

## Jean Jewell

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**From:** geoncarol@roadrunner.com  
**Sent:** Thursday, May 12, 2016 7:07 PM  
**To:** Beverly Barker; Jean Jewell; Gene Fadness  
**Subject:** Case Comment Form: carol abelhanz

Name: carol abelhanz  
Case Number: DIA-W-15-01  
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rathdrum idaho, 83858

Name of Utility Company: Diamond Bar Estates Water Co.  
Comment: Idaho Public Utilities Commission Case #DIA-W-15-01

I have some questions regarding the two wells that provide water service to both Diamond Bar Estates and Boekel Estates homes.

With the backup well being out side of Diamond Bar Estates and located on a private household land is the water that is provided to that home or does it have another totally separate well?

If the household is supplied by the backup well is the water usage billed at the rate as Diamond Bar Estates and Boekel Estates?

Are wages, supplies, insurance, etc. divided by how many businesses the Turnipseeds own?

How many fulltime and part time employees are there dedicated to Diamond Bar Estates Water Company?

Why do they use 2 people to read the meters?

The meters are in groups of two therefore only 21 stops are necessary in Diamond Bar Estates and 2-3 stops in Boekel Estates. Is the labor cost calculated by total time of reading meters or by cost per meter?

We have lived in Diamond Bar Estates almost 21 years and during this time have experienced 4 to 5 pumps being replaced in addition to other outages. What is the estimated life expectancy of a water well pump that provides adequate water pressure for the potential of 50 plus households some of which use the 2 inch irrigation connection?

In regards to the latest pump replacement it has been speculated that this was due to a power surge in the electrical service. Other times the pump house had been struck by lightning. What precautions has Diamond Bar Estates Water Company taken, if any in order to prevent these types of outages from occurring? Such as ground fault surge protection and/or installment of lightning rods.

Mr.Turnipseed had indicated the power for both wells are separate. Are we charged for the power on the backup well if we are not using it?

With the proposed rate increase some homeowners could see their water bill during the peak months of May to end of Sept at \$200 to \$400 per month. Our water bills for 1 year could be higher than our Avista bill.

The new rate could be detrimental for sellers and a deal breaker for buyers.

I would like to see the actual dates the meters are read on our monthly bill.

Unique Identifier: 76.178.17.78

**Diamond Bar Estates Homeowners Association**

1952 W. Diamond Bar Rd.

Rathdrum, ID 83858

May 12, 2016

Idaho Public Utilities Commission  
P.O. Box 83720  
472 W. Washington Boise, ID 83702  
Boise, ID 83720-0074  
(208) 334-0300

Subject: Water Case No. DIA-W-15-01  
Water Rates Committee Response #2

As a homeowner in Diamond Bar Estates since May of 1998 and at the request of the current HOA board of directors, I am commenting on the historical aspect of this water system which I believe directly relates to the current case before the Idaho PUC.

My focus is to look at this system from a historical perspective and whether it has been operated prudently with regard to the initial install and subsequent pump failures and repeated pump replacements.

**KNOWN ELECTRICAL PROBLEMS**

Request 11 in Case No. DIA-W-15-01 Titled "REPLY TO SECOND PRODUCTION REQUEST OF COMMISSION STAFF, DBWC, says,

*"From 2002 forward Diamond Bar Estates has been at the receiving end of inconsistent, unbalanced as well as underpowered service from Kootenai Electric Co-op".*

There doesn't appear to be anything in the record, or prior rate cases for DBWC that explain why this has not been addressed. This seems to point to the direct cause of repeated pump failures over the years. Late in 2015, a Kootenai Electric Co-op General Manager visited the pump site and apparently agreed to "fix" the power issue....some 13 years after.

The AEI engineering report (labeled "exhibit 19" and dated 9/23/2015 seems to point to several electrical problems at the pump site all of which could be the direct and substantial cause of repeated pump failures. Especially in the area of soft-starting motors above 20HP per the electric company's requirements as well as other protection measures.

While there is no apparent original engineering report from when the developer (Mr. Turnipseed) first put the water system in operation, there are also no records of the substandard power to the pump site being addressed until the 2015 visit by the Kootenai Electric Co-op General Manager.

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## **PUMP SIZING, CHANGES and FAILURES**

Request 11 in Case No. DIA-W-15-01 Titled "REPLY TO SECOND PRODUCTION REQUEST OF COMMISSION STAFF, exhibit 6 (quote from "H2O Well Service, Inc",

The quote for the original pump and associated equipment in 1994 shows that this company recommended a 25 HP pump and that a 50 HP pump **"...Would be excessive..."**

The initial pump installed in 1994 by H2O Well Service, Inc. was a 50 HP pump even though this company had recommended a 25 HP pump would be more than adequate based on the 50,000 gallon reservoir size.

In August of 2002, the pump failed and is replaced with another 50 HP pump (covered by insurance).

In 2004 it is replaced again (no failure shown on well pump record, exhibit 11d). The replacement pump is a 60 HP pump with no supporting documentation as to the reason for the increase. No apparent engineering opinion or vendor quote as to a reason.

- The increase in pump size would put a further strain on an already acknowledged power problem at the pump site. It seems reasonable to assume that this could cause premature pump failures.
- Subsequent pump failures where the pump motor was sent back to the manufacturer for warranty claims were rejected because there was no issue with a defect and the proximate cause of the failure was the electrical supply.

Refer to Exhibit 11, No. DIA-W-15-01 Titled "REPLY TO FIRST PRODUCTION REQUEST OF COMMISSION STAFF, DBWC

- Franklin Electric warranty evaluation summary **"...Failure modes in the bottom end turns are generally associated with either excessive surge or unbalanced power..... This failure is not the result of material or workmanship..."**

## **SUMMARY**

Up until the recent pump failure in 2015, Diamond Bar Water apparently had insurance to cover pump failures. It seems that the multiple failures and insurance claims over the years finally made the insurance apparently not available to DBWC. I feel that this is also a substantial reason for the excessive rate increase request.

I believe that the lack of addressing the substandard power to the pump site from the start of the water system is the direct cause of repeated pump failures and excessive maintenance costs over the years.

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The added fact that an apparent oversized pump was installed initially and subsequently “upgraded” to an even larger horsepower pump further exacerbated the problems and failures. Nowhere along this process was the electrical supply, protection and associated equipment properly addressed.

I believe that after years of neglecting to properly determine the cause of repeated pump failures that the DBWC should not be allowed to force an unprecedented 80% increase in rates on the customer base to cover the lack of properly installing and maintaining a water system.

Diamond Bar Estates Homeowners Association  
Water Rates Committee

Eric Hallgren, Committee Member

Darrel Ramus, Director

Mike Tillery, Director

Glenn Fetter, Director