

**STATE OF RHODE ISLAND AND PROVIDENCE PLANTATIONS  
DIVISION OF PUBLIC UTILITIES AND CARRIERS  
100 ORANGE STREET  
PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND 02903**

IN RE: Investigation into Meter Reading :  
Practices of the Providence Water : Docket No. D-00-21  
Supply Board :

NOTICE OF FORMAL INVESTIGATION

Whereas, the Providence Water Supply Board’s (“PWSB”) ability to perform regular and accurate reads of its water meters has been a frequent matter of regulatory examination by the Division of Public Utilities and Carriers (“Division”) and the Public Utilities Commission (“Commission”) over the last eight years (See Docket Nos. 2048, 2051, 2108, 2222, 2304, 2961 and D-97-6).

Whereas, the ratepayers of the PWSB have contributed significant revenues over the years for the purpose of improving the PWSB’s meter-reading efficiency.

Whereas, the Division continues to see manifestations of the PWSB’s meter-reading difficulties, as evidenced in:

1. An increased number of consumer complaints relating to meter-reading estimates;
2. The reduction in the percentage of actual reads vs. estimated reads over the last three years, and various related data inconsistencies, as reflected in monthly “meter reading radix system” reports filed by the PWSB at the behest of the Division; and

3. Most recently, the supporting testimony contained in the Narragansett Bay Commission's ("NBC") general rate filing in Commission Docket No. 3163, wherein the NBC's Director for Administration and Finance characterized the meter-reading data provided to the NBC by the PWSB as "poor and unreliable".

Whereas, the Division finds that the PWSB's persistent meter-reading difficulties now warrant a complete investigation, which the Division will conduct pursuant to Rhode Island General Laws, Section 39-4-13.

Now, therefore it is

(16405) ORDERED:

That the Division hereby establishes the instant docket for the purpose of thoroughly investigating the Providence Water Supply Board's meter-reading practices.

Dated and Effective at Providence, Rhode Island on October 17, 2000.

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Thomas F. Ahern  
Administrator