



For Immediate Release

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Elkhart Municipal Water Rate Case: Public Comments Invited

IURC Hearing Oct. 1 in Elkhart

The Indiana Office of Utility Consumer Counselor (OUCC) is inviting public comments on the City of Elkhart's pending water rate request through Oct. 3, 2024.

In addition, the Indiana Utility Regulatory Commission (IURC) will hold a public field hearing in Elkhart on Tuesday, Oct. 1, 2024.

The OUCC – the state agency representing consumer interests in cases before the IURC – is using its technical and legal resources to review the utility's proposal. Formal testimony from the OUCC is due Oct. 7, 2024.

Written Consumer Comments

Consumers who wish to submit written comments for the case record may do so via the form on the OUCC's website at www.in.gov/oucc/2361.htm, or by mail at:

Public Comments
Indiana Office of Utility Consumer Counselor (OUCC)
115 W. Washington St., Suite 1500 SOUTH
Indianapolis, IN 46204

Consumer comments will be included in the formal case record for Commission review. Comments **should not** contain sensitive or personal information as comments will become viewable and searchable online once posted to the IURC's online case file. Consumers with questions about commenting can contact the OUCC's consumer services staff at 1-888-441-2494.

The OUCC needs to receive all written consumer comments **no later than Thursday, Oct. 3, 2024**, so that it can: 1) Consider comments 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, city, zip code, and a reference to either "**IURC Cause No. 46010**" or "**Elkhart 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 has scheduled a public field hearing in this case for Tuesday, Oct. 1, 2024, in the Council Chambers at Elkhart City Hall (229 South 2nd Street).

The hearing will begin at **6:00 p.m.** Consumers are encouraged to arrive by 5:45 p.m. for an overview of field hearing procedures and the rate case process. No final decisions about the case will be made at the hearing.

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The sole purpose of a field hearing is to receive public testimony. A final decision is expected later this year.

- Consumers can speak directly to the Commission under oath and on the record.
- Oral comments presented during the field hearing will become part of the case record. They will carry the same weight as written consumer comments submitted to the OUCC by Oct. 3, 2024.
- Utilities do not make presentations or answer questions during field hearings. The focus, again, is on public input. In this case, the utility filed testimony and exhibits earlier this year.
- 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 intervening parties. OUCC staff will be available to answer questions at the hearing.

Case Overview

Elkhart's current water rates were approved in 2007. According to its testimony, the utility is seeking the increase due to higher operating and maintenance costs and to continue ongoing infrastructure repairs and replacements, including repairs and replacements of water mains and the replacement of lead service lines. The utility also includes the forecasted costs to begin remediation of PFAS contamination per recently established EPA regulations.

The utility is proposing a three-phase increase. Under the city's pending proposal, monthly water charges for a residential customer using 4,000 gallons would rise as follows:

Current	Phase 1 (Jan. 2025)	Phase 2 (Jan. 2026)	Phase 3 (Jan. 2027)
\$12.81	\$17.18	\$17.87	\$18.40

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

A settlement agreement is possible in any legal proceeding; such an agreement, if reached, would require IURC approval.

The OUCC is posting case updates online at <https://www.in.gov/oucc/watersewer/key-cases-by-utility/elkhart-municipal-water/>. Case updates are also available through the agency's monthly electronic newsletter. Consumers can subscribe at www.in.gov/oucc/news/.

(IURC Cause No. 46010)

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.