



Bucks County

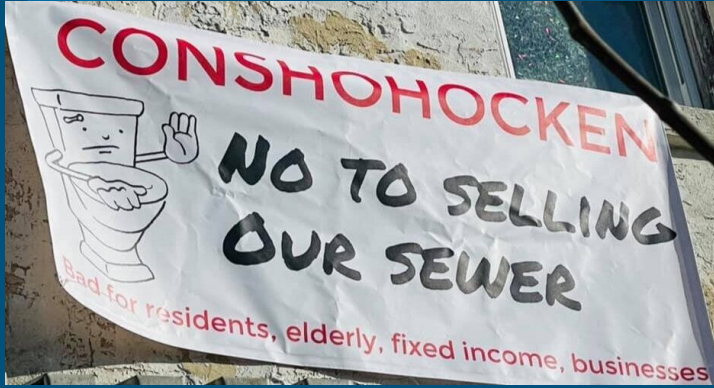
Neighbors Opposing Privatization
Efforts



What is NOPE?

- We're your neighbors
- Different towns, same lies about the benefits of selling essential infrastructure to investors
- Successfully stopped the sale of municipal sewer systems in Norristown and Conshohocken.
- Working now to stop the Sale in Towamencin and Bucks
- Regular contact with similar groups fighting attempted privatization across the commonwealth

What is NOPE?



How Did We Get Here?

- Act 12 passed in 2016, allowed inflated valuation of water and wastewater systems
- Supposedly a way to save distressed systems but the results show otherwise
- Buyers are entitled to recover Fair Market Value of purchase through rates
- Nearly unanimous bipartisan votes
- A majority of PA legislators take money from the water utility companies that lobbied for this bill

What's going on in Bucks County?

- Aqua submitted an unsolicited offer to BCWSA in 2020
- BCWSA board signed a 1 year exclusivity agreement to explore the sale
- Public meetings so far have had very little notice at inconvenient times
- Last 2 meetings were Aqua PR events, not town halls

“For the hearings that we had for Bucks County, we organized them much like an expo” Essential Utility CEO Chris Franklin

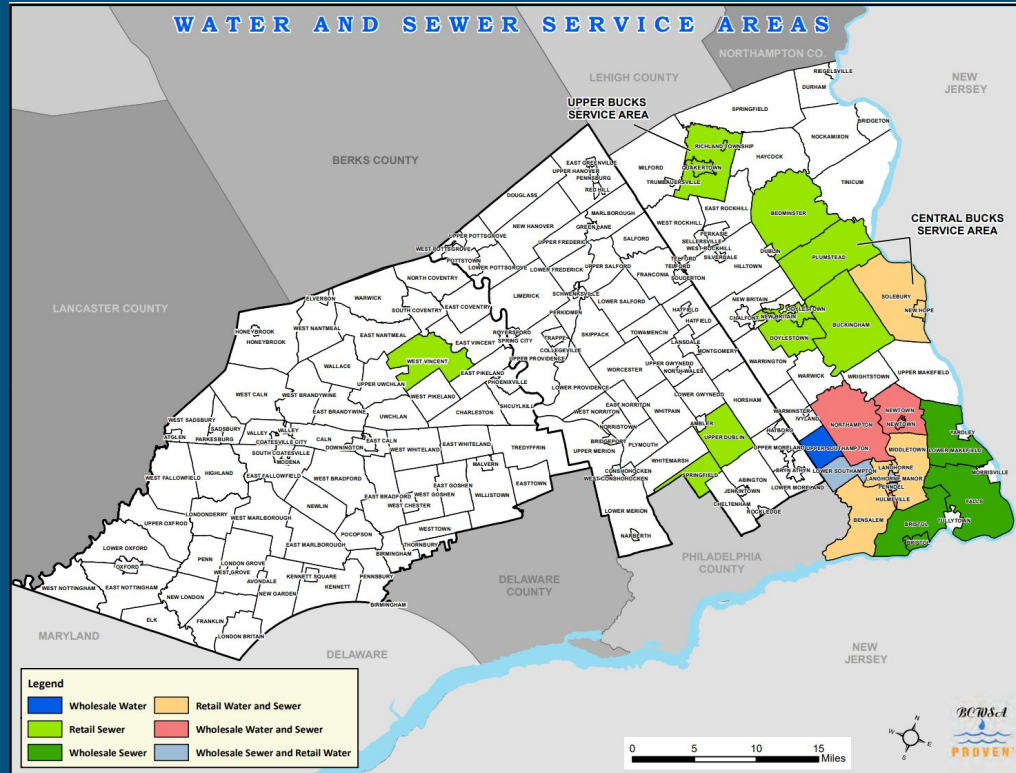
Who is Aqua?

- Largest subsidiary of Essential Utilities
- Aggressively targeting water/wastewater utilities in Southeastern PA
- Very active in election spending and lobbying efforts
- Has history of “rewarding” politicians that do their bidding

Who is Affected by a sale?

- BCWSA ratepayers
- Current Aqua ratepayers
- All PA residents

Who is Affected by a Sale?



What's At Stake?

- Sewer Rates
 - Aqua's average rates are \$1056/year compared to BCWSA's \$576/year
- Local Control
 - No more public meetings
 - Needs of shareholders will come before needs of ratepayers
- Democracy
 - Every system Aqua acquires gives them more power over Harrisburg and local officials
 - Local decisions over development will have Aqua at the table
 - England privatized all of their water/wastewater 30 years ago and now their legislature is incapable of holding companies to account
- Employees
 - Employee jobs and pensions at risk

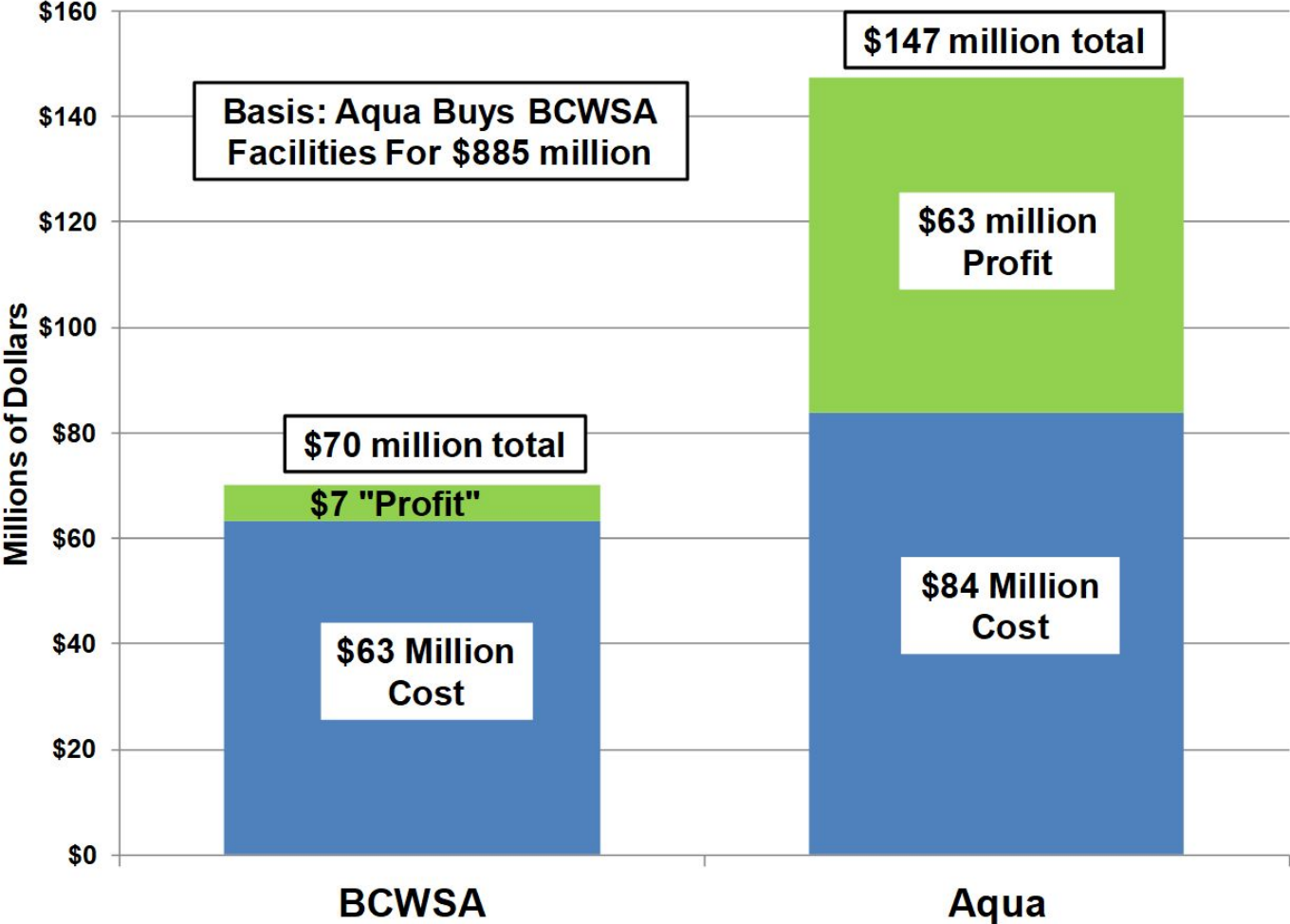
Busting the myths of Aqua(Bill)

- The candy jar
- Scare tactics and promises
- Future rates
- Accountability

Step #1 - The Candy Jar Offer



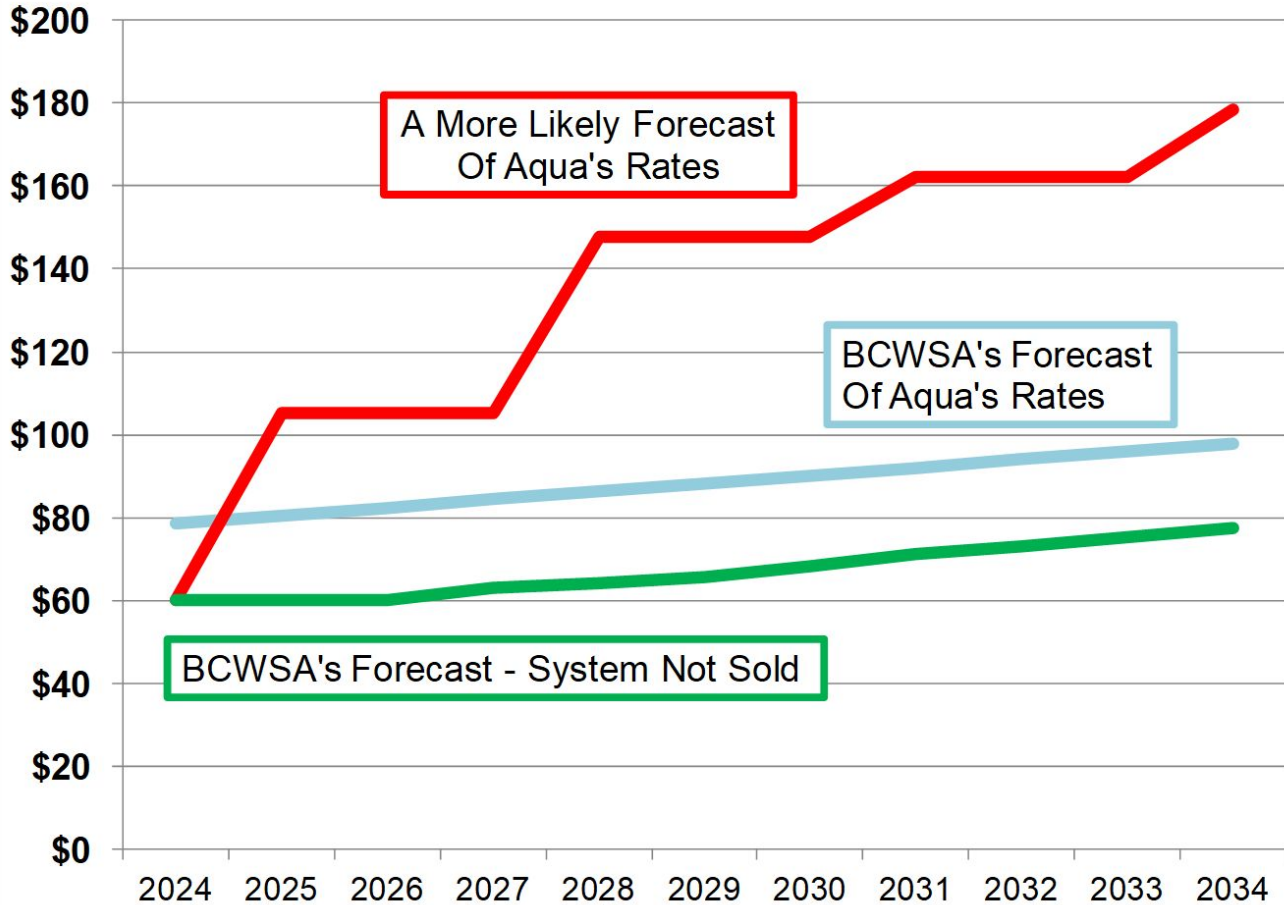
BCWSA Vs Aqua - Impact on Customers



Step #2

- Scare tactics
- Bait & switch

Average Monthly Sewer Bill



Benefits of Municipal Authorities

Who can stop this?

- BCWSA board
- Bucks County Commissioners
- PA General Assembly
- Federal Courts

Call to Action #1

BCWSA, CWA, or DELCORA falling into the hands of Aqua PA would be a disaster for ratepayers. All of these multi county systems are well within their abilities to handle upgrades and regulations at cost. Section 1329 of title 66 is fundamentally broken and is being abused to satisfy shareholders at huge detriment to PA ratepayers. Aqua and PAWC have had huge ratehikes recently that are a direct result of section 1329 transactions and they already charged double the rates of the mentioned municipal authorities. This extra burden on ratepayers during a period of high inflation is patently unconscionable and section 1329 needs to be amended.

Please pass HB 527, HB 1936, HB 97, HB 144, SB 452

PA. RESIDENTS

TEXT **SIGN PUMXOF**
TO 50409

TO JOIN KOFI & TELL YOUR OFFICIALS

Water/Wastewater Section
1329 Acquisitions



SIGNER No. 1

Call to Action #2

<https://secure.foodandwaterwatch.org/act/bucks-county-say-no-water-privatization>

I oppose the sale of the sewer system from the Bucks County Water and Sewer Authority (BCWSA) to Aqua, a for-profit corporation, and I ask you to protect our wastewater system through whatever means necessary. You appoint the Board Members for the Sewer and Water Authority and you should direct them to immediately stop the sale. If the Commissioners refuse to stop privatizing the system, you should promptly dissolve the authority or change its charter to stop the sale.

Aqua Pennsylvania – a subsidiary of Essential Utilities – made an unsolicited offer to buy the system in 2020. Since then, the BCWSA board lawyers and the companies have been in secret talks. In July 2022, the BCWSA board announced its backroom exclusive deal with Aqua. This sewer sale would be a disaster for residents and local businesses in our county.

Sewer privatization usually results in higher rates and worse customer service. The company will seek to raise Bucks County's sewer rates up to the level it charges in its main service area. Our families and businesses are already suffering from the challenges of a global pandemic, out of control inflation, and skyrocketing gas prices. We can't afford rate hikes on essential sewer services.

After taking over a public system, water companies typically seek to increase rates to recoup the purchase price and make a profit. Private companies also often cut corners on customer service and rely on out-of-state call centers. As a result, many customers of private systems have reported slow responses to their service requests and difficulties resolving billing errors.

I am concerned that privatization of BCWSA would lead to skyrocketing rates, decreased quality of service, and loss of transparency and accountability over a service essential for public health. Large water corporations are beholden first and foremost to their shareholders, and have frequently failed to keep promises to elected officials and to the public, particularly regarding rate freezes. Private companies will put their profits ahead of our needs.

Call to Action #3

- Go to BCWSA Meetings
 - Next Meeting 7:00pm Wednesday August 24, 2022
 - 1275 Almshouse Road
 - Warrington, PA 18976
 - <https://www.bcwsa.net/>
- Go to Bucks County Board of Commissioner Meetings
 - 10:30 am 1st and 3rd Wednesday of the month
 - Bucks County Administration Building
 - 55 E Court Street
 - 1st Floor, Commissioners' Meeting Room
 - Doylestown, PA 18901

Questions and Answers

Put any questions you have in the chat

