

PRESS RELEASE



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**MADIGAN, VILLAGE OF HOMER GLEN FILE COMPLAINTS WITH
ICC ALLEGING PATTERN OF NON-COMPLIANCE BY WATER
UTILITY**

Chicago – Attorney General Lisa Madigan and Homer Glen Village Mayor Russ Petrizzo today filed separate complaints with the Illinois Commerce Commission (ICC) alleging a pattern of non-compliance with ICC rules and regulations by a water utility operating statewide.

Madigan’s complaint also alleges violation of the Illinois Public Utilities Act and seeks civil remedies under the law.

Among the consumer complaints prompting Madigan’s lawsuit was a report that the utility charged a single-family home for the use of 140,000 gallons of water in one month, an impossibly high amount considering the average monthly water consumption for a single-family home is 7,000 gallons.

Madigan and Petrizzo’s complaints both allege that Illinois-American Water Company (IAWC) violated ICC rules regarding metering, customer service, billing, rates and service quality. IAWC serves approximately 260,000 water customers and 30,000 sewer customers in Illinois. IAWC provides residential, commercial, industrial and sale-for-resale water service and fire protection service across the state, including in Champaign, Chicago, Lincoln, Pekin, Peoria, Pontiac, Sterling, Streator and other parts of southern Illinois.

“Illinois-American Water Company mistreated its customers by first allegedly overcharging them and then failing to inform them of their right to dispute their outrageous water bills,” Madigan said. “Public utilities are required to abide by the state regulations to ensure that Illinoisans receive fair bills and adequate service.”

“The Village of Homer Glen has been investigating major problems with the service provided by Illinois American Water Company for well over a year,” Petrizzo said. “Unfortunately, Illinois American has not adequately addressed the issues or implemented solutions. We appreciate the attention that Attorney General Madigan has given to the concerns of the Village and our residents regarding the problems with the service provided by Illinois American.”

The complaints allege IAWC overcharged customers and then failed to inform customers of their right to dispute the charges at the ICC. The complaints also allege IAWC has failed to inspect and test meters, failed to notify customers of

the need to boil water when the need arose, and failed to maintain fire hydrants, which on at least one occasion interfered with a fire department's ability to extinguish fires.

Madigan's office has received numerous reports from individual consumers, municipalities, including the Village of Homer Glen, legislators and other consumer groups regarding IAWC's billing and collection practices, poor customer service and unreasonable charges. Many complaints allege that residential customers have been erroneously billed for the consumption of enormous quantities of water, with one-month water bills reportedly totaling as much as \$2,000.

In addition, IAWC allegedly has engaged in poor customer service practices, including failing to investigate complaints of unreasonably high bills.

Madigan's lawsuit asks the ICC to determine whether customers are entitled to refunds, and to assess penalties of up to \$2,000 per violation of the Public Utilities Act.

Bureau Chief Janice Dale and Assistant Attorney General Susan Satter are handling the case for Madigan's Public Utilities Bureau.

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