

April 28, 2004

Washington State Utilities and Transportation Commission  
Attn: Carol Washburn  
1300 So. Evergreen Park Drive, SW  
Olympia, WA 98504-7250

Dear Ms. Washburn:

Please find enclosed our general complaint and the original letters of 25 complainants, plus one full set of copies of these complaint letters, against Marbello Water Company of Kent, WA.

We hope that we have complied with the filing rules. If there is anything additional needed, or if we have overlooked anything, please let us know so that we can respond promptly. Thank you very much for your assistance.

Yours truly,

Ronald N. de Lisle  
Preparer

RECEIVED  
REGISTRY MANAGEMENT  
94 APR 29 PM 2:53  
STATE OF WASH.  
UTIL. AND TRANSP.  
COMMISSION

**BEFORE THE WASHINGTON UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION**

In the Matter of the Complaint of the	)	
undersigned complainants as listed below:	)	
	)	<b>No.</b>
v.	)	
	)	<b>COMPLAINT OF UNFAIR BILLING,</b>
Marbello Water Co.	)	<b>POOR COMMUNICATION AND</b>
	)	<b>MAINTENANCE BY THE</b>
Respondent	)	<b>RESPONDENT</b>
<hr/>		

The below named complainants have combined as a group to complain against the Respondent, and allege as follows:

**1. PARTIES**

1.1 The Complainants are:

Nancy Bates  
18527 - 126th St., SE  
Snohomish, WA 98290

Jim and Marcy Bichler  
18508 - 126th St., SE  
Snohomish, WA 98290

Joel and Heather Birchman  
18715 - 126th St., SE  
Snohomish, WA 98290

Ken Chisholm  
12631 - 189th Drive, SE  
Snohomish, WA 98290

Ken and Linda Counter  
12715 - 189th Drive, SE  
Snohomish, WA 98290

Ronald and Martha de Lisle  
12718 - 189th Drive, SE  
Snohomish, WA 98290  
(360) 794-3443

Roy and Denise Dickmeyer  
18502 - 126th St., SE  
Snohomish, WA 98290

Jim and Cindy DuFrain  
18722 El Bollo Paseo St., SE  
Snohomish, WA 98290  
(360) 794-9286

Arnold and Sharon Eby  
18623 - 126th St., SE  
Snohomish, WA 98290  
(360) 794-4382

Steve and Lorinda Edwards  
18820 - 126th St., SE  
Snohomish, WA 98290  
(360) 794-5024

Chad Everitt  
18514 - 126th St., SE  
Snohomish, WA 98290

Greg and Elaine Galloway  
18505 - 126th St., SE  
Snohomish, WA 98290

Richard Groves  
18607 - 126th St. SE  
Snohomish, WA 98290

Nance' Haydock-Keck  
18529 - 126th St., SE  
Snohomish, WA 98290

Ronald and Sharon Holloway  
18521 - 126th St., SE  
Snohomish, WA 98290  
Home: (360) 794-8601

Ryan Irving and Catherine Ostbye  
18808 - 126th St, SE  
Snohomish, WA 98290

Margaret LaCombe and David Williams  
18804 - 126th St., SE  
Snohomish, WA 98290

Charles and Catherine Leach  
18717 El Bello Paseo, SE  
Snohomish, WA 98290  
(360) 794-3640

Garth and Shannon Lien  
18513 - 126th St., SE  
Snohomish, WA 98290

Barry and Rachelle Meehan  
12814 - 189th Drive, SE  
Snohomish, WA 98290  
(360) 794-6636

Mark and Karen Moore  
18802 - 126th St., SE  
Snohomish, WA 98290

David and Vikki Poole  
18529 - 126th St., SE  
Snohomish, WA 98290

Constance R. Reid  
18515 - 126th St., SE  
Snohomish, WA 98290

Andre and Christine Sinn  
19413 - 130th Place, SE  
Snohomish, WA 98290

Jim and Tracey Smith  
18815 - 130th St., SE  
Snohomish, WA 98290

- 1.2 The Commission may receive one or more additional complaint letters from Marbello customers in the near future.
- 1.3 The complainants are current customers of Marbello Water Co.
- 1.4 The Respondent is Marbello Water Co., a privately-owned water system purchasing water from the City of Monroe and operating (reselling the water) in Snohomish County, Washington, with offices in Kent, WA. Marbello Water Company is not currently regulated by the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission (Commission), but is under Prehearing status and has agreed by "Stipulated Agreement", to becoming regulated by the Commission.

## **2. RULE/STATUTES AT ISSUE**

- 2.1 The following statutes and provisions of the Washington Administrative Code may be brought into issue:

RCW 80.04.110; RCW 80.04.220; RCW 80.04.230; RCW 80.28.010; RCW 80.28.040;  
WAC 480-110-255; WAC 480-110-275; WAC 480-110-315; WAC 480-110-365;  
WAC 480-110-375; WAC 480-110-385.

- 2.2 RCW 80.04.110 allows 25% of the customers of a water company to combine as one group to complain against a water company that the group feels is charging unfair and/or unreasonable water rates.
- 2.3 RCW 80.04.220 allows reparations when a complaint has made to the commission.
- 2.4 RCW 80-04-230 provides for refunds of amounts charged in excess of reasonable and fair water rates.
- 2.5 RCW 80.28.010 requires that all rules and regulations issued by any water company pertaining to the sale or distribution of its product shall be just and reasonable.
- 2.6 RCW 80.28.020 requires that if the Commission shall find that rates or charges demanded, exacted, charge or collected, or that the rules, regulations, practices or contracts affecting such rates or charges are unjust, unreasonable, unjustly discriminatory or unduly preferential, or in any wise in violation of the provisions of law, the Commission shall determine the just, reasonable, or sufficient rates, charges, regulations, practices or contracts to be thereafter observed and in force, and shall fix same by order.
- 2.7 RCW 80.28.040 requires that if the Commission shall find that any rules, regulations, practices or acts of any water company are unjust, unreasonable, improper, insufficient, or inadequate, or that any service which may be reasonably demanded is not furnished, the Commission shall fix the reasonable rules, regulations, measurements, standards, practices, acts, or service to thereafter be followed and shall fix the same by order of rule. If a water company fails to comply with a Commission's order, the Commission may request that the department petition the court to place the company in receivership.

### 3. STATEMENT OF FACTS

The statements of facts and complaints of each of the listed complainants are attached.

**WHEREFORE, the complainants ask for relief as follows:**

1. That these complaints be heard by the Commission;
2. That the Respondent be ordered to rectify their procedures so as to comply with the law;
3. Recovery of losses, overpayments, illegal charges and injuries as permitted by RCW 80.04.440, including any reasonable fees incurred with this filing;
4. For such other and further relief as the Commission deems just and equitable.

**DATED** this 29th day of April, 2004,

  
Ronald N. de Lisle,  
Preparer

To Marbello Water Company -  
and/or Washington State UTC

As of September 2003 my water bill  
with Marbello Water Company nearly  
tripled.

I agree with Mr Holloway regarding the  
notices that we received from Marbello Water.  
They would tell us that they were going  
to start metering our water, yet they never  
did so. It has been difficult to reach  
Marbello by telephone for many years.

Last September's bill, in excess of \$34.50 should  
be reimbursed to each and every Marbello  
Water customer

It is only fair that our water bills go back  
to the way they were before Sept. 2003.  
We are paying far above the rate of other  
water companies - including city water.

Waney Bates  
18527 126A ST SE  
Snohomish, Wa 98290

April 13, 2004

Washington State Utilities and Transportation Commission

As a 15 year customer of Marbello Water Co. I have watched a company that is happy to send out and collect the "Water Bill", but when it comes to earning their keep, they fall very short. Now with their metered water charges, *if they didn't have a monopoly on the water supply in our neighborhood, they would starve as a business.*

Many times through out the summer, water pressure falls to unacceptable levels by anyone's standards. The lack of overseeing their maintenance contractor, Illiad, is amazing. On one particular instance, they (Illiad) left a large open hole, 3' in diameter, 3+ feet deep and full of water. There were no barriers, tape, or warning signs posted. My daughter was about 4 years old at the time and she fell in. If it were not for my wife being right there, she could have drowned. After several attempts to reach a live person at Marbello, my wife finally received a call stating that someone would be sent out right away. This did not happen. She later called Snohomish County Public Works, who did send out a representative right a way. This gentleman stated the work performed by Illiad did not have a permit issued and by no means should have been left unprotected and unmarked. The next day, Illiad did come out and barricade the site.

As for the rate increase, Marbello does have a right to make a *reasonable* profit, but not 2 to 20+ times the basic flat rate. Some customers did not even have a meter installed! These customers have been able to pay the basic flat rate for the past seven months. The lack of line maintenance was evident with a leak that worked its way up to the asphalt surface and continued to leak for several months.

The combination of their excessive rate hike, lack of maintenance supervision, and slow response to customers concerns, bring into question all of their business practices. Unfortunately, we are unable to change our water source and therefore request the State Utilities to step in and set fair and reasonable rates.

Respectfully submitted,



Jim & Marcy Bichler  
18508 126<sup>th</sup> ST SE  
Snohomish, WA 98290

(360) 794-7739

April 25, 2004

To Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission.  
Marbello account # 10234000

Dear Sirs:

We would like to lodge a complaint against Marbello Water Company and their methods for charging for water service. There has been an overcharge on the December and January bills because they changed the billing cycle. They have been unwilling to discuss prorating the bill or the overcharged \$12.85.

We are dissatisfied with their base rate charged for 750 c.f. of water. We pay a much too inflated rate as opposed to surrounding water districts. As a former Public Works Director for a city with a population of over 22,000 people, I have performed multiple utility rate studies. Never in my professional career have I known of any utility charge a commodity rate exceeding the 750 c.f., which is equal to the unit base fee per cubic foot charge, or a commodity rate, which are double the wholesale rates. The rate of 4 cents per cf over 750 cf used is double Monroe's wholesale rate, plus they say there will be Washington State Utility tax of .05029 per cf. These fees are excessive and not justified. When calls are placed to Marbello they refuse to discuss in detail how their rates have been established. They refuse to answer the simple question as to how Marbello's fixed cost increases with the additional consumption of water over the 750 c.f. Why are they charging a commodity rate over the 750 c.f. that is twice what the City of Monroe is charging Marbello. Other than in cost of the water how has their cost increased over Monroe's?

Several weeks ago, Iliad Construction Co, the operation and maintenance agent for Marbello, installed a meter for our service. During the installation of the meter, they intentionally disturbed our property corner. After repeated calls to Mr. Dorland of Iliad, the property corner has not been restored to its correct location. Shoddy, poor, and non-maintenance practices are observed regularly with this water company. In 17 years of living in this neighborhood, it has never been observed by ourselves or any of our neighbors that Marbello is properly maintain the system by flushing the water mains and sampling of the system for water quality. They have informed us that their rates include their cost for water quality testing. They are not testing the system. What they provide us are the water quality reports from the City of Everett's testing of the system.

If you have any questions regarding the above, please call us at (360) 794-7513.

Sincerely,

  
Joel and Heather Birchman



April 27, 2004

To Whom it may concern,

I am writing this letter to express my concerns about Marbello's business practices and to join in with my neighbors filing of an official complaint. Let me first say that I have no problem "paying for usage", but I would like to know that the rates are fair. I trust my neighbors research that demonstrates we are paying excessive rates. My major concern is in the business and customer service practices of Marbello. I have attempted to express my concerns directly to Marbello, and as of yet, I still haven't received one response from my written complaints. I only wish I had taken copies of my complaint letters, so that I might have included them here. My complaint here deals with how they handled that first "pay for usage" bill and the subsequent billing period.

The first "pay for usage" bill I received was based on a meter period of August 15<sup>th</sup> thru September 19<sup>th</sup> 2003, which is a 35 day period. Marbello's rate system (for that billing period) was based on 30 days of usage, therefore I was being charged the "excessive usage" rate on 5 extra days. I repeatedly called Marbello to express my complaint, but only got an answering service. After several attempts

and over one week later, I received a call back. I was told that they had received several complaints and they weren't sure how they would go forward. They requested that I send in my usual payment of \$34.50 and told me they would notify me soon of any decisions regarding future billing. I sent in my payment, as directed, and included a letter to describe why payment was less than the bill. I never did get that promised response of a billing decision.

The next month, I got a bill for current usage plus my unpaid balance coupled with interest charges on that unpaid balance. I quickly saw the writing on the wall about how Marbello would handle this problem and sent in the payment "in full". I included a "letter of objection" in how THEY told me to only send in the \$34.50 and then, later charged me interest on the unpaid balance. Once again, no response and worse yet, no reversal of interest charges. I also wrote them another letter suggesting how to calculate an "average days usage" with the meter period data (easily done with a spreadsheet) and then apply it to the number of days in the billing period. Guess what? No response!

I hope this investigation will achieve three outcomes: 1) that myself and my neighbors

can feel comfortable that the rates we are paying are fair, 2) Marbello will better learn to align their billing and meter reading practices, and 3) Marbello learns to respond to customer concerns in a timely manner.

Thank you for your time in dealing with our troubles.

Sincerely,

Ken Chisholm

12631 189<sup>th</sup> Dr. SE.  
Snohomish, WA 98290

4-26-04

UTILITIES & TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION  
OLYMPIA, WA. 98504-7250

MY RELATIONSHIP WITH THE MARBELLO WATER CO. BEGAN IN OCT. 1977. WITHIN A MONTH OF MOVING INTO OUR HOME I WAS CONTACTED BY A. REP. FROM MARBELLO. I WAS INFORMED OUR WATER HOOK-UP FEE WAS NOT PAID AND WE HAD 5 DAYS TO PAY OR WATER SERVICE WOULD BE SUSPENDED. I CONTACTED THE SELLERS WHO SAID THE FEE WAS PAID. MARBELLO REFUSED TO ACCEPT THE SELLERS STATEMENT AND AGAIN THREATENED SHUT OFF. I GOT A RECEIPT FROM THE SELLERS AND PROVIDED MARBELLO WITH A COPY. END OF PROBLEM.

THE ONLY PROBLEMS I EXPERIENCED WITH MARBELLO UP TO SEPT - OCT 2003 WAS SHUT OFF OF WATER WITH NO WARNING. WHEN SERVICE WAS RESTORED SO MUCH CORROSION GOT TRANSFERRED INTO HOME THAT 6 WATER VALVES HAD TO BE REPLACED. AFTER INFORMING MARBELLO ABOUT THE PROBLEMS I WAS EXPERIENCING I WAS TOLD THAT "WE WOULD JUST HAVE TO LIVE WITH THAT."

WE HAVE ALWAYS ATTEMPTED TO BE CONSERVATIVE WITH WATER, GAS, ELECTRICITY. WE INSTALLED SEVERAL YEARS AGO, LOW FLOW TOILETS, LOW FLOW SHOWER HEADS, ENERGY EFFICIENT FRONT LOADING WASHER & DISHWASHER. THESE PRECAUTIONS TO CONSERVE DIDN'T PREVENT US FROM RECEIVING A \$204.27 WATER BILL IN SEPT - OCT 2003. AFTER MANY PHONE CALLS TO MARBELLO AND SIX MONTHS LATER, OUR BILL WAS REDUCED BY 50% AND INTEREST WAIVED.

FROM LETTERS OF COMPLAINTS FROM

CUSTOMERS OF MARBELLO, IT HAS BEEN STATED  
THAT THERE ARE BILLING DISCREPANCIES WHICH I  
SEE AS CREATING A HIGHER BILL THAN IF  
METERS WERE READ ON A PROPER SCHEDULE

IF \$200.00 + A MONTH WAS  
THE NORMAL WATER BILL, I WOULD CONSIDER  
MOVING INTO A DIFFERENT WATER CO. I DO  
FIND IT UNUSUAL IN THE FACT THAT OUR WATER  
BILLS WERE ALWAYS \$34.50 PER MONTH, AND SUDDENLY  
A LARGE WATER BILL FOR ONE MONTH, AND  
AFTER THAT BACK TO A SET FEE. I FEEL THAT  
WE HAVE ALWAYS USED A CONSTANT MONTHLY AMOUNT  
OF WATER, HAVE NEVER WATERED GRASS AND ONLY  
WATER SHRUBS AND FLOWERS AS NEEDED IN THE  
SUMMER MONTHS. OUR FAMILY CONSISTS OF 2 ADULTS,  
ONE CHILD.

*Ken Counter*

KEN COUNTER  
LINDA COUNTER

12715 189<sup>th</sup> DR. S.E.  
SNOHOMISH, WA. 98290

April 21, 2004

Statement of Facts and Complaint of:

Ronald N. and Martha F. de Lisle  
12718 - 189th Drive, SE.,  
Snohomish, WA, 98290  
(360) 794-3443  
Marbello Acct. No. 10261000

We purchased the home in July (closing date: July 19, 2003), and moved in on July 25, 2003. Marbello Water Co. was notified of our possession by a telephone message left with their answering service at that time. At closing, no documents were delivered nor signed regarding the water company. As the previous owner had let the grounds go dormant during the negotiation and closing period, and due to the summer drought season, we began to water the grounds to return them to reasonable health.

Our first water bill arrived showing the billing dates of July 1 to July 31, 2003. The bill was for the flat monthly rate of \$32.85 plus \$ 1.65 tax, and showed a credit of \$ 35.00. We knew that our escrow company had paid \$ 50.00 toward water usage at closing. No meter readings were shown. Evidently, Marbello prorated this bill for 12 days usage.

Our August water bill arrived, again showing the billing dates from Aug. 1 to 31, and again was for a flat rate like the July bill. The bottom line was a \$ 0.50 credit, so now our \$ 50.00 escrow payment was almost used up.

The September bill arrived showing billing dates of Sept. 1 to Sept. 30, but now meter readings showed up and we were charged for consumption of 4,160 cubic feet (all used in August). The billing amount was for \$ 169.25, plus 8.51 tax, including the base rate of \$32.85, plus tax (a total of \$ 177.76). We did use the water, but the billing was illegal as we had already paid the August bill. After several unanswered telephone calls and our letter dated Oct. 21 to Marbello, we did receive a letter from Marbello (dated Oct. 23) giving the dates of the meter readings. Marbello had read the meter on August 15, and again on Sept. 19. As we were out of the state from Aug. 29 until Sept. 22, the water usage shown could only have been used before the Sept. 1st billing date.

When we arrived home from our vacation, a letter from Marbello dated Sept. 19 was waiting for us. It stated that metered rates were beginning with the Sept. bill, and that we had been notified in a June, 2003 letter that water conservation was to begin. We never received it as we did not live there then. Their Sept. 19 letter said that their conservation program was to begin with the Sept. billing period. This letter further stated that the water service agreement gives the rates on page two. We had never seen any water service agreement.

Marbello had been billing from the 1st to the end of the month, and after the fact in Sept. changed their billing to include meter readings with dates that did not coincide with their previously standard monthly (1st to end of month) billing dates. This was done without prior notice. Their conservation period began on Sept. 1, again without prior notice to us.

We did use the water, but before their conservation program began, and before their normal billing period unfairly changed (without notice). Had their billing period not changed the water used would not (and should not) have been charged for.

We continued to regularly pay the monthly bill at \$ 34.50, including tax, but notified Marbello that we were protesting the excess water charge of \$ 143.26. We continued to refuse paying the excess water charge through December. However, believing that our protest had gone on long enough, in January we finally paid the excess water charge.

We feel that the Marbello Water Co. was unfair, unjust, and unreasonable in their billing practices, and ask for rebate of the excess water charge of \$ 143.26 in their Sept. bill plus the interest we paid to Marbello on this amount (interest of \$ 2.92) a total of \$ 146.18.

Further, in December, 2003, Marbello once again changed their billing practice, again without prior notice. They changed from using billing dates from the 1st to the end of the month, with meter readings in mid-month, to billing directly from the meter reading dates in mid-month. This is the correct method, however, they neglected to prorate the minimum rate, which we have been paying since September. Marbello billed from Nov. 30 to Dec.19 at \$ 32.85, plus tax, and then in January billed from Dec.19 to Jan. 21, 2004, again at \$ 32.85, plus tax. The lack of proration with the Dec. bill constitutes excess billing. They have received an excess \$12.85 in over billing from us (and probably from all the other 93 Marbello customers, a tidy little extra of \$ 1,207.90 in their pocket).. We would appreciate having this amount rebated also.

We are aware that Marbello purchases our water from the City of Monroe at the rate of \$ 2.03 per 100 cubic feet. In an article in the Everett Herald Newspaper dated Mar. 29, 2004, we learned that the Sky Meadow Water Co. also purchases water from the City of Monroe, but at the much lower rate of \$ 0.66 per 100 cubic feet. A new rate of \$ 1.11 per 100 cubic feet is currently being negotiated between Monroe and Sky Meadow. Sky Meadow has 375 customers. With regard to those negotiations, Monroe City Mayor Donnetta Walser said, "They (Sky Meadow) can continue to get (water from the City of Monroe), (but if they do not accept the \$ 1.11 rate it will be at the \$ 2.03 rate) but it will be pretty expensive". That "pretty expensive" rate is what the Marbello Water Co. pays to Monroe for the water they resell to us at a much higher rate. The article further stated that individuals living outside of Monroe pay \$ 2.03 per 100 cu. ft. Since Marbello is a company and not an individual, we wonder why Marbello has failed to negotiate a more fair and lower rate than \$ 2.03 per 100 cu. ft. for their 94 customers. Why is Marbello Water Co. paying such a high rate to Monroe if lower rates are available? (a copy of the article is attached).

Sincerely,

   
Ronald N. de Lisle      Martha F. de Lisle

Enclosure #1

Metallo Water Co.  
P.O. BOX 20429  
SEATTLE, WA 98102  
PHONE 1-800-928-3750 BATCH 21

SERVICE FROM 05-01-03 09-30-03

ACCT. 10261000: 12718 189TH DR SE

CURRENT	PREVIOUS	CONSUMPTION	AMOUNT
135540	131380	4160	NORMAL RD

PREV. BALANCE	0.50CR
WATER	169.25
STATE TAX	8.51

SEPT.  
2003

*136300 - 135540 = 760 cu. ft. used to date*

BILLING DATE	PREVIOUS BALANCE
10-15-03	
DUE DATE	TOTAL DUE
11-07-03	177.26

*OVER* 

*Paid \$34.50 on acct.  
Balance under protest*



Enclosure #2

Dec. 1 2003

Marbella Water Co.  
PO Box 20429  
Seattle, WA 98102

Re: Acct # 10261000  
Ron de Lisle  
12718 - 189th Dr. SE  
Snohomish, WA 98290

This bill continues to be in dispute. We are still awaiting a reply to our letter of Oct. 29, 2003, addressed to Ms. Sondra LeCron.

The general letter we received Nov. 14, 2003 did not address our specific concerns.

Until we hear from you, we will continue to pay the standard monthly payment.

Martha F. deLisle

Marbella Water Co.			
P.O. Box 20429			
Seattle, WA 98102			
Phone 1-800-928-3750			
Service from 09-30-03 to 10-31-03			
Acct 10261000: 12718 189th Dr. SE			
CURRENT	PREVIOUS	CONSUMPTION	AMOUNT
136300	135540	760	NORMAL RD

OCT  
2003

PREV. BALANCE	177.26
PAYMENTS	34.50 CR
WATER	38.25
INTEREST	1.48
STAIL TAX	1.67

pd \$34.92  
12/1/03

FAST DUE

BILLING DATE	11-10-03	PREVIOUS BALANCE	
DUE DATE	12-05-03	TOTAL DUE	179.11

Enclosure #3

Dec. 17, 2003

Marbella Water Co.  
P.O. Box 20429  
Seattle, WA 98102

Re: Account 10261000 - Ron de Lisle  
12718 189th Dr. SE  
Snohomish, WA 98290

We will continue to pay the  
standard fee - \$34.50 - while this  
account is still in dispute.  
Our letters of 10/30/03, 12/1/03, 12/3/03  
have not been addressed.

Martha F. de Lisle

18180 WOODCOCK  
P.O. BOX 20429  
SEATTLE, WA 98102  
PHONE 1-800-928-3000 WA  
SERVICE FROM 10/31/03 TO 11/30/03  
ACCT. 10261000 12718 189TH DR SE  
CURRENT PREVIOUS CONSUMPTION AMOUNT  
136790 136300 490 NORMAL RD



PREV. BALANCE 179.11  
PAYMENTS 64.92CR  
WATER 52.85  
INTEREST 1.44  
STATE TAX 1.65

BILLING DATE	12-10-03	PREVIOUS BALANCE	180.13
DUE DATE	01-02-04	TOTAL DUE	

101 838.00

Nov. 2003

Enclosure #4

Marbetto Water Co.  
P.O. Box 20450  
SEATTLE, WA 98102  
PHONE 1-800-928-8750

SERVICE FROM 11-30-03 TO 12-19-03  
ACCT. 10261000 12718 189TH DR SE

CURRENT	PREVIOUS	CONSUMPTION	AMOUNT
137270	136790	480	NORMAL RD

PREV. BALANCE	180.13
PAYMENTS	34.50CR
WATER	32.85
TRILLREST	1.46
STATE TAX	1.35

*pd in full  
2/3/04 #4765*

*1/2 of DEC.  
2003*

BILLING DATE	01-13-04	PREVIOUS BALANCE	
DUE DATE	02-06-04	TOTAL DUE	181.59

Notice change in billing dates

Nov. 30, 2003 to Dec. 19, 2003

No proration of monthly charge!

Endosure #5

Jan. 2004  
 12-19-03  
 to  
 1/21/04

Marbello Water Co.  
 P.O. BOX 20429  
 SEATTLE, WA 98102  
 PHONE 1-800-928-3750

SERVICE FROM 12-19-03 TO 1-21-04  
 ACCT. 10261000: 12718 189TH DR SE WA

CURRENT	PREVIOUS	CONSUMPTION	AMOUNT
138370	137850	520	NORMAL RD

PREV. BALANCE 34.50  
 PAYMENTS 34.50 CR  
 WATER 32.85  
 STATE TAX 1.65

pd 3/2/04  
 # 4790

BILLING DATE	03-11-04	PREVIOUS BALANCE	
DUE DATE	03-05-04	TOTAL DUE	34.50



Feb. 2004  
 1-21-04  
 to  
 2-19-04

Marbello Water Co.  
 P.O. BOX 20429  
 SEATTLE, WA 98102  
 PHONE 1-800-928-3750 BATCH 11

SERVICE FROM 01-21-04 to 02-19-04  
 ACCT. 10261000: 12718 189TH DR SE WA

CURRENT	PREVIOUS	CONSUMPTION	AMOUNT
138370	137850	520	NORMAL RD

PREV. BALANCE 34.50  
 PAYMENTS 34.50 CR  
 WATER 32.85  
 STATE TAX 1.65

pd 4/1/04  
 # 4813

BILLING DATE	03-11-04	PREVIOUS BALANCE	
DUE DATE	04-09-04	TOTAL DUE	34.50

# Monroe considers water rate options

*Sky Meadow may  
see 45-cent increase*

By YOSHIAKI NOHARA  
Herald Writer

MONROE—The city has to increase water rates, but the question is who should swallow it.

The city has asked the Sky Meadow Water Association to endure part of the pain by proposing a new rate of about \$1.11 for 100 cubic feet of water, a rate increase of about 45 cents, said Carol Grey, the city's finance director.

If the association, which serves 375 customers west of the city, used the same amount of water as last year, the city would get about \$93,000 on the new contract, an increase of about \$38,400, Grey said.

The city needs to increase the rate for the association, which

See WATER,  
back page, this section

has been on a lower rate than those inside the city.

"They are comfortable with the old rate, but we can't afford to give them water at that rate any more," Mayor Donnetta Walser said.

The city's contract with the association expires at the end of the month, city officials said. If the association decides not to go with the new rate, it would have to pay the same \$2.03 per 100 cubic feet of water that other individual customers outside the city pay.

"They can continue to get (water), but it will be pretty expensive," Walser said.

Clark Vellema, the association's

manager, said it hasn't decided on the new contract.

"We're asking the city to continue negotiations to review various rate consideration," Vellema said, adding the association questions a rate study used by the city to determine the new rate.

The city conducted the study last year to propose new rates for the association and the state prison in town. While the association pays 66 cents for 100 cubic feet and the prison pays 59 cents, customers in the city pay \$2.49 and those outside the city pay \$2.03.

The city and the state Department of Corrections have agreed on a new contract, officials from the two agencies said. The prison would pay about \$1.59 on the new rate, which the city expects would bring in \$448,000, or an in-

crease of about \$183,000.

Unlike the prison, the association has its own storage system, said Brad Feilberg, the city's engineering director. That's why the new rate is lower than the one for the prison.

The new rates for the prison and association would keep the rate for the others from increasing, Walser said.

"What we are trying to do is to be fair," she said.

There should be a difference between the rate for the association, which doesn't have many meters for the city to read, and for the other customers, Vellema said.

The city is trying to downplay the difference and use the association as "cash cow," he said.

Reporter Yoshiaki Nohara:  
425-339-3029 or  
ynohara@heraldnet.com.

$\$1.11/100 \text{ cu. ft.} \times 7.5 = \$8.325$   
 $\$2.03/100 \text{ ft}^3 \times 7.5 = \$15.225$   
 $\$2.49/100 \text{ ft}^3 \times 7.5 = \$18.675$

EVERETT HERALD  
3/29/04

April 30,2004

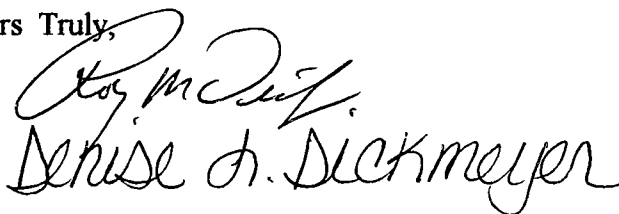
Washington State Utilities and Transportation Commission  
1300 So. Evergreen Park Drive, SW  
Olympia, WA 98504-7250

To Whom It May Concern:

Please find enclosed the original and I copy of our complaint (s) against the Marbello Water company of Kent, WA.

We feel that we have complied with the filing rules. If there is anything additional that is needed, pleas let us know so that we can respond promptly. Thank you for your assistance.

Yours Truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Denise A. Dickmeyer". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "D".

/signed/

April 12,2004

Washington State Utilities and Transportation Commission

We feel that Marbello Water is taking advantage of us and everyone on our water system. We have lived in our home for 17 years, the water has always been a flat rate. We did not even have a water meter for the first ten years. Even after the meters were installed we continued to pay a flat rate.

In June of 2002 we received a letter stating that as of July 2002 they would start reading the meters at a rate of \$.03 per cubic foot over the flat rate of \$34.50 for 750 cubic foot of water, but the rates never changed. Then in September of 2003 we received a bill for \$206.41, which is \$.04 a cubic foot over the \$34.50 or 750 cubic feet. After leaving many messages with their answering service we received a letter from Marbello itemizing our meter readings from 5-15-03 to 10-24-03, with the highest usage being September which was double the usage of any of the other four months. We find it very hard to believe that we used 2000 cubic feet more water in September than in August.

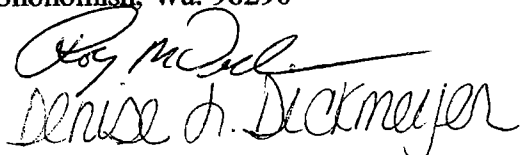
I was finally able to get another phone number for Marbello Water system. I spoke to Dave Dorland and was told that the rates were for the heavy usage months April through September and that they would return to a flat rate in November. The rates have never returned as promised, we continue to pay \$60.00 to \$80.00 per month for water. Which is double the rates of surrounding water companies.

We believe that we are paying for Marbello Water Systems poor management and lack of maintenance, over the years we have repeatedly called concerning leaks on the main road, poor water pressure, and cloudy water. All we were able to do was leave a message with the answering service and never received a return call. Some leaks go unrepaired for months.

We would also like to address how the City of Monroe can charge Marbello Water System a rate of \$2.03 per cubic foot and yet charge Sky Meadow Association a rate of only \$1.11 per cubic foot for the same water.(see attached letter) We believe that the city should have the same rate for all water systems.

Thank You for your consideration in this matter and any help will be greatly appreciated.

Roy and Denise Dickmeyer  
18502 126<sup>th</sup> St. S.E.  
Snohomish, Wa. 98290

Handwritten signatures of Roy and Denise Dickmeyer. The signature for Roy is written in cursive and is partially obscured by the signature for Denise. Denise's signature is written in cursive and is clearly legible.

Published on [HeraldNet.com](http://HeraldNet.com): 3/29/04

## Monroe weighs water rates

### Sky Meadow may see 45-cent increase

By Yoshiaki Nohara  
Herald Writer

MONROE – The city has to increase water rates, but the question is who should swallow it.

The city has asked the Sky Meadow Water Association to endure part of the pain by proposing a new rate of about \$1.11 for 100 cubic feet of water, a rate increase of about 45 cents, said Carol Grey, the city's finance director.

If the association, which serves 375 customers west of the city, used the same amount of water as last year, the city would get about \$93,000 on the new contract, an increase of about \$38,400, Grey said.

The city needs to increase the rate for the association, which has been on a lower rate than those inside the city.

"They are comfortable with the old rate, but we can't afford to give them water at that rate any more," Mayor Donnetta Walser said.

The city's contract with the association expires at the end of the month, city officials said. If the association decides not to go with the new rate, it would have to pay the same \$2.03 per 100 cubic feet of water that other individual customers outside the city pay.

"They can continue to get (water), but it will be pretty expensive," Walser said.

Clark Vellema, the association's manager, said it hasn't decided on the new contract.

"We're asking the city to continue negotiations to review various rate consideration," Vellema said, adding the association questions a rate study used by the city to determine the new rate.

The city conducted the study last year to propose new rates for the association and the state prison in town. While the association pays 66 cents for 100 cubic feet and the prison pays 59 cents, customers in the city pay \$2.49 and those outside the city pay \$2.03.

The city and the state Department of Corrections have agreed on a new contract, officials from the two agencies said. The prison would pay about \$1.59 on the new rate, which the city expects would bring in \$448,000, or an increase of about \$183,000.

Unlike the prison, the association has its own storage system, said Brad Feilberg, the city's engineering director. That's why the new rate is lower than the one for the prison.

The new rates for the prison and association would keep the rate for the others from increasing, Walser said.

"What we are trying to do is to be fair," she said.

There should be a difference between the rate for the association, which doesn't have many meters for the city to read, and for the other customers, Vellema said.

The city is trying to downplay the difference and use the association as "cash cow," he said.

Reporter Yoshiaki Nohara: 425-339-3029 or [ynohara@heraldnet.com](mailto:ynohara@heraldnet.com).



## Statement of Facts

Statement of Facts and Complaint of:

Jim and Cindy DuFrain  
18722 El Bello Paseo  
Monroe, WA 98272  
(360) 794-9286

Marbello Acct No. #10305000

Reviewing past documents received from the Marbello Water Company, they have stated in several letters that they were metering our water consumption and if that was the case why did we not receive with our monthly bill a notation on the cubic usage amount we were consuming each month. None of us probably realized we were beyond our 750 cubic feet guideline until September 2003, when we finally saw on our monthly bill a consumption reading that send a lot of us in shock and on the edge of amazement. For years, we have paid a flat fee and now Marbello decides to alert the consumer with outrageous readings, which we question, are not very correct.

Marbello chose the billing cycle to go from the 1<sup>st</sup> to the end of the month and then without any notice decided to change that feature as shown on the December 2003 statement. I was lead to believe that a month was 30/31 days, not the 19/20 days that was claimed on the December 2003 billing record. With that, they shorten our water consumption usage in that one-month and then lengthen the next month's billing where they over charged. If anything they should of not calculated any one's water for the transition period or at least pro-rated the minimum rate. This excess billing is unacceptable and surly an addition of money to Marbello's pocket.

I showed that my September 2003 bill increased \$12.95 and felt this was unfair. As many others I decided to still pay the flat fee of \$34.50 rate and not the extra amount which now I'm being charged interest on the outstanding balance. Under protest, I recently decided to pay the outstanding excess bill as I felt the protest for 6 months was long enough and didn't want Marbello to ruin my outstanding credit rating.

In review of my current billing statements it is amazing to see that after several complaints to the Marbello Water Company after September 2003 the first documented usage of 1070 cubic feet down spiraled to 640, 290, 270, 240, and another 240 and I did nothing different in my direction of usage.

I cannot understand how Marbello Water Company is passing on such high rates to their consumers for the general purchase of 750 cubic feet of water. We realize that Marbello purchases our water from the City of Monroe at the rate of \$2.03 per 100 cubic feet yet from reading several articles and discussions with other Marbello consumers why isn't Marbello negotiating for lower rates if they are available.

*Cindy + Jim DuFrain 4/27/04*

**Statement of Facts with regard to the following Formal Complaint of :**

Arnold A and Sharon R. Eby  
18623 – 126<sup>th</sup> St SE  
Snohomish, Wa. 98290  
(360) 794- 4382

Re: Marbello Acct. No. 10232000

- 1) Billing changes that were done last September were done with little, insufficient and unclear notice. As near as we can determine the meter reading billing was to begin September 1 and be a monthly billing each first of the month through the end of the month with what we thought would be consistent meter readings for the same period of time. The fact is that the first bill was for meter reading August 15 to September 19, but a billing date of September 1 to September 30. The cubic ft usage was 3000cu ft more than the prior period in hot July and early August and 5500 cu ft more the following billing period, if I can follow the periods properly. The point is that the readings seem so inconsistent with a consistent life style of water consumption that didn't fluctuate very much, and there is now no way to tell if accurate. We have to take their word for it.  
It is also a fact that water consumption by household fluctuated with out regard to size. (E.g. a ten member household using much less than a two person household.)
- 2) There have been system leaks in the main line over the last 3 years that having been reported yet went unattended or ignored until this past summer ('03) when they were fixed. It would seem to me that a prudent person concerned about water conservation, as Marbello told us was the reason for metering, would have responded quickly. I think it is obvious that they were continuing to "milk" the system with out making expenditures for repairs. This of course would create a false sense of total consumption and expenses to try to "justify" revenue enhancements.
- 3) The rates we are being charged seem so far out of line with almost any surrounding water district we have researched that it seems at best to be price gouging and at least mismanagement or lack of effort to negotiate with a supplier (Monroe Water System). It would seem that the attitude of Marbello is "just pass it on..." Marbello is paying Monroe the \$2.03/ccf that Monroe charges "individual outside the city" customers. Why should we as a system pay "individual rates" ?
- 4) Sky Meadow pays Monroe .66/ccf and the city is trying to negotiate that to \$1.11/ccf. Why then can't a similar rate negotiation be done by Marbello, since the city doesn't have the responsibility of maintenance or the expense of meter reading of their system.
- 5) There are some residents of the neighborhood that have not been hooked to a meter. I would suggest that this is unfair and puts a greater burden on all others for water consumption.

Continued on page 2.

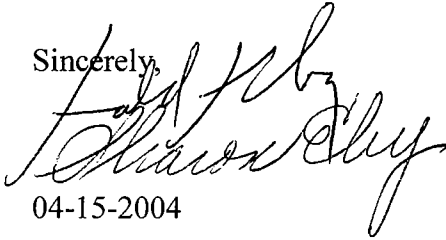
Page 2.

We would pray for relief as follows:

- 1) Reverse the meter reading back to flat rate of \$32.85 as of last September, while fixing the problem. I would ask for reimbursement of the overcharges from that time to the present.
- 2) Determine fair rates for meter reading billing, which should include a good faith re-negotiation with Monroe.
- 3) A suggested rate schedule might look like this. A flat rate of \$ 32.85 for the first 1000 or 1200 cf , with excess usage charged at perhaps something like \$3.11/ccf. This would assume a \$1.11/ccf renegotiated rate with Monroe, the same being afforded Sky Meadows.
- 4) I would request that the water provider make certain that all residents are properly hooked up.

Thank you for your considerations and all we can ask for is fairness.

Sincerely,



Paul J. By

04-15-2004

Sunday, April 25, 2004

Steve & Lorinda Edwards  
18820 126<sup>th</sup> Street SE  
Snohomish, WA (8290

To Whom It May Concern:

Lori and I purchased our property approximately nineteen years ago, with the promise that the private water system that we bought into would be operated and maintained in a professional manner.

On numerous occasions water main leaks have remained leaking for prolonged periods of time. I have never seen Marbello crews exercise any of the valves or the fire hydrants to ensure that they are in good working condition. Marbello provides the barest minimum maintenance while charging us \$0.04/ft<sup>3</sup>. This is outrageous rate to pay for water! If Marbello is allowed to continue providing our water, they should:

- Negotiate a more competitive water purchase rate from the City of Monroe, and thus lower the rate they charge us to an acceptable level.
- Be required to operate, maintain and repair this water system in a professional and responsive manner.

Our first desire would be to have the City of Monroe or the Snohomish PUD assume ownership and maintenance of our water system. This would ensure that the system is operated, maintained and repaired in a professional manner.

Please feel free to call us at (360) 794-5024 if we can answer any questions.

Sincerely,



Steve & Lori Edwards

April 15, 2004

Statement of Facts and Complaint of :

Chad Everitt  
18514 126<sup>th</sup> ST. SE  
Snohomish WA 98290  
(360)805-0154  
Marbello Acct. No 10271000

The reason I am writing this letter is to express my dissatisfaction with the way Marbello Water Company handled the introduction of metered water bills. I also wish to dispute the rates as well as charges on the bill(enclosure 1) in excess of the normal flat rate billing to which we've become accustomed.

First, an acceptable business practice is to provide reasonably adequate notification of a change in billing policy. The letter "METER RATES BEGINNING" (enclosure 2) was received on October 10, 2003, despite the letter being dated September 19, 2003 (see enclosure 3, postmarked envelope). This letter indicates that the billing change will occur starting with the September billing period. This letter also references the June 2003 conservation letter, and implies that the June letter provided formal notification that metered billing will be instituted. I'd like to point out that we've received similar letters each year for the past several years, which all contain wording to the same effect (see enclosures 4, 5, and 6). Given that metered billing did not follow in previous years, this year's June letter was perceived as yet another empty promise/threat.

Second, I believe a "starting meter reading" should be provided to the customer prior to commencement of metered billing. In lieu of this, notification of a date on which a starting meter reading would be recorded would be acceptable, and could have accompanied timely notification of the intent to begin metered billing. **Without either, there is no integrity to the metering process.**

Our bill covering the period September 1, 2003 to September 30, 2003 contains charges for 5870 cf of water. After August of this year, nearly all garden watering, use of children's wading pool, and other hot-weather activities ceased due to the change in weather. Since receipt of the recent bill, we've determined there to be no leaks downstream of our meter. Considering these facts, it is my presumption that the starting meter reading on the recent billing was recorded well before September 1, 2003.

Attempts to obtain the date at which the starting meter reading was recorded have been unsuccessful. Again, this lessens the credibility of the metering process.

Furthermore, I'd like to comment on the rates being levied by Marbello. The City of Monroe bills rural customers \$2.03 per cf for a line of our size, for water usage in excess of 400 cf. Marbello is charging its customers practically double that, in addition to applying a much higher charge for base usage. Since Monroe is Marbello's water provider, the fees being charged by Marbello are excessive and unacceptable.

In summary, I believe Marbello should refund to the undersigned, the excess charges (Sept-03) in the amount of \$203.15. In addition, future billing practices should reflect those of similar water customers in the area.



Chad Everitt

Enclosure 1

9/1/03 to 9/30/03

314570

CURRENT	PREVIOUS	CONSUMPTION	AMOUNT
10271000	10271000	126TH ST	
	308700	8870 NORMAL RD	

↑ 308700    ↑ 5870

PREV. BALANCE	34.50
WATER	237.65
INTEREST	0.35
STATE TAX	11.95

RETURN THIS STUB WITH YOUR REMITTANCE TO:	
Marbello Water Co. P.O. BOX 20429 SEATTLE, WA 98102	
ACCT. NO.	TOTAL DUE
10271000	284.45
BILLING DATE	DATE DUE
10-15-03	11-07-03

BILLING DATE	10-15-03	PREVIOUS BALANCE	
DUE DATE	11-07-03	TOTAL DUE	284.45

CHAD EVERETT  
18514 126TH ST SE  
SNODGRASS WA 98290



237.65  
 - 34.50  
 -----  
 203.15

Excess Billing

MARBELLO WATER COMPANY  
PO BOX 20429  
SEATTLE, WA 98102  
(800) 928-3750

METER RATES BEGINNING

September 19, 2003

Dear Water Customer:

You were notified back in June 2003 in the Conservation Letter as to the meter rates conservation program starting. Per the Department of Health's conservation program, the drought conditions, increased costs in power, water rate increases, maintenance and testing we are beginning our conservation program for the September billing period.

The water service agreement has the rates on page two, but as a reminder the rates are as follows:

Base rate \$32.85 for 750 cu ft per month anything over 750 cu ft is billed at 0.04 cents per cu ft. plus Washington State Utility Tax charged at .05029.

If you have any questions please call me at (800) 928-3750.

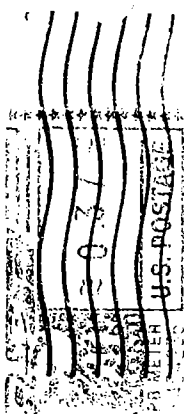
Sincerely,



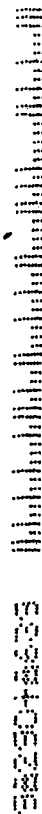
Sondra LeBaron  
Agent

WATER SERVICES

P. O. BOX 20429  
EATLE, WASHINGTON 98102



CHAD EVERETT  
19314 126TH ST SE  
SNODHOMISH WA 98290



Enclosure 3



Enclosure 4

Marbello Water System  
P. O. Box 20429  
Seattle, WA 98102  
(800) 928-3750

June 1, 2002

**\*\*\*Important\*\*\*Rate Change\*\*\*Important\*\*\*Rate Change**

Attention: All Water Customers

The State of Washington Department of Health is requiring all water systems to be metered to help with water conservation.

As of July 1, 2002 we will begin meter rate billing. Any water usage over the flat rate will be billed per each 100 cu ft as an additional water usage charge. This rate will be charged as follows:

Flat Rate: (750 cu ft) \$ 34.50

Metered Rate: .03 (three) cents per cu ft over the flat rate water usage

If you have any questions please mail your correspondence to:

Water Services  
P. O. Box 20429  
Seattle, WA 98102

Sincerely,

Marbello Water Company

**WATER CONSERVATION PROGRAM  
MARBELLO WATER COMPANY  
2001**

Dear Water Customer:

As most of you are aware the State of Washington is in the midst of the worst drought and lowest snow pack in years in recent years.

We must institute a water conservation program to insure adequate water for our usage.

The highest water use for the entire year occurs in the summer months when you get the least amount of rain.

Water systems are strained by the extra water used to water lawns and gardens, wash cars and fill swimming pools. Out of all of these, lawn watering uses the most water.

Your water system does not have the capacity to supply warm weather irrigation for your yard.

**The following guidelines will become effective May 1, 2001 and remain in place until further notice.**

Emergency or mandatory water restrictions should not be required if you follow the guidelines below, unless ordered by the State of Washington.

- ❖ **No irrigation watering between 6:00 AM and 10:00 AM and then again from 3:00 PM to 9:00 PM.**
  - Water customers with **even numbered addresses** water only on **even days**.
  - Water customers with **odd numbered addresses** water only on **odd days**.

An approved backflow prevention assembly must protect all lawn and garden irrigation systems.

Irrigation systems not protected by an approved backflow prevention assembly could endanger the health of the household and the water system community. Penalties will be passed on to customers not in compliance.

- ❖ Cars should use commercial car washes
- ❖ A child's wading pool is permissible, however no hoses, waterslides, or sprinklers for play.

**Suggested conservation ideas in your home are:**

- ❖ Only run the dishwasher when full.
- ❖ Wash full loads of clothes.
- ❖ Check your plumbing and irrigation system for fixtures that are running, leaking or overflowing. By repairing leaks now, you can help conserve our precious water supply.
- ❖ We ask that you implement other ideas, as you deem appropriate.

The Water Company has installed water meters at all service connections. Water meter readings will be recorded to help control over use of water. Should we receive any complaints, as to over use of water, we will notify the customer via mail and phone. If the over use continues we will begin metered billing. Any water usage over the flat rate will be billed per each additional 100 cu ft as an additional surcharge.

Enclosure 6

May 1, 2000

Marbello Water System  
P. O. Box 20429  
Seattle, WA 98102  
800-928-3750

Dear Water Customer:

It is that time again for the lawn garden watering! The Marbello water-system does not have the capacity to supply warm weather irrigation for your yard.

To alleviate any water shortage we recommend the following steps be taken:

1. NO irrigation watering between 6:00 AM and 10:00 AM and then again from 3:00 PM to 9:00 PM.
2. Water customers with even numbered addresses only water on even days and water customers with odd numbered addresses water only on odd days.

All lawn and garden irrigation system must be protected by an approved backflow prevention assembly.

Irrigation systems not protected by an approved backflow prevention assembly could endanger the health of the household and water system community. Penalties will be passed on to customers not complying.

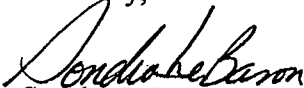
Any illegal irrigation connection will be disconnected from the water system until an approved backflow preventor is installed.

The Department of Health is now requiring all Group A water systems to provide a water conservation program to help control over usage of water.

The Water Company has installed water meters at all service connections. Water meter readings will be recorded to help control over use of water. If we receive complaints as to overuse of water we will first notify the customer by mail or phone and if the overuse still continues we will begin metered billing. Any water usage over the flat rate will be billed per each additional 100 cu. ft. as an additional surcharge.

Should you have any questions or need further information, please call (206) 282-4200 or 800-928-3750.

Sincerely,

  
Sondra LeBaron  
Agent

April 13, 2004

Washington State Utilities and Transportation Commission

For years we have heard "We are going to start reading meters" then we heard "The Department of Health is requiring us to read meters". They do not follow Health Department's laws nor fair business practices. To charge a 100 percent wheeling charge on the sale of the Everett/Monroe water has got to be illegal.

We receive zero customer service; they don't even return phone calls. They perform non-emergency water main shutdowns with out notification. Then do nothing for water quality on start-ups, no flushing of the disturbed water or bleeding of the air out of the system. We in turn have to perform our own flushing through our extremely high-metered connections.

We have purchased water conservation fixtures and appliances (price a front load washer). In our 10 years here we have replaced three hot water heaters due to their construction/maintenance practices or lack there of. We do not water our lawn, yet our monthly bill is always over the 1000 cubic foot minimum.

If they are following the Department of Health laws like they say, then please make them prove it. Where is there cross connection program, they just this month set a meter at a home with a well. By law this auxiliary water supply is a High Hazard, thus requiring and RPBA (Reduced Principle Backflow Assembly). This along with the numerous other cross connections is putting our family and friends health at risk. They plagiarize the City of Monroe's water quality report, show us where is their/our lead and copper samples drawn.

Had we known when we purchased our wonderful home what we know now we would never have purchased in the Marbello Water Utility District. They cannot continue to run this utility un-supervised, how many other small water systems are they doing this too?

Thank you,



Elaine and Greg Galloway  
18505 126 ST SE  
Snohomish, WA 98290

April 13, 2004

Washington State Utilities and Transportation Commission

Attn:

1300 So. Evergreen Park Drive, SW

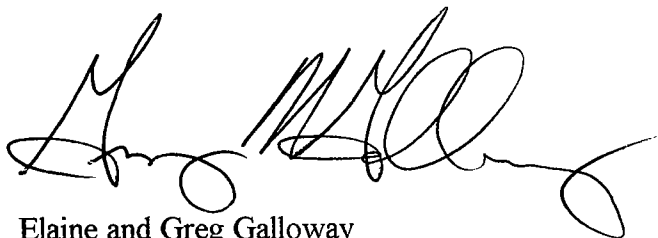
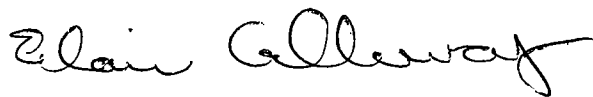
Olympia, WA 98504-7250

Dear Mr./Ms.:

Please find enclosed the original and 1 copy of our complaint(s) against the Marbello Water Company of Kent, WA.

We feel that we have complied with the filing rules. If there is anything additional that is needed, please let us know so that we can respond promptly. Thank you for your assistance.

Yours truly,



Elaine and Greg Galloway

18505 126 ST SE

Snohomish, WA 98290

Do we need to send a copy of this complaint to Marbello?

April 22, 2004

Washington Utilities & Transportation Commission  
1400 S. Evergreen Park Drive SW  
PO Box 40128  
Olympia, WA 98504

Dear Commission,

Since June 1993 we have experienced outrageous water rates, and increases, that are far from the standard charged by surrounding area water companies. The first, in June 1993, was a whopping rate increase from \$24.00 to \$31.00 flat rate and the excuse given was to promote water conservation. Other increases since then have brought us to the current rate of \$34.50 flat rate (\$32.85 plus \$1.65 tax) supposedly to promote water conservation and to pay for a health department regulation requiring water meters to be read, and additional charges were to be levied for overuse (Aug. 9, 1996 letter). Apparently, there is no health department regulation regarding water metering as Marbello has led everyone to believe. However, the rates have stayed the same and water meters were never recorded even though each year letters were received stating this would occur.

Such was a letter received in June 2002 stating meter rate billing would start on July 1, 2002 indicating an additional charge of \$.03 (three) cents per cu ft over the flat rate usage of 750 cf. As usual no meter rate billing occurred. June 2003 another letter was received regarding meter rate billing, but this time the charge was \$.04 (four) cents per cu. ft. over the flat rate usage of 750 cf but this time no actual start date was indicated. Shortly after September 19, 2003 a letter was received indicating meter rate billing indeed had begun for the September billing period, which supposedly began on September 1<sup>st</sup>, over two weeks prior.

As had been the tendency for Marbello Water, this start date was very deceptive. We received charges supposedly for service from September 1<sup>st</sup> to September 30<sup>th</sup>. This bill was for \$143.48, a whopping \$108.98 over the past water bills received for years. And, I understand that our bill was tame compared to that of other Marbello customers. **No actual start date had previously been announced so that verification of meter readings could be made.** Another letter dated October 23<sup>rd</sup> from Marbello Water indicated the actual meter readings occurred on **August 15<sup>th</sup> and September 19<sup>th</sup>** for service between **September 1<sup>st</sup> and September 30<sup>th</sup>**. The reading dates are not consistent with the reported service period. The meters again were read on October 22 for reported service between October 1<sup>st</sup> and October 31<sup>st</sup> and a reading of 174531 was recorded by Marbello. This was not accurate either. We read our meter the day before, on October 21 and, a reading of 174541 was noted. As other water customers would agree, Marbello has shown a distinct pattern of deceptive practices and inaccurate readings in this district and neighborhood. As protest, we continued to pay the flat rate billing of \$32.85 + \$1.65 tax (\$34.50) since the initial billing. Marbello Water has charged us interest on the amount since then. We finally paid the full amount on the 12/19 to 1/21 billing and decided to look for other avenues of relief.

Marbello eventually seemed to recognize the error in their ways and at the end of November 2003 changed their statements to more closely, but not exactly, resemble the actual dates when the meters were read. It also appears that they over billed us when the statement dates were changed as they did not take in account the initial

flat rate per month charge they accessed: \$32.85 plus tax minimum charge from Nov. 30 to Dec. 19 instead to Dec. 30<sup>th</sup> as had been the usual monthly charge, then another \$32.85 plus tax charge from Dec. 19, 2003 to Jan 21, 2004. This amount should have been prorated and we should have been credited the difference (\$32.85 divided by 31 days equals \$1.07, times 12 days double charged, equals \$12.84 overcharged).

Marbello Water rates are completely out of line with surrounding water company rates. Below is a comparison obtained from the respective water company websites for 3/4" line meter (October 2003):

<u>Company</u>	<u>Flat rate monthly fee</u>	<u>Additional surcharges</u>
<b>Marbello</b>	32.85 plus tax / 750 cf	.04 cents per cu ft (\$4.00 per 100 cf)
Cross Valley	\$17.16 plus tax / 700 cf	\$1.29 per 100 cf (701cf – 2000 cf)
Woodinville	\$8.70 base rate plus tax	\$1.95 per 100 cf (0 to 1200 cf)
Alderwood	\$8.67 base rate	\$1.18 winter/\$1.29 summer per 100 cf
Everett (metered)	\$16.98 for up to 1200 cf	\$1.71 ccf for over 1200 cf used
Everett (flat-rate)	\$27.10 flat rate for 2 months	none shown over flat rate fee

I also understand that another nearby water district, Sky Meadow who also purchases water from the City of Monroe, is currently paying only \$.66 per 100 cubic feet of water and is negotiating an increase to only \$1.11 per cubic feet. For some unknown reason, Marbello Water is reportedly paying nearly twice that amount, \$2.03 per 100 cubic feet (\$15.23) to the City of Monroe. So, initially Marbello was charging us over twice that of what they were paying Monroe (\$32.85 plus tax for 750 cubic feet, flat rate). To add insult to injury, they now charge us over twice that of the flat rate amount for the first 750 cubic feet, and \$4.00 per 100 cubic feet for anything over the initial flat rate. This is no less than stealing from victims who have not other available option for a necessity.

Marbello claims they need to charge us more as we have fewer customers than surrounding districts, which causes their expenses to increase. This seems ridiculous as with fewer customers there should be less utility to maintain, thus less expenses. Additionally, our water lines are not up to the standard required by and for the City of Monroe to take over our district. Marbello wants to charge us excessive rates for a system that is sub-standard and receives little ongoing maintenance. Marbello has vacillated back and forth regarding the true reason for increased rates. First it was a health department requirement then it was financial considerations. They need to get their story straight.

Due to the circumstances described above, we request the following occur:

Marbello water rates need to closely follow surrounding rates and be reasonable.

We request a refund of \$143.66 which includes overages in the flat rate water billing plus tax, interest charged, and the overage billing charges from Dec. 2003 as described.

Sincerely,



Richard Groves  
 18607 – 126 Street SE  
 Snohomish, WA 98290  
 Account # 10233000

April 30,2004

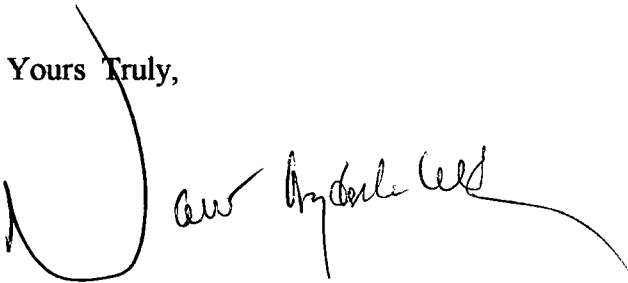
Washington State Utilities and Transportation Commission  
1300 So. Evergreen Park Drive, SW  
Olympia, WA 98504-7250

To Whom It May Concern:

Please find enclosed the original and I copy of our complaint (s) against the Marbello Water company of Kent, WA.

We feel that we have complied with the filing rules. If there is anything additional that is needed, pleas let us know so that we can respond promptly. Thank you for your assistance.

Yours Truly,



/signed/



April 30, 2004

Nance' Haydock-Keck  
18529 126<sup>th</sup> /street S E apt 1  
Snohomish, WA 98290

Washington State Utilities and Transportation Commission  
1300 So. Evergreen Park Drive, SW  
Olympia, WA 98504-7250

To Whom It May Concern:


My water bill, for the month of September was \$595.37 plus \$29.94 tax for a total of \$625.31. You can imagine my reaction, since I was in New Zealand and had rented my home out. I immediately contacted my renters to see if there was a reason for the high water bill. My renters checked out toilets and water lines and did not discover anything unusual. However they did notice that several of the neighbours were digging up their water line up as they also had water bills that had significant increases.

I contacted Marbello and asked them to verify my bill and to have my meter checked out. I followed up at least two additional times with the last one occurring in February where I was advised that they were still investigating. During this time I was advised to pay the normal amount but they did continue to charge an interest charge each month. Upon my return to the States, March 4<sup>th</sup> 2004, I again called but was not allowed to talk with anyone, so I left a message and asked for some one to give me a call since at this point it had been five months without any resolution. Finally I received a letter crediting my account for \$545.10 plus \$24.17 in interest charges. This would have left my bill at \$80.31 for the month of September. While I am very appreciative of the reduction in the bill, it is still more that double that which I normally pay (\$34.50).

Marbello wrote a letter stating that they had been selling their water at a loss and that they would need to meter and increase the rates. While I understand that they need to operate at a profit, I also would like to point out that on more than one occasion I personally called Marbello to report to them that their water lines were leaking and it took them months to respond when all the while there was water that was running out onto the road that they neglected to respond to. I can't help but think some if not a large part of their financial situation was do to their own neglect. I personally don't think the customers should have to pay an excessive rate to cover mismanagement. Nor should this justify them charging a higher rate then other districts charge.

Any help we can get from Washington State Utilities System would be greatly appreciated.

Sincerely

  
Nance' Haydock-Keck

April 30,2004


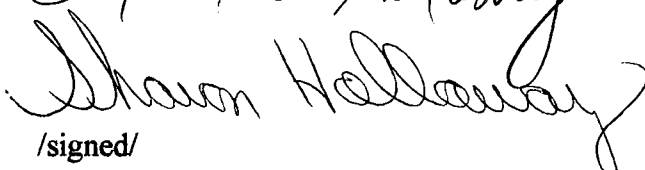
Washington State Utilities and Transportation Commission  
1300 So. Evergreen Park Drive, SW  
Olympia, WA 98504-7250

To Whom It May Concern:

Please find enclosed the original and I copy of our complaint (s) against the Marbello Water company of Kent, WA.

We feel that we have complied with the filing rules. If there is anything additional that is needed, pleas let us know so that we can respond promptly. Thank you for your assistance.

Yours Truly,

  
  
/signed/

April 10, 2004

Page 1 of 2

Washington State Utilities and Transportation Commission

We feel that as of our September billing of \$279.01 Marbello water is taking unfair advantage of all their customers. We do appreciate them cutting our bill by fifty percent and dropping the interest, but by doing so we feel they are admitting guilt. We feel that Marbello has not negotiated with Monroe water district in good faith to better their profit and our cost. We understand that they pay \$2.03 per hundred cubic feet and Monroe is selling water to Sky Meadow Association with a 45-cent increase for \$1.11 per hundred cubic feet. According to Carol Grey, Monroe City Finance Director.

According to Monroe Mayor Donnette Walser if Sky Meadow does not agree to the 45-cent increase they can continue to get water but it will be pretty expensive. They would have to pay the \$2.03 per hundred cubic feet. Also the state prison system in town pays 59 cents for a hundred cubic feet and their new rate would be \$1.59 if the City and the State Department of Corrections can agree on a new contract. We feel Monroe Water District should sell its water at the same rate to all out of city customers. Monroe City customers are paying \$2.49 per hundred cubic feet we are being billed at **\$4.38 per hundred cubic feet** of water.

We feel the remainder of the September billing in excess of \$ 34.50 should be reimbursed to us and every customer with Marbello. At the present time Marbello is charging us **\$4.38 per hundred cubic Feet.** for our water

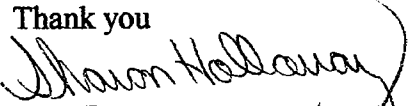
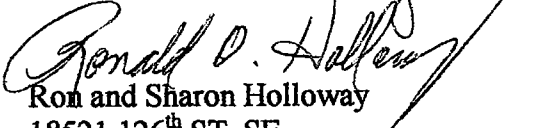
Since the September billing of \$279.01 our bills have dropped into the forty dollar a month range. Please find the attached newspaper article from the Snohomish Herald backing our comments about Sky Meadow and the prison system.

Also from September when they started reading our meters, until approximately the first of April they've had two and maybe three houses that did not have meters at all. Please see the attached photo of the two new meters.

Prior to September in the past fifteen years we have received three notices from Marbello stating they were going to start metering our water. Even after mailing us the notice they never proceeded to do so. On several occasions we have seen and reported leaks in the Marbello water system prior to any individual meters. On one occasion it took them five weeks to come out and fix a leak. When calling Marbello we would get an answering service and never get a call back from Marbello. If we did receive a call back it would be days before it happened. We feel that Marbello has run an unmanned ship for fifteen years and now they have woke up to the fact that due to their lack of maintenance they are not making any money, even with them charging \$2.35 more than they pay for the water from Monroe. We do not feel we should have to carry their burden.

Any help we can get from Washington State Utilities System would be greatly appreciated.

Thank you

Ron and Sharon Holloway  
18521 126<sup>th</sup> ST. SE  
Snohomish, WA. 98290

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Published on [HeraldNet.com](http://HeraldNet.com): 3/29/04

## Monroe weighs water rates

### Sky Meadow may see 45-cent increase

By Yoshiaki Nohara  
Herald Writer

MONROE — The city has to increase water rates, but the question is who should swallow it.

The city has asked the Sky Meadow Water Association to endure part of the pain by proposing a new rate of about \$1.11 for 100 cubic feet of water, a rate increase of about 45 cents, said Carol Grey, the city's finance director.

If the association, which serves 375 customers west of the city, used the same amount of water as last year, the city would get about \$93,000 on the new contract, an increase of about \$38,400, Grey said.

The city needs to increase the rate for the association, which has been on a lower rate than those inside the city.

"They are comfortable with the old rate, but we can't afford to give them water at that rate any more," Mayor Donnetta Walser said.

The city's contract with the association expires at the end of the month, city officials said. If the association decides not to go with the new rate, it would have to pay the same \$2.03 per 100 cubic feet of water that other individual customers outside the city pay.

"They can continue to get (water), but it will be pretty expensive," Walser said.

Clark Vellema, the association's manager, said it hasn't decided on the new contract.

"We're asking the city to continue negotiations to review various rate consideration," Vellema said, adding the association questions a rate study used by the city to determine the new rate.

The city conducted the study last year to propose new rates for the association and the state prison in town. While the association pays 66 cents for 100 cubic feet and the prison pays 59 cents, customers in the city pay \$2.49 and those outside the city pay \$2.03.

The city and the state Department of Corrections have agreed on a new contract, officials from the two agencies said. The prison would pay about \$1.59 on the new rate, which the city expects would bring in \$448,000, or an increase of about \$183,000.

Unlike the prison, the association has its own storage system, said Brad Feilberg, the city's engineering director. That's why the new rate is lower than the one for the prison.

The new rates for the prison and association would keep the rate for the others from increasing, Walser said.

"What we are trying to do is to be fair," she said.

There should be a difference between the rate for the association, which doesn't have many meters for the city to read, and for the other customers, Vellema said.

The city is trying to downplay the difference and use the association as "cash cow," he said.

Reporter Yoshiaki Nohara: 425-339-3029 or [ynohara@heraldnet.com](mailto:ynohara@heraldnet.com).



COPY

April 12, 2004

Washington State Utilities and Transportation Commission  
1300 S. Evergreen Park Drive SW  
P.O. Box 47250  
Olympia, WA 98504-7250

RE: Marbello Water Company

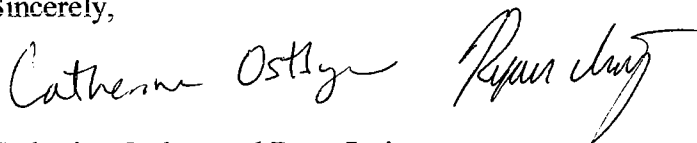
Dear Sir or Madam:

It is our understanding that during the hearing regarding the regulation of Marbello Water Company on March 25<sup>th</sup>, Marbello agreed to become a regulated water company. We believe that because we were charged \$411.97 for consumption prior to Marbello becoming a regulated water company in compliance with the laws of the State of Washington, our money should be refunded. We feel amounts billed in September and October 2003 in excess of the \$34.50 base rate should be reimbursed to each and every customer of Marbello. We do not think that the customers of Marbello should share any of the burden Marbello brought on themselves by failing to follow the laws of Washington state.

We also feel that all customers who purchase their water from the City of Monroe should be charged the same rate. We understand that Marbello purchases water from the City of Monroe for \$2.03 per 100 cubic feet, then attempted to charge their customers \$4.06 per 100 cubic feet. According to the article "*Monroe weighs water rates*" in the Everett Herald on March 29<sup>th</sup>, Sky Meadow Water Association will pay only \$1.11 per 100 cubic feet after a 45-cent rate increase. The article also states that the Department of Corrections pays a mere 59 cents per 100 cubic feet currently, and would pay only \$1.59 after a recently proposed increase. Customers in the city of Monroe pay a whopping \$2.49 per 100 cubic feet. Other customers who purchase water from the City of Monroe should not be subsidizing the water provided to other water associations or at the state prison.

Any help the Washington State Utilities Commission can provide in these matters would be greatly appreciated. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,



Catherine Ostbye and Ryan Irving  
18808 126<sup>th</sup> Street SE  
Snohomish, WA 98290

April 20, 2004

Statement of Facts and Complaints of:

Margaret LaCombe and David Williams  
18804 126<sup>th</sup> St SE  
Snohomish, WA 98290  
(360) 805-1926

RE: Marbello Acct. # 10266000

We did not receive notification that metered billing of our water consumption would begin until October 8, 2003. On October 17, we received a bill for the month of September (1<sup>st</sup> through 30<sup>th</sup>) for a total of \$444.96 indicating a usage of 10,520 cubic feet of water for two people. There was no indication of a leak of this magnitude- there was no change in water pressure, no sink holes, no water leaking out of the ground, and no notification from Marbello regarding our consumption even though they have been taking readings since at least May 2003. We repaired the leak (installed all new water lines from the meter a distance to our home of about 350 feet) at our own considerable cost and labor by October 27<sup>th</sup> and notified the company both by phone and in writing of the repair. We were informed by the company a credit would be issued once the leaks were repaired so we paid the monthly rate of \$34.50. Our average consumption after the repair is now about 600-650 cubic feet of water. We received a bill for October on November 13<sup>th</sup> with a past due notice for the \$444.96 plus an additional \$370.00. We again contacted the company and received no information until a letter arrived the following week stating we would be issued a 50% credit but still owed \$405.99. We paid the bill fearing our water would be turned off but feel this amount should be refunded since the company had known about this outrageous consumption for months and failed to notify us. It certainly would have been much easier to repair the leak in May or June than the last part of October. We also could have avoided a huge water wastage that occurred over one of the driest summers on record in the region.

We feel Marbello has been remiss in proper communication with its customers by not notifying of outrageous consumption amounts and for not responding to phone calls or written communication in a timely or effective manner at any time. Their billing dates have been changed several times and are inconsistent with the reading dates adding to the confusion. It also seems they are charging two to four times that of surrounding neighborhoods which obtain water from the same source: City of Monroe.

We believe the fair thing to do is: bill the flat rate from September 2003, refund the amount that was paid over this, develop a metered billing coinciding with reading dates that is fair and consistent with surrounding neighborhoods, and inform customers of abnormal consumption rates allowing them time to correct a problem if it exists.

Sincerely,



Margaret LaCombe  
David Williams



To whom it may concern:

Since May of 1999 our water bill has been a monthly amount of \$34.50 including tax. We have consistently paid our bill on time.

My husband + I paid six months in advance for the months of June through Dec. 2003, the amount of \$241.50.

In Sept. of 2003, we were billed an additional \$102.17, saying our water consumption was higher.

Because there are only the two of us at this address and are at work during the day, we felt this to be completely inaccurate. We had already paid in advance for the Sept. bill and hadn't received any prior notice to this exorbitant and outrageous amount.

We tried countless times to call throughout different times of the day, to no avail. We left messages and Marbello never ~~answered any~~ returned any of our calls.

When we did reach someone at Marbello, they could not explain facts as to the high amount. They said they had been reading our meter and it was showing higher water consumption.

In the five years we've been at this address, I can not recall ever seeing anyone read our meter. It is overgrown with shrubs & covered with dirt. No signs of being wiped off to read. In January of 2004, we noticed three blue flags pushed into the ground by the meter.

Marbello also told us to pay the extra amount or our water would

be shut off. We paid the  
\$102.17 in protest, and I strongly  
feel we should be reimbursed.

Charles + Catherine Leach

18718 Bello Paseo, SE  
Snohomish, WA 98290  
(360) 994-3640  
4/27/04

Garth & Shannon Lien  
18513 126<sup>th</sup> ST SE  
Snohomish, WA 98290

April 22 2004

To: Washington Utilities Commission

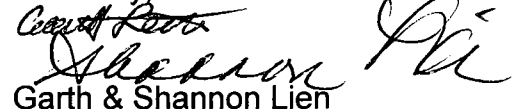
We would like to formally petition that our water supplier Marbello Water Services be regulated by the Washington State Utilities Commission. They have served our home since it was built in 1994.

Generally we not informed in advance of water shut offs for repairs. I do not expect advance notification of emergency repairs. In the past ,water leaks have not always been taken care of in a timely manner. After repairs the water mains have not been properly purged of air or flushed. At the end of our service to 4 homes is a fire hydrant that I have to open after each water service interruption. Marbello to my knowledge, has never purged the mains from this point. This is the high point for the water mains in the 126<sup>th</sup> block.

Marbello has been inconsistent with their notices of intent to read water meters. We received several notices over the years to read meters and they never did until the end of last summer (after several years of notification). If they say they are going to implement something; do it or send a retraction.

Marbello is supplied by City of Monroe water, yet our rates are significantly higher and only allowed a base of 700 cu ft. with additional charges after 700 cu ft. With the implementation of metering reading Marbello showed no justification of their new charges.

Sincerely,

  
Garth & Shannon Lien

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**BARRY & RACHELLE MEEHAN**  
**12814 189TH DR SE**  
**SNOHOMISH, WA 98290**  
**HOME (360) 794-6636**  
**bemchell64@aol.com**

April 26<sup>th</sup>, 2004

To Whom it may concern:

This is a Complaint against Marbello Water Company. We too received a large Bill for water in Oct. for the usage in the month of Sept. They said that we used 2313 cubic feet . I called to complain and was told that we should just send in the usual flat rate of \$34.50 and give them time to figure things out, So I did. I guess they never figured things out because they still wanted what I believe is an inflated rate. In talking with some of the other Neighbors I found that we were not all being told the same thing on how to handle the situation. I must tell you we are a 2 person household and we do not wash our cars at home nor did we water our lawn that Summer as they had asked us all to conserve. So you can see that it is a little hard for me to believe that 2 people with no leaks on there line can use that much water in one month. The highest bill I have received after that was 628 cubic feet which just so happened to be the very next bill ( Oct.). This is where things get a little interesting to me. My next 2 bills for Nov. and Dec. were both 481 cubic feet. Which makes me wonder if they are actually getting out of there truck every month and really reading the meters. I do not know if this was a one time thing or the fact that I had observed Illiad Services not get out of there truck that month to read the 3 yes 3 meters on my Property. They sat there for about 5 minutes or so doing what looked like paperwork and went on up the hill to read ( I assume) the other meters in the neighborhood.

We also received a letter from Marbello stating that they would go back to the flat rate until spring after the Oct. billing. I do not believe it is fair to outrageously over bill one month and then when we all made complaints about it say o.k. they will go back to the flat rate , BUT still charge that inflated month? Finally on Nov. 14<sup>th</sup> we received a letter from Marbello responding to why they are trying to change the way they charge. They said it was because of purchasing water from Monroe for the last 2 years. I think that we should have been notified of that purchase before they even did it. I have wondered why our water is ( in my view) not quality drinking water anymore. If they had to purchase extra water you would think that they would realize that would cost them more and adjust the billing expecting that. Instead I believe we were all broad sided with this and not given a chance to adjust our lives and budget accordingly.

Furthermore I believe that we were charged \$ 60.87 too much and should receive a refund.  
Enclosed are copies of all our bills from Sept. on

Thank you

  
Rachelle Meehan

4-26-04

Statement of Facts and Complaint of:

Mark & Karen Moore  
Service Address: 18802 126<sup>th</sup> St. SE  
Snohomish, WA 98290  
(360) 794-6576  
Marbello Acct. No. 10253000

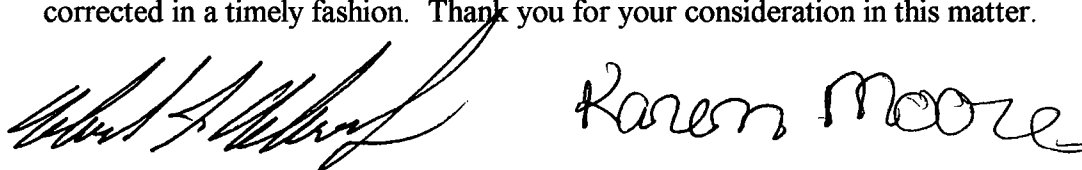
This letter is to make a formal complaint regarding the unfair business practices of Marbello Water Company. Marbello notified us sometime last year that they were changing their billing practices and would begin to charge us based on usage rather than the flat rate of \$32.85 per month.

In a letter dated November 14, 2003 from Marbello Water Company to us it was stated that they "started meter readings in May 2003 to establish the accuracy and consistency of the reading prior to sending out the first meter rate billing for August/September 2003." The first statement that we received reflecting a metered billing was dated October 15, 2003 for the period dated 9/01/03 through 9/30/03. The statement did not reflect which date the meter reading had taken place. We were never provided with an initial meter reading. We feel it was Marbello's responsibility to provide us with this information along with statements of each meter reading that had taken place prior to the October 15, 2003 bill.

Our meter is placed in a group of four meters. Two of our neighbors were shocked to receive bills in the hundreds of dollars for one month's water usage. This obviously reflected long time leaks in their systems which needed to be repaired. They were informed by Marbello that it was their responsibility to repair the leaks and if done in a timely manner then Marbello would work out a payment arrangement with them. Once again, Marbello stated that they had been reading meters since May. Why didn't they give these customers information that obviously reflected something was broken in their system...giving them an opportunity to repair the broken lines...saving Marbello and themselves hundreds of dollars in water costs?

In December Marbello changed their billing from beginning to end of month to mid month without notifying us of this change. We did not receive a statement for the time period of 12/19/03 through 1/21/04. Our water usage was the exact same amount for this time period as the previous month. We find this curious.

Our metered statements have ranged from 1328 to 848 units of water used in a month since September. We use water in a fairly consistent manner and so do not understand this wide variation in meter readings. So what is our bottom line complaint? We are not confident that Marbello is charging us consistently and fairly for our water usage. We would like this situation corrected in a timely fashion. Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

The image shows two handwritten signatures in black ink. The signature on the left is for Mark Moore and the one on the right is for Karen Moore. Both are written in a cursive, flowing style.

Mark & Karen Moore, 14911 Chain Lake Rd., #301, Monroe, WA 98272 (mailing address)

April 30, 2004

Washington State Utilities and Transportation Commission  
1300 So. Evergreen Park Drive SW  
Olympia, WA 98504-7250

To Whom It May Concern:

Please find enclosed the original and a copy of our complaint (s) against the Marbello Water company of Kent, WA.

We feel that we have complied with the filing rules. If there is anything additional that is needed, please let us know so we can respond promptly. Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,

David & Vicki Poole

April 10, 2004

Dave & Vikki Poole  
18529 - 126<sup>th</sup> St SE  
Snohomish, WA 98290

Washington State Utilities and Transportation Commission;

Let me first say that we do appreciate Marbello water cutting our bill. I do however still feel that Marbello is taking advantage of the people who depend on them. We also feel that Marbello hasn't worked with the Monroe water district to help better themselves or to help us with the cost of water to the customers.

On numerous occasions several of us have repeatedly contacted Marbello water over water leaks in their systems. Not only were the water leaks not fixed but, there was no returned phone calls even acknowledging the reports. Out of frustration there was nothing further that we could do as customers. We feel that we should not have to cover the burden of mismanagement by Marbello.

We feel that the Monroe water district should be charging everyone the same amount for water rather than discriminating with different fees for water for different areas within the same community i.e. state prison, city and rural Monroe.

We appreciate any help from the Washington State Utilities System in helping us resolve this matter.

Thank you for your help in advance, as it is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

David & Vikki Poole



Published on [HeraldNet.com](http://HeraldNet.com): 3/29/04

## Monroe weighs water rates Sky Meadow may see 45-cent increase

By Yoshiaki Nohara  
Herald Writer

MONROE – The city has to increase water rates, but the question is who should swallow it.

The city has asked the Sky Meadow Water Association to endure part of the pain by proposing a new rate of about \$1.11 for 100 cubic feet of water, a rate increase of about 45 cents, said Carol Grey, the city's finance director.

If the association, which serves 375 customers west of the city, used the same amount of water as last year, the city would get about \$93,000 on the new contract, an increase of about \$38,400, Grey said.

The city needs to increase the rate for the association, which has been on a lower rate than those inside the city.

"They are comfortable with the old rate, but we can't afford to give them water at that rate any more," Mayor Donnetta Waiser said.

The city's contract with the association expires at the end of the month, city officials said. If the association decides not to go with the new rate, it would have to pay the same \$2.03 per 100 cubic feet of water that other individual customers outside the city pay.

"They can continue to get (water), but it will be pretty expensive," Waiser said.

Clark Vellema, the association's manager, said it hasn't decided on the new contract.

"We're asking the city to continue negotiations to review various rate consideration," Vellema said, adding the association questions a rate study used by the city to determine the new rate.

The city conducted the study last year to propose new rates for the association and the state prison in town. While the association pays 66 cents for 100 cubic feet and the prison pays 59 cents, customers in the city pay \$2.49 and those outside the city pay \$2.03.

The city and the state Department of Corrections have agreed on a new contract, officials from the two agencies said. The prison would pay about \$1.59 on the new rate, which the city expects would bring in \$448,000, or an increase of about \$183,000.

Unlike the prison, the association has its own storage system, said Brad Fellberg, the city's engineering director. That's why the new rate is lower than the one for the prison.

The new rates for the prison and association would keep the rate for the others from increasing, Waiser said.

"What we are trying to do is to be fair," she said.

There should be a difference between the rate for the association, which doesn't have many meters for the city to read, and for the other customers, Vellema said.

The city is trying to downplay the difference and use the association as "cash cow," he said.

Reporter Yoshiaki Nohara: 425-339-3029 or [yohara@heraldnet.com](mailto:yohara@heraldnet.com).

# Constance R. Reid



18515 126th St.. S.E. ♦ Snohomish, WA 98290  
Home Phone (360) 794-9397 ♦ Email dibreid@yahoo.com  
April 23, 2004

Washington State Utilities and Transportation Commission  
1300 S. Evergreen Park Drive, S.W.  
Olympia, WA 98504-7250

Re : Marbello Water Company rates.

We do not understand why there are so many rates for Monroe water system water, which is sold to several different suppliers , which is then sold to users at so many different rates :

Monroe City customers pay \$2.49 per hundred cubic feet  
Sky Meadow association pays \$1.11 per hundred cubic feet  
The State Prison will be paying \$1.59 per hundred cubic feet  
Marbello pays \$2.03 per cubic foot and charges us \$4.38 per hundred cubic feet!!!!

When we live a half mile outside the city limits paying almost twice the price for the water really galls me!  
Marbello charges us over twice what they pay for the water.

WHY????? This water all comes out of the same tank.

Our water bill in September ( The first metered bill) was \$148.00 That is because I sprinkled the parched lawn, thinking it was so dry it was a fire hazard. By constant fussing about wasting water we got the bill down to the minimum usage of 750 cubic feet, but then in March I hosed the winter accumulation of debris off the deck and that cost over ten dollars!!!

There are three adults living in this house. We each take three showers a week and wash clothes every other day and run the dish washer once a day . We are not wasteful and yet we use over the minimum according to their meter. We have no leaks. we checked. At this rate we will have to start using paper plates and wearing dirty clothes and take fewer baths, and throw out my houseplants. I will NEVER EVER sprinkle the lawn again--I can't afford such a luxury.

I feel sorry for the families with several school aged children. More baths, more laundry more dishes to wash.

Any help you can give us in resolving this matter will be appreciated.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Constance R. Reid".

Constance R. Reid

April 30,2004

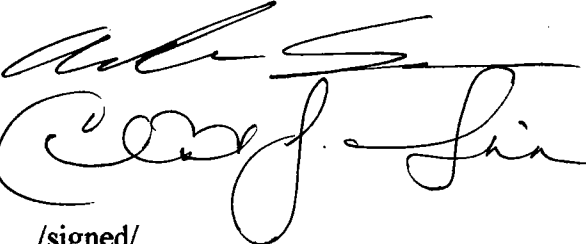
Washington State Utilities and Transportation Commission  
1300 So. Evergreen Park Drive, SW  
Olympia, WA 98504-7250

To Whom It May Concern:

Please find enclosed the original and I copy of our complaint (s) against the Marbello Water company of Kent, WA.

We feel that we have complied with the filing rules. If there is anything additional that is needed, pleas let us know so that we can respond promptly. Thank you for your assistance.

Yours Truly,



The image shows two handwritten signatures in black ink. The top signature is a cursive name that appears to be 'John S. ...'. The bottom signature is also cursive and appears to be 'Cory J. ...'. Below the bottom signature is the text '/signed/'.

/signed/

**April 13, 2004**

**Andre and Christine Sinn  
19413 130<sup>th</sup> Place SE  
Snohomish, WA 98290**

**Washington State Utilities and Transportation Commission  
1300 South Evergreen Park Drive, SE  
Olympia, WA 98504-7250**

**To Whom It May Concern:**

**We have been Marbello customers for the past 5 years. We moved out here from the Seattle/Edmonds area because we loved the community feel of the Snohomish/Monroe area and specifically, we loved the house and property we bought. We have two children and we were looking forward to having space for them to run and enjoy the property we own. However, it has become increasingly difficult for us to enjoy the home we live in, because of the water rates. The kids aren't able to fill up their wading pool because of the cost of the water. We aren't able to water the lawn for a nice green yard for them to run in. Simple things like giving them baths, watering the plants in the house, washing the dishes and even filling up a water bottle for drinking, all have to be considered with some hesitation and great thought because of the outrageous billing that is being charged by Marbello. We understand and agree with cutting back during the summertime and during times of reduction in use, but this is ridiculous.**

**We would like for you to consider our dissatisfaction with Marbello and hopefully, with your help, something can be done to keep this company from continuing to charge these people outrageous amounts for it's own mistakes.**

**Thank you,**

**Andre and Christine Sinn**

Handwritten signatures of Andre and Christine Sinn. The top signature is Andre Sinn and the bottom signature is Christine Sinn.

Published on [HeraldNet.com](http://HeraldNet.com): 3/29/04

## Monroe weighs water rates Sky Meadow may see 45-cent increase

By Yoshiaki Nohara  
Herald Writer

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The city needs to increase the rate for the association, which has been on a lower rate than those inside the city.

"They are comfortable with the old rate, but we can't afford to give them water at that rate any more," Mayor Donnetta Walser said.

The city's contract with the association expires at the end of the month, city officials said. If the association decides not to go with the new rate, it would have to pay the same \$2.03 per 100 cubic feet of water that other individual customers outside the city pay.

"They can continue to get (water), but it will be pretty expensive," Walser said.

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The new rates for the prison and association would keep the rate for the others from increasing, Walser said.

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There should be a difference between the rate for the association, which doesn't have many meters for the city to read, and for the other customers, Vellema said.

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Reporter Yoshiaki Nohara: 425-339-3029 or [yohara@heraldnet.com](mailto:yohara@heraldnet.com).

4/23/04

RE: Complaint against Marbello Water Company  
TO: Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission, Olympia, WA

To Whom It May Concern:

Our water bill has consistently been \$34.50 since June 2000 and before that it was \$31.51 for as long as I can remember and we have lived here going on 15 years. As far as I know we have never exceeded the standard monthly usage.

Every spring Marbello sends out a water conservation letter. This last year a letter was sent out stating that starting September 2003 customers who used in excess of 750 cu. ft. would be charged .04 for every cu. ft. over the base.

For the month of September our bill was \$256.45 alleging we had exceeded the base usage of 750 cu ft. The meter reading alleged that we utilized 6033 which we feel is inaccurate. There are just two adults living here and we both work full time during the day. We have done some research into water usage and find it inconceivable that we could have used that much water. This equates to a \$211.95 overcharge.

The subsequent billing for the month of October showed a consumption of 1081 cu. ft. and for November 871. Billing statements prior to September 2003 did not show consumption amounts.

Subsequently on October 23, 2003 we received a letter from Marbello indicating that after October billing will go back to the flat rate. Since that time are bills have fluctuated as follows:

Nov	\$39.59
Dec	\$44.54
Jan	\$47.11
Feb	\$37.27
March	\$42.69

These figures represent an overcharge of \$38.70. This in addition to the \$221.95 overcharge for September equals \$260.65. We are looking for this amount to be refunded to us.

Marbello would not return our calls to discuss the matter. They requested that all correspondence be in writing. We complies with this but all we got in return were *form* letters defending their position.

Because our credit rating is very important to us we have paid all of these bills in full and in a timely manner to avoid the possibility of marring our good credit but we feel we were backed into a corner with no alternatives.

We are pleased and relieved that you are looking into regulating the Marbello Water Company operation. Anything you could do to aid us in recovery would be appreciated.

Sincerely,

*Tracey Smith*  
*Jim Smith*

Tracey and Jim Smith

*18815-130<sup>th</sup> St. S.E.*  
*Snohomish, WA 98290*  
*(360) 794-1252*