



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC UTILITIES

NOTICE OF FILING AND PUBLIC HEARING

D.P.U. 23-65

August 11, 2023

Petition of Housatonic Water Works Company, pursuant to G.L. c. 164, § 94, G.L. c. 165, § 2, and 220 CMR 5.00 for Approval of a General Increase in Rates.

On June 23, 2023, Housatonic Water Works Company (“Company”) filed a petition with the Department of Public Utilities (“Department”) for approval of a general increase in rates. The Department has docketed this matter as D.P.U. 23-65 and has suspended the effective date of the proposed increase until June 1, 2024, to investigate the Company’s request. The Company last received a general increase in rates in June 2019. Housatonic Water Works Company, D.P.U. 15-179, Stamp-Approved Compliance Filing (May 29, 2019).

The Company seeks to increase its rates to generate \$808,808 in additional revenues. This proposal represents an increase of approximately 113 percent over the Company’s current rates. The Company also proposes to change its rules and regulations on private water mains, including that customers on private water mains must pay for the construction, installation, repair, operation, and maintenance of their private water mains and grant the Company access to and operation of private water mains, as necessary. Further, the Company proposes to change its rules and regulations on terms of payment, including that customers must grant the Company access to property to read, replace, or repair meters; customers must pay all costs of collection; and the Company may place a lien against property for amounts owed.

Under the Company’s current rates, all metered customers pay a monthly fixed charge that includes a water allowance (e.g., first 2,500 gallons of water used each month for a customer with a 5/8-inch meter is included in the fixed charge) and a volumetric rate for all water used over the allowance (e.g., \$1.057 per 100 gallons over the monthly allowance for a customer with a 5/8-inch meter). The fixed charge and water allowance each vary with the size of the customer’s meter. Non-metered customers pay a monthly charge for each plumbing fixture.

The Company proposes to increase both the fixed and volumetric charges for all metered customers and increase the plumbing fixture charges for all non-metered customers. For example, the Company proposes to increase the monthly fixed charge for customers with a 5/8-inch or 3/4-inch meter from \$44.73 to \$98.38. Additionally, the Company proposes to increase the volumetric charge for all metered customers from \$1.057 per 100 gallons over the monthly allowance to \$2.324 per 100 gallons over the monthly allowance.

The bill impacts of the proposed rate increases will vary for individual customers based on meter size and usage or, for non-metered customers, the number of plumbing fixtures a customer owns. The Company states that the annual cost of water service for the average residential customer would increase from \$746.40 to \$1,641.48, or about 120 percent. Individual customers may contact the Company as shown below for specific bill impact information.

The Attorney General of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts (“Attorney General”) filed a notice to intervene in this matter pursuant to G.L. c. 12, § 11E.

The Department will conduct a public hearing to receive comments on the Company’s petition. The hearing will take place on: **September 26, 2023 at 7:00 p.m.** at Monument Mountain Regional High School, Auditorium, 600 Stockbridge Road, Great Barrington, Massachusetts. Any person interested in commenting on this matter may appear at the public hearing or file written comments with the Department not later than the close of business (5:00 p.m.) on **September 27, 2023**.

Written comments from the public may be sent by email to dpu.efiling@mass.gov, kevin.crane@mass.gov, and the Company’s attorney, William Martin, Esq. at WEM@martinlawofficespc.com. In the interest of transparency, any comments will be posted to our website as received and without redacting personal information, such as addresses, telephone numbers, or email addresses. As such, consider the extent of information you wish to share when submitting comments.

The Department strongly encourages public comments to be submitted by email. If, however, a member of the public is unable to send written comments by email, a paper copy may be sent to Mark D. Marini, Secretary, Department of Public Utilities, One South Station, Boston, Massachusetts, 02110.

Any person who desires to participate otherwise in the evidentiary phase of this proceeding shall file a petition for leave to intervene no later than 5:00 p.m. on **September 12, 2023**. A petition for leave to intervene must satisfy the timing and substantive requirements of 220 CMR 1.03. Receipt by the Department constitutes filing and determines whether a petition has been timely filed. A petition filed late may be disallowed as untimely, unless good cause is shown for waiver under 220 CMR 1.01(4). To be allowed, a petition under 220 CMR 1.03(1) must satisfy the standing requirements of G.L. c. 30A, § 10. All responses to petitions to intervene must be filed by the close of business (5:00 p.m.) on the second business day after the petition to intervene was filed.

All documents should be submitted to the Department in **.pdf format** by e-mail attachment to dpu.efiling@mass.gov and kevin.crane@mass.gov. The text of the e-mail must specify: (1) the docket number of the proceeding (D.P.U. 23-65); (2) the name of the person or company submitting the filing; and (3) a brief descriptive title of the document. All documents submitted in electronic format will be posted on the Department’s website through our online File Room as soon as practicable (enter “23-65”) at: <https://eeaonline.eea.state.ma.us/DPU/Fileroom/dockets/bynumber>. In addition, one copy of all

written comments and petitions to intervene should be emailed to the Company's attorney William Martin, Esq. at WEM@martinlawofficespc.com.

The filing and all subsequent related documents submitted to or issued by the Department will be available on the Department's website as referenced above as soon as is practicable. To the extent a person or entity wishes to submit comments or intervene in accordance with this Notice, electronic submission, as detailed above, is sufficient. To request materials in accessible formats for people with disabilities (Braille, large print, electronic files, audio format), contact the Department's ADA coordinator at Gabriella.Knight@mass.gov.

For further information regarding the Company's filing, please contact the Company's attorney, William Martin, Esq. at WEM@martinlawofficespc.com. For further information regarding this Notice, please contact Kevin T. Crane, Hearing Officer, Department of Public Utilities, at kevin.crane@mass.gov.