

## **NOTICE TO CUSTOMERS**

Pursuant to Section 367.081(4)(a), Florida Statutes, water and wastewater utilities are permitted to adjust the rates and charges to its customers without those customers bearing the additional expense of a public hearing. These adjustments in rates would depend on increases or decreases in noncontrollable expenses subject to inflationary pressures such as chemicals, and other general operation and maintenance costs.

Pursuant to Section 367.081(4)(b), Florida Statutes, water and wastewater utilities are permitted to pass through, without a public hearing, a change in rates resulting from: an increase or decrease in rates charged for utility services received from a governmental agency or another regulated utility and which services were redistributed by the utility to its customers; an increase or decrease in the rates that it is charged for electric power, the amount of ad valorem taxes assessed against its used and useful property, the fees charged by the Department of Environmental Protection in connection with the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Program, or the regulatory assessment fees imposed upon it by the Commission; costs incurred for water quality or wastewater quality testing required by the Department of Environmental Protection; the fees charged for wastewater biosolids disposal; costs incurred for any tank inspection required by the Department of Environmental Protection or a local governmental authority; treatment plant and water distribution system operator license fees required by the Department of Environmental Protection or a local governmental authority; water or wastewater operating permit fees charged by the Department of Environmental Protection or a local governmental authority; and consumptive or water use permit fees charged by a water management district.

On November 15, 2018, Bocilla Utilities, Inc. filed its notice of intention with the Florida Public Service Commission to increase water and wastewater rates in Charlotte County pursuant to these Statutes as the result of an increase in water rates imposed on Bocilla Utilities, Inc. by the Englewood Water District. The filing is subject to review by the Commission Staff for accuracy and completeness. Water rates will increase by approximately 1.01% and wastewater rates by -0%. In addition, the gallonage charge for water will increase by \$2.39 per 1,000 gallons and -0- for wastewater. These rates should be reflected for service rendered on or after February 1, 2019.

If you should have any questions, please contact our office at (941) 769-0561 or [office@bocillautilities.com](mailto:office@bocillautilities.com).

*Be sure to have your account number handy for quick reference.*

Over the past year, Bocilla Utilities has had customers with water bills in excess of \$5,000.00 for incidents related to irrigation, swimming pool and plumbing leaks in unoccupied and unattended homes.

Florida Public Service Commission states, "It is important to have leaks repaired because the customer, not the utility company, is responsible for any leaks on the customer's side of the water meter. If the leak is on the customer's side of the meter, the customer can be billed for the consumption of water and any other related wastewater charges. The company is under no obligation to show how the water was consumed once it has passed through the meter. The company is obligated to make sure the meter is working correctly and that accurate readings are being taken".

To prevent this from happening to you, and to encourage water conservation, the utility has the following tips and recommendations:

1. *Install two (2) shut off valves.* The first one should be located at the home; the second on the homeowner's side of the meter. If you currently do not have two shut off valves, a licensed plumber can install them for you. It is highly recommended both be turned off whenever the property is going to be unoccupied and unattended. This is the best way to ensure there is no unknown water usage in your absence.
2. *Have the property checked regularly.* Secure someone who will regularly visit the property to verify the water has remained off or has been shut off after a guest. They should thoroughly check the home inside for running toilets and leaky faucets, and outside for running hoses (especially on docks and pools), irrigation malfunctions and plumbing leaks in the yard. They should also check the meter during each visit to record and compare meter readings, and to determine if the meter dial is spinning.
3. *Explore and consider Technology.* If you must leave the water on during your absence due to a swimming pool or irrigation, with today's technology, there are a number of ways (in addition to securing someone to visually check your property regularly) for you to remotely monitor your home 24/7. One such example is a smart home water monitor from Streamlabs <https://streamlabswater.com/> or Flo <https://meetflo.com/>. This type of device can easily be installed on the main water line, on the homeowner's side of the meter, and monitored by way of a smart phone app.
4. *Learn more about conservation at:* <https://www.epa.gov/watersense> The United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has sponsored WaterSense, a voluntary partnership program. WaterSense is both a label for water-efficient products and a resource for helping you save water.

As always, should you have any questions, or if the utility can be of any assistance whatsoever, please do not hesitate to contact us.