

Ojai FLOW

Friends of locally owned water

NEWS

For Immediate Release: August 23, 2011

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Copies of letters attached

Golden State Water Company July 2011 rate increase protested by Ojai FLOW, the City of Ojai, and a local Ojai citizen.

Ojai, California – Ojai FLOW has sent a letter to the Public Utilities Commission (PUC) and State Officials formally protesting the latest Golden State Water Company (Golden State) rate increase application. Ojai FLOW representative Richard Hajas stated, “We sent about 2,000 pages of paper to the PUC, including copies of all of our petitions, and we copied Governor Brown, State Senator Strickland, and Supervisor Bennett. We hope that our elected officials and each commissioner at the PUC read our letter and have our petitions sitting on his or her desk when the next rate case is decided.”

Ojai FLOW Chairperson Pat McPherson stated, “Our protest letter not only addresses specific concerns about the Golden State rate request, but systemic problems with the PUC rate application process. If the process is not changed to fairly address rate payer complaints in the future, we plan to take the matter to our elected officials and let them pass legislation to take it out of the hands of the PUC. With re-districting, we feel we have a very good chance of getting such legislation passed. We are simply tired of the rubber stamp approvals given by the PUC.”

Ojai City officials informed Ojai FLOW today that a letter has been sent to the PUC stating the City of Ojai’s officially protested the latest Golden State rate increase request. Ojai FLOW has been working hand in hand with the City of Ojai and Casitas to make Ojai FLOW’s proposal a reality. Ojai FLOW Chairman, Pat McPherson, stated, “We are very pleased to see the City of Ojai taking such proactive steps in helping remove Golden State as Ojai’s water purveyor and to oppose unreasonable rate increases. Stopping these rate increases is an important part to buy back the water system because the less the rates are, the less the system is worth.”

The reasons given for the protests that include the protest made by local citizen Lou Torres, range from the already excessive rates charged by Golden State to the failure in the new rate case to address the \$12 million settlement recently agreed between Golden State and the California Department of Water and Audits because of illegal procurement practices by Golden State.

According to Ojai FLOW representative Ryan Blatz, “Here is a corporation that just got caught stealing millions from its customers, and yet, they are still asking for the PUC to increase their rates and guarantee them a 7 to 9% return on their investment. Why should Golden State get such a premium return on their investment when they have been caught stealing from their customers and have no risk because their profits are guaranteed.

The latest Golden State rate increase asks for a 14.8% increase in 2013, 4.9% in 2014 and 5.3% for 2015. According to McPherson, “These increases are after last year’s rate increase of 27.5%, and on top of the increases already requested to make up for lost profits because Ojai residents conserved water and Golden State did not receive the profit they had anticipated.”

The letters and Application can be found on Ojai FLOW’s web site www.OjaiFlow.com under Resources/Documents. Ojai FLOW have also have extracted and posted just the portions of the application that apply just to Ojai.

Ojai FLOW is volunteer organizations funded entirely by donations, and is dedicated to citizen ownership and control of Ojai’s water. They are focused on taking over Golden State Water that charges two to three times as much as public owned water companies in the same area. Ojai FLOW has presented petitions to Casitas Municipal Water District asking them to take over Golden State Water Company. Their feasibility study, news, and request for signs and newsletter sign up can be found on Ojai FLOW’s web site www.OjaiFLOW.com. They can be contacted by e-mail: info@OjaiFLOW.com.

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