Accurately Bill for Wastewater Usage

Billing Based on Consumption Will Lead to Improved Water Conservation

ALBANY — The New York State Public Service Commission (Commission) today approved the water usage data sharing agreements between Suez Water Westchester and 10 municipalities in Westchester County in order to enable the municipalities to more accurately calculate sewer rates, while protecting the security of each customer's data.

“Legislation, which Governor Cuomo signed into law last year, called on the Commission to oversee the sharing of private water company data with certain municipalities if so requested,” **said Commission Chair John B. Rhodes**. “Today’s Commission action will allow the ten Westchester County municipalities to properly plan for and finance vital sewage treatment facility upgrades, while protecting the customer’s data.”

In Westchester County, Suez provides drinking water service to the Village of Port Chester, the Village of Ardsley, the Village of Bronxville, the Village of Dobbs Ferry, the Village of Hastings-on-Hudson, the City of New Rochelle, the Village of Pelham Manor, the Village of Tuckahoe, the City of Rye, and the Village of Rye Brook, while the municipalities maintain sanitary sewer systems within Suez’s service territory. In areas of the State without private water companies, municipalities often provide both drinking water and sewer service, thus allowing them to bill based upon usage. Historically, the municipalities recovered the cost of sewer services through property taxes. These municipalities determined that using water consumption volume as a basis for a separate sewer charge was a more accurate way to bill consumers while encouraging water conservation and potentially reducing resident’s taxes. The data will also allow the municipalities to plan and raise capital for essential sewage treatment project upgrades, while providing for adequate privacy protections for Suez’s customers.

The agreements approved today provide for the sharing and protection of Suez’s customer water usage data, as permitted by Chapter 261 of the laws of 2018. The recently enacted statute states that water usage data shall only be used for calculating and billing for municipal services for which water usage is a relevant factor; in this case, the calculation of sewer bills. The law also requires that the Commission review and approve any proposed written agreement to share customer water usage data between a municipality and water works corporation and make any modifications to the agreement as would be in the public interest. The agreements would allow the municipalities to

calculate and volumetrically bill sewer rates based on the water usage data to be provided by Suez and billed through a third-party vendor selected by each municipality.

Today's decision may be obtained by going to the Commission Documents section of the Commission's Web site at www.dps.ny.gov and entering Case Number 19-W-0498 in the input box labeled "Search for Case/Matter Number". Many libraries offer free Internet access.

Commission documents may also be obtained from the Commission's Files Office, 14th floor, Three Empire State Plaza, Albany, NY 12223 (518-474-2500). If you have difficulty understanding English, please call us at 1-800-342-3377 for free language assistance services regarding this press release.