

PENNSYLVANIA PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17120

**Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission
et al vs Pittsburgh Water and Sewer
Authority – Water and Wastewater**

**Public Meeting held December 3, 2020
3017951-ALJ
Docket Nos. R-2020-3017951 et al**

STATEMENT OF CHAIRMAN GLADYS BROWN DUTRIEUILLE

Before the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission (Commission) is the Recommended Decision (RD) of Administrative Law Judges Mary D. Long and Emily I. DeVoe (collectively the ALJs) pertaining to the rate case filed by Pittsburgh Water and Sewer Authority (PWSA or the Authority).

This proceeding marks another important milestone in the Commission's effort to effectuate Act 64 of 2017. I note the efforts made by our dedicated Commission Staff, the Authority, the Office of Consumer Advocate, the Office of Small Business Advocate, and all other active Parties in this proceeding for their continued diligence in navigating the challenges associated with incorporating PWSA under our regulatory scheme.

The RD in front of the Commission today approves the Joint Petition for Settlement (Settlement) in its entirety. I would like to take the time to highlight some key items in the Settlement.

While this Commission has established minimum uniform criteria to protect customers during these turbulent times, I continue to support additional measures carefully crafted by individual utilities to help maintain affordable access to life-sustaining utility service. Therefore, I am pleased that the Settlement includes provisions to assist low-income customers and those challenged by the COVID-19 Pandemic. These provisions include, but are not limited to the following:

- Waiving reconnection fees for one year,
- Targeted outreach to customers with existing arrearages to inform said customers about assistance programs,
- Expanded access to hardship grants,
- A hardship grant fundraising campaign,
- Implementation of a Pilot Arrearage Forgiveness Program, and
- Expanded access and benefits provided under the Authority's Bill Discount Program.

Further, the Settlement proposes to modify the Commission's prescribed plan for moving PWSA into further compliance with Act 64, the Public Utility Code, and the Commission's Regulations. Here, the Settlement moves the vehicle for establishment of the Authority's stormwater tariff from the second compliance stage to its next combined water and wastewater tariff filing. PWSA contends that consolidating the proceedings in this manner will give the Commission and interested parties the ability to address stormwater issues, the tariff, and proposed rates comprehensively with water and wastewater rates.

I note that Commission Staff retains the ability to issue directed questions to the Authority before it files its next combined water, wastewater, and stormwater tariff. Further, the Commission may also exercise its prerogative to issue stormwater related inquiries upon action to suspend any future combined tariff filing.

Thank you.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gladys Brown Dutrieuille". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "G".

December 3, 2020
Date

Gladys Brown Dutrieuille, Chairman