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Dear WSSC Customer,

July 1, 2016

Yes water rates are going up. Effective July 1, 2016, customers will see a quarterly \$6 increase in the Infrastructure Investment Fee and a 3% increase in the cost of the water you use. That amounts to approximately \$3.28 per month for the typical user, or \$9.84 per quarter. As the new GM/CEO of WSSC, I want to share with you why these increases are needed.

The short answer is, **aging infrastructure**. WSSC maintains over 11,000 miles of water and sewer mains. Approximately 37% of our system averages 50 years old, and needs to be repaired or replaced. Each year we replace approximately 60 miles of water lines, which is about the distance of a ride around the beltway. And we are under court order to repair the sewer system which will cost over \$1 billion over time. Last year, our capital improvement projects totaled \$4.2 billion. To provide the highest quality of service, WSSC needs steady funding to maintain and rebuild our aging infrastructure so that we can continue to provide you with high quality, clean water as well as waste water services to protect public health and the environment.

A **stable source of financial support** is necessary to continue this work. The Infrastructure Investment Fee provides some of that stability. But, to be frank, fees collected by WSSC finance a much smaller percentage of these costs compared to other similar-sized utilities around the country.

WSSC has taken many steps to reduce costs and save money over the last several years. But even with these efforts, there is one major contributing factor causing our rising rates: your **conservation efforts have been working!** WSSC is making about the same amount or less water than we produced 20 years ago, even with a large growth in the number of customers we serve. That's great! Except that **less water usage means less revenue** to support and maintain the system. It's a Catch 22. We have launched a study to closely examine our 40-year-old conservation-based rate structure to determine if it is the best model for our services.

We know rate increases can be a burden for many. We are now in our second year of the Customer Assistance Program, where we waive fees for eligible customers. We have helped more than 6,000 customers so far. More information is available on our website.

There is another area where WSSC will be focusing more intently: customer service. We know this is a key area that needs improvement. I believe in the platinum rule. Treating you the way you want to be treated is our goal. Across every level of interaction with the organization, I want you to be treated in the best possible way: with courtesy, accuracy and resolution. Improving our relationships with our customers and instilling a culture of service in our workforce is a top priority.

In our 98 year history, WSSC has never had a drinking water quality violation. We remain committed to our core mission of providing our customers with the safest drinking water, along with best-in-class customer service. It is my pledge to you.

Sincerely,

Carla A. Reid  
General Manager/CEO

Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission

