
BRYCE FREEMAN
ADMINISTRATOR
DENISE PARRISH
DEPUTY ADMINISTRATOR



DAVE
FREUDENTHAL
GOVERNOR

Office of Consumer Advocate

2515 Warren Ave., Suite 304

Cheyenne, Wyoming 82002

Telephone 307-777-7427

FAX 307-777-5748

**FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT: Bryce Freeman @ (307) 777-5742
Marcy Norby @ (307) 777-5720**

Vista West Water Company Rates Reduced

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – December 10, 2003

CHEYENNE – The Office of Consumer Advocate (OCA) announced today that a recent Public Service Commission decision will reduce Vista West Water Company customers' monthly water bills by approximately 14%.

In June, Vista West applied to the Wyoming Public Service Commission for authority to implement new rates that would have increased an average customer's monthly bill by 12%. The requested rate increase included a 17% increase in non-commodity volumetric charges, an 11% commodity cost increase related to the City of Casper's most recent wholesale water rate increase, and a 10% increase in fixed monthly charges.

The Office of Consumer Advocate intervened in the case after reviewing Vista West's application, and disputed many of the company's expenses as well as its method of calculating rates. State Representative Ann Robinson also intervened and opposed the rate increase. A public contested case hearing was held in Casper during early October, 2003. (Oct. 6-7)

After deliberations on December 8th in Cheyenne, the Wyoming Public Service Commission accepted most of the adjustments to Vista West's projected revenues and expenses proposed by the Office of Consumer Advocate and Representative Robinson. The adjustments reduce Vista West's total allowed annual revenues by approximately 11% from the existing level. A formal Commission order establishing the reduced rates is expected before the end of the year.

Marcy Norby, Senior OCA Rate Analyst, and the OCA's expert witness at the hearing, attended the Commission's deliberations and stated afterward: "We are pleased with the Commission's decision, and that the OCA was able to provide some of the evidence and analysis that persuaded the Commission to deny the rate increase. This decision will set appropriate water rates while allowing Vista West to earn a fair return after reasonable operating expenses. The evidence presented to the Commission simply did not support any rate increase."

The Office of Consumer Advocate is a State agency responsible for representing the interests of Wyoming citizens and all classes of utility customers in public utility matters.