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To Whom It May Concern:

As a concerned citizen of Martin County, KY, I can understand everyone's frustration with the thoughts of an additional water rate hike for anyone. Of course, if there were improvements made, I could respect the notion of a legitimate hike for continued upgrades and improvements. I assumed that the takeover by Alliance Water Resources would remedy and modernize our water infrastructure that could once again provide the quality of water safe for our everyday needs. Clean water should remain a nonnegotiable for all residents. Unfortunately, the water crisis in our small communities leaves more questions than answers by the concerned citizens of Martin County. When no one listens to or acts upon our concerns and the mounting issues that cause problems, how is it justified for the Martin County Water and Sanitation District to request a rate hike when Martin County customers have yet to see real changes after imposing additional fees and past rate hikes the last couple of years?

Of course, the water issue doesn't simply revolve around the proposed "rate hike" by the water district. As a customer of the Martin County Water and Sanitation District, I have been facing property damage issues that must hold them accountable for their inaction. Perhaps the problem with water usage isn't from theft that could lead to prosecution, but for property owners like me who see hundreds and even thousands of gallons of water wasted on a daily basis because of a leak that has been ignored since my original complaint on February 24, 2021. After four messages to the water district since February, I have been ignored when requesting that the water district make repairs to a broken water line that continues to cause damage to my property—destroying my blacktop driveway and my yard. They have never shown enough courtesy to at least pretend to care how they treat their customers or care about customer concerns. It is disrespectful and uphauling when a customer's complaints are quite simply IGNORED.

My property matters to me. I paid for it. It is not theirs to destroy. I take pride in what I own. As I sit and watch my property be destroyed, I am still paying for water service each month for low water pressure and to buy my drinking water in fear of contamination. I am sure the leak that was addressed in my original complaint should have been followed up with a boil water advisory. I am a patient person, but this has absolutely gone too far for too long. I should not have to accept property damage caused by someone else's inept ability to stand up and take responsibility for their customers' concerns and complaints. Not only that, but I should not be addressing the PSC about Alliance Water Resources if the water district was a responsible business that truly showed concern to remedy complaints and listen to their customers.

At this point and moving forward, I demand action that they repair the water line that is on their side of the water meter and make necessary repairs to damaged property caused by their negligence and neglect. Their negligence and their neglect have become my burden—all because they would not repair a broken line three months ago.

I have numerous photos and video footage to show the continuous flowing stream of water day in and day out expanding into my yard, pushing mud from under the blacktop, eroding the

sealer, and causing ruts to form and loose gravel to settle on my driveway. I cannot mow the lawn in sections of my yard because of the heavily saturated soil. I cannot have my driveway sealed as water continues to stream uninterrupted. That saturated soil is weakening my “once” dependable driveway. I feel that my hands are tied because the line is on their side of the water meter. Therefore, there is no way I can resolve this unless they make the first move.

I want to be clear that in no way is this a complaint to bash anyone or belittle a company. It is simply one that needs to be heard by the water district and resolved as quickly as possible. The anticipated cost for repairs alone is stressful and most likely unavoidable given the fact the water line has continuously leaked since at least February 24, 2021. I simply want the problems rectified. That is all I ask.

Below is a detailed accounting of the requests made to the Martin County Water and Sanitation. After repeated, unsuccessful attempts to call about my situation, I finally decided I had no other choice but to use the only other method I knew...Facebook.

February 24, 2021, sent at 9:47 PM—My first reported Facebook private message to the Martin County Water and Sanitation contained the following:

- Suspected water leak on the water district’s side of the meter;
- Informed them of water standing/saturating my blacktop driveway;
- Reminded to them that they cut a square in my blacktop last year (although I never saw water saturating my driveway at any time);
- A reminder that they dug several holes in my yard in April 2020 (one hole dug last year has now caused a section of my blacktop to completely break apart along the edge);
- Dug several holes in my yard and cut my gas line and covered it back without making me aware of it (and I had to call Columbia Gas to report a gas leak once I discovered my gas was not working);
- Made them aware that the leak was on their side of the water meter;
- Requested immediate attention in the matter before damage to my driveway occurred;
- Provided them with my address and contact number;
- Thanked them for their attention regarding the urgent matter; and
- Sent five photos of my driveway showing the water saturation from the line break.

February 24, 2021: I received an immediate reply from the Martin County Water and Sanitation District via Facebook private message informing me that my complaint was relayed to someone. However, there was no reply or follow-up from anyone for the next two days (Feb 25-26).

February 26, 2021, sent at 12:49 PM—My second reported Facebook private message to the Martin County Water and Sanitation District contained the following:

- Sent 17 new photos of the water leak expanding;
- Told them that gravels in the blacktop starting to separate and sealer topped last year was beginning to dissolve;

- Wetness had expanded to side yard;

February 26, 2021, reply at 1:46 PM by a water district employee

- Said he would send someone to check it out (on the same day of his reply);
- Stated that they have leaks all over the county;
- Stated that the winter storm buried them;
- Would get to it ASAP.

—No follow-up information to my February 26th complaint after that—

March 23, 2021, sent at 8:09 AM—My third reported Facebook private message to the Martin County Water and Sanitation contained the following:

- Informed them that driveway had a steady stream of water flowing;
- Had low water pressure and milky appearance at times with inconsistent sputtering in the lines;
- Cracked parts of my driveway;
- Added that the lower end of my yard was soggy (no longer able to walk on it);
- Sent a video of the water “streaming” from my driveway;
(No reply to my repeated complaint of March 23rd although MY MESSAGE was seen.)

May 3, 2021, sent at 8:40 PM—My fourth reported Facebook private message from my original complaint on February 24, 2021, to the Martin County Water and Sanitation contained the following:

- Updated to them that I have cracks and breaks on my driveway caused by the damaged water line on their side of the meter;
- Reiterated that the middle of my blacktop was completely saturated and weakening;
- Repeated to them that the leak that continuously streams in my driveway had saturated a portion of my yard that is growing daily and affecting other areas of my driveway;
- The dirt beneath the blacktop was forced outward along the edge of my driveway and visible;
- Repeated that the line needed repaired;
- Advised them that my driveway would need repairs caused by the water line leak on their side of the meter;
(No reply to my repeated complaint of May 3rd although MY MESSAGE was seen.)

In order for Martin County citizens to live in a community with safe water, reliable customer support, and a sense of pride, the water district needs to step up and show action to deflect on their improprieties. To suggest a rate hike by any amount is a slap in the face to Martin County and its citizens. What company accepts the responsibility to take over a failing water district but cannot accept consequences for their inaction and inadequacies? No legitimate business would do that. Period.

Respectfully,

Willie Stepp,
A Concerned and Dissatisfied Customer

*Martin County Water District
387 East Main Street, Suite 140
Inez, KY 41224

*Craig Miller
Martin County Water District
c/o Alliance Water Resources, Inc.
1402 East Main Street
Inez, KY 41224

*Cassandra Moore
Martin County Water District
c/o Alliance Water Resources, Inc.
1402 East Main Street
Inez, KY 41224

*Brian Cumbo
Attorney at Law
P.O. Box 1844
Inez, KENTUCKY 41224

*Mary V. Cromer
Appalachian Citizens' Law Center, Inc.
317 Main Street
Whitesburg, KENTUCKY 41858