



NEWS FROM
ULSTER COUNTY
County Executive Jen Metzger

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Contact: Laura Nordstrom, Director of Research & Operations
(845) 340-3800 x8854 / Lnor@co.ulster.ny.us

NYS Public Service Commission Takes Action on Hudson Valley Water Company Failures, as Urged by County Executive Metzger and Local and State Officials

PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION ORDERS COMPANY TO SHOW CAUSE BY MARCH 1 OR WILL INSTALL A TEMPORARY OPERATOR

ALBANY, NY and KINGSTON, NY - The New York State Public Service Commission today took action to address persistent problems with water service provided by Hudson Valley Water Company (HVWC), as urged by County Executive Metzger and local and state elected officials in a letter to the Commission last month. The Commission Order requires HVWC to show cause by March 1 as to why the Commission should not order and replace the company with a temporary operator for its failures to comply with previous directives.

DPS Staff issued and detailed a 2024 report outlining the most recent “catastrophic failure” and referenced the 2020 investigation case and ongoing inability of HVWC to comply with the 49 recommendations and orders previously issued by the Commission. “Every New Yorker deserves access to clean, safe and reliable drinking water,” **said Commission Chair Rory M. Christian.** “With today’s action, we are formally starting the process to determine whether the company has failed to meet this basic requirement, and we will take swift action if the company is found to have failed to meet necessary operating standards.”

In a letter to the Commission in January that was co-signed by 11 state and local leaders, County Executive Metzger made the case for a new owner-operator, citing repeated service interruptions, water quality issues, and poor communication from the company over many years, most recently in Boiceville, where residents were left without water service for nearly a month. The Office of the Ulster County Executive and Ulster County DOH, together with DPS

staff, coordinated to ensure residents received proper communication, and pressed operators to comply with their responsibilities and provide potable water to residents until the Do-Not-Drink order could be lifted.

In a written response to the letter, the Department of Public Service stated that it is “actively investigating” HVWC and is “urgently considering short-term actions to ensure customers are provided with safe drinking water,” while the Department and Commission evaluate long-term solutions, including replacing the owner and operator.

“I want to thank the Public Service Commission for taking prompt action on our urgent request to address long-standing issues with the service provided by Hudson Valley Water Company to more than 430 Ulster County households,” said **Ulster County Executive Jen Metzger**. “The chronic problems associated with HVWC’s service are unacceptable, and the company’s failure to follow the improvement plan set out for them by the Commission suggests that the only fix is to change owners. Water is life, and our residents deserve service they can depend on.”

“The Town of Olive appreciates the diligent advocacy by the Ulster County Executive’s Office and the quick response of the NYS PSC on this issue of great importance to our residents. People need the security to know the source of their water is reliable and safe to drink,” said **Olive Supervisor, Jim Sofranko**.

"Thank you to County Executive Jen Metzger for her continued efforts put forth on this matter. This is a great first step in providing the overdue relief to the residents of the HVWC," said **Saugerties Supervisor, Fred Costello**.

“Excellent, I could not think of a better outcome,” added **Mike Boms, Hurley Supervisor**.

Supervisor Jeanne Walsh of Rosendale stated “Thank you to the Public Service Commission for taking this first step. The residents of High Falls Park deserve to have reliable clean water and they deserve management that takes the necessary steps to ensure their district is run responsibly.”

“Today, the PSC has taken a significant step toward ensuring that HVWC customers in Hurley, West Hurley, and other locations in Ulster County will be able to count on having dependable, clean water. I thank them for taking this action to help protect our residents,” said **Ulster County Legislator Jeff Collins, (D-23)**.

“High Falls residents have long suffered from the inadequacies of HVWC in providing quality water service. I thank the County Executive and our Ulster County Department of Health for taking the lead on this most recent issue and ensuring swift action followed. We look forward to the next steps,” added **Manna Jo Greene, Ulster County Legislator, (D-19)**

State Senator Michelle Hinchey said “The Hudson Valley Water Company has persistently violated the Constitutional right of our residents to clean, safe, and reliable water service, and we commend the PSC for hearing our calls and instituting a show cause order. Access to clean water is not just a necessity but a fundamental right, and we remain hopeful that today’s action will help reveal to the Commission the long-standing negligence and indefensible service quality on the part of the Hudson Valley Water Company.”

Assemblymember Sarahana Shrestha said, "Many of my constituents have had their lives disrupted for years by unreliable access to clean and safe water. I welcome the Public Service Commission’s decision to call on the Hudson Valley Water Company to respond as to why a temporary operator should not be installed to oversee its operations. Reliable access to water is a fundamental right and I urge the PSC to set a precedent on how seriously the responsibility of providing this service must be taken."

BACKGROUND:

Hudson Valley Water Company, Inc., operates five pumping and distribution systems throughout Ulster County, including in Mount Marion, High Falls Park, Pine Street-Hurley, West Hurley, and Boiceville. After a system failure began on December 16, the Boiceville system was left without drinking water service for nearly a month. This extended outage is the latest in a long record of outages, service interruptions, and poor customer service, and demonstrates the company’s inability to follow its PSC-approved Standard Operating Procedures and Emergency Plan.

The company’s failures have repeatedly resulted in officials having to step in over the years to ensure residents were properly notified of issues, including outages, boil water notices, service interruptions, and the provision of potable water during a system failure.

These issues were the basis of customer complaints about the Hurley and Mount Marion systems, which prompted a Department of Public Service Investigation in 2019-2020. In June 2022, then-County Executive Pat Ryan, together with Senator Michelle Hinchey and then-Assemblymember Kevin Cahill, held a public hearing on HVWC’s request for a 20.6% rate increase, drawing residents from all five systems to demand service improvements. The

company was granted just a 2.8% increase, due in good part to numerous complaints by residents and officials, and the company's failure to comply with commission orders.

Commission order and 2024 staff report for Matter 24-W-0105 can be found here:

<https://documents.dps.ny.gov/public/MatterManagement/CaseMaster.aspx?MatterCaseNo=24-W-0105&CaseSearch=Search>.

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