



**For Immediate Release**

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## **Bloomington Water Rate Case: OUCC Invites Consumer Comments**

If you are a Bloomington municipal water customer and want to comment on the utility's pending rate request, you have the chance to do so.

The Indiana Office of Utility Consumer Counselor (OUCC), the state agency representing consumer interests in cases before the Indiana Utility Regulatory Commission (IURC), is reviewing the utility's request and is scheduled to file testimony on July 23, 2021.

### **Written consumer comments**

While using its legal and technical resources to review Bloomington's request, including examining the water utility's books and operations, the OUCC is inviting written comments from customers through July 16, 2021.

Consumers who wish to submit comments for the case record are encouraged to do so in writing. Comments are welcome via the OUCC's website at [www.in.gov/oucc/2361.htm](http://www.in.gov/oucc/2361.htm), by email at [uccinfo@oucc.IN.gov](mailto:uccinfo@oucc.IN.gov), or by mail at:

Consumer Services Staff  
Indiana Office of Utility Consumer Counselor  
115 W. Washington St., Suite 1500 South  
Indianapolis, IN 46204

The OUCC needs to receive all written consumer comments no later than July 16, 2021 so that it can: 1) Consider them 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**, **mailing address**, and a reference to either "**IURC Cause No. 45533**" or Bloomington Municipal Water. 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**

The IURC is currently scheduled to hold a public field hearing on Tuesday, July 6, 2021 in the City of Bloomington's Common Council Chambers (401 N. Morton St.). The hearing is scheduled to begin at 6:00 p.m. and is statutorily required in this case. Its sole purpose will be to receive public testimony.

- Consumers can speak directly to the Commission under oath and on the record.
- Oral comments during the hearing will become part of the case record. They will carry the same weight as written consumer comments submitted to the OUCC by July 16.
- Utilities do not make presentations or answer questions during field hearings. The focus, again, is on public input. In this case, Bloomington filed testimony and exhibits in April 2021.
- 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 any intervening parties.
- No final decisions will be made at the July 6 hearing.

A brief instructional video on consumer comments is available at [www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZyflMy7ZncQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZyflMy7ZncQ).

**(Continued)**

## Case overview

Bloomington's water utility is proposing a \$3.7 million rate increase to be implemented in two phases. It is also seeking IURC authority to issue up to \$17.2 million in long-term debt.

According to the city's testimony, the rate and financing request would cover increases in operating and maintenance costs, along with a five-year capital improvement plan to address aging infrastructure throughout its water distribution system. Specific projects include improvements to the Monroe Water Treatment Plant, main replacements, hydrant maintenance, booster station rehabilitations, storage tank improvements, and an inventory of lead service lines. Additional improvements include new meters and solar equipment to produce electricity for the utility's infrastructure.

Bloomington's current water rates received IURC approval in 2017. The city's proposal would raise monthly residential water charges for 5,000 gallons (including fire protection charges) as follows:

	Current Rates	Proposed Rates	
		When Order is Issued	Jan. 1, 2024
In City	\$26.50	\$29.07	\$31.45
Out of City	\$27.82	\$30.30	\$32.68

Only the city's *water* rates are at issue in this case. The IURC does not have jurisdiction over municipal *sewer* utility rates, which are set by locally elected city and town councils throughout the state.

Additional parties that have formally intervened in this case include Indiana University and the Washington Township Water Authority. Any testimony those parties may file is due on July 23, 2021.

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.

A final Commission order is currently expected in February 2022.

The OUCC is posting case updates online at [www.in.gov/oucc/watersewer/key-cases-by-utility/bloomington-municipal-water-rates](http://www.in.gov/oucc/watersewer/key-cases-by-utility/bloomington-municipal-water-rates). Case updates are also available through the agency's monthly electronic newsletter. Consumers can subscribe at [www.in.gov/oucc/news](http://www.in.gov/oucc/news).

(IURC Cause No. 45533)

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.