#1688

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OCT 11 2006
WASH. UT. & TP. COMM

Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission
Attn: Secretary
Box 47250
Olympia, WA 98504-7250

Re: **Waste Connections** Proposed Rate Increase

Dear Staff and Commissioners,

The proposed residential Waste Connection rate increase is absolutely inappropriate. If fact, a more appropriate action would be a significant rate reduction, along with improvements in collection methods to lower overall cost and improved service levels.

Moving from Scottsdale Arizona to Vancouver Washington three years ago, I immediately noticed the exorbitant cost of waste collection here. It was also apparent that old technology and evidently a failure to continuously modernize facilities and collection methods were partly to blame for the excessive cost.

Below is an excerpt from the Scottsdale Arizona web site, depicting the monthly cost for residential collection. This flat rate includes containers provided by the city (one 90 gallon for trash and one 90 gallon for recycle, similar to the ones we get here for yard debris), yard debris collection (in piles or bundles), old appliance collection, moving box disposal, periodic hazardous material pick up and state-of- art collection equipment. The recycle is mixed in one container and separated at the disposal plant. We never had to go to the dump!

"Monthly fee charged for service on all single family residential homes. Includes trash, recycling, brush, move-in box collection and appliance collections

Rate/Fee Amount: $14.68 per home/month
Authority: City Revised Code; Sec 24-31
Last Date Reviewed: 7/1/2006
Contact: James Livingston, Systems Coordinator (480) 312-5608"

Comparing the difference in services and costs, one can readily understand why the current rates and proposed increase seems so out of line. The lack of any statement to substantiate the requested increase other than "escalating costs of operation" is also very concerning. Is there a master plan, automation to move beyond the current state of the operation (seemingly 1970's technology) any cost reduction initiatives, any benchmark studies with other cities to consider future direction and best practices, capital expenditure plan to achieve technological improvements which lead to lower costs of operation and higher service levels? No mention of any of this in the letter from Waste Connections seeking our blessing for a rate increase. The lack of any explanation, expression of concern, or plan to improve and become more service oriented and cost effective seems presumptuous and arrogant.

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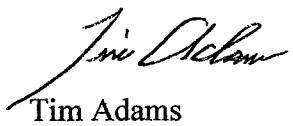
CONSUMER AFFAIRS

This rate increase request should be denied. Furthermore, a cost containment and business improvement plan should be initiated. If there is no immediate plan to move forward in the aforementioned areas, either a new management approach or a new service provider should be considered. Prudent management and ongoing service level improvements with specific cost containment goals with measured results should be in-place and presented to the public before the words 'rate increase' are ever uttered.

Failure to address these concerns and/or the approval of this rate increase should lead to more exposure and public examination of Waste Connections business practices and cost structure. One would also have to seriously question the rate approval criteria and process.

Thank you for your consideration.



Tim Adams

cc. Waste Connections, Inc