

**ACC Gives APS a Rate Increase
Information & Perspective by Warren Woodward
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At their Open Meeting last Tuesday, the Arizona Corporation Commission (ACC) commissioners voted 4 to 1 to give APS a rate increase of about 4.5% on residential customers' rates. Since all the commissioners were elected with *major* APS money spent on their campaigns, their votes were to be expected.

The lone No vote was from commissioner Robert Burns. Burns has been in dispute, and Superior Court, with the other commissioners and APS over alleged money spent by APS two elections ago to get commissioners Little & Forese elected. As a commissioner, Burns has the legal right to examine APS's books but he has been stonewalled for about 2 years.

Burns contends that because of APS's influence, those two commissioners should have recused themselves. He wants the rate case done over. The issue hangs with the Superior Court judge hearing the case. You can read more about that here: <http://azcapitoltimes.com/news/2017/08/15/arizona-corporation-commission-approves-aps-rate-hike/>

I was of course at the meeting but I did not say much for 2 reasons. 1) Chairman Forsese said at the outset that the commissioners had read everything filed and so Intervenors should not just regurgitate everything we've already written. That of course did not stop others, and especially APS, from repeating their tired propaganda. 2) Since "smart" meters will be taken up at a separate meeting (at an as yet undetermined date) I didn't have much to say anyway.

I did speak to the issue of forcing new customers on to demand/TOU rates for 90 days. I told the commissioners they had the constitutional and statutory authority to set rates but not to force people on rates. I told them by denying customers rates available to other customers they were discriminating (per A.R.S. § 40-334). I told them mandatory demand/TOU rates hurt those who can least afford it. I told them I never thought I'd see the day when Republicans engaged in social engineering like this. But they could not be swayed by shaming or by the law. They don't care. It was clear their job was to rubber stamp the Settlement Agreement and give APS what it wanted.

The meeting was like a "[show trial](#)." It was a total farce. Despite Chairman Forese's statement that the commissioners had read everything, commissioner (and former judge!) Dunn had to have APS's rate transition period explained to him about 8 times. He also introduced some amendment about "bio-fuel" that even all the other commissioners were against because it was totally out of place in the rate case and already had its own docket. In short, poor Dunn was at sea.

Commissioner Little gushed how amazing the Settlement Agreement was because RUCO, the residential ratepayer advocate, had signed on to it. I guess Little missed the part in my testimony where I pointed out that RUCO does not represent residential ratepayers -- even though they are supposed to -- because 1) of the hundreds of public comments submitted to the docket, not one favored a rate increase or change to basic service charges. 2) No residential ratepayers expressed an interest in discriminating against new customers for 90 days. And 3) the head of RUCO admitted under oath that RUCO had not done *any* surveys whatsoever to determine what residential ratepayers actually wanted.

I could go on. There was so much self-congratulatory nonsense about how hard ACC Staff and the Administrative Law Judge had "worked" that I found myself looking for a barf bag. I rolled my eyes so much I practically got dizzy.

I wasn't alone in my feelings about the meeting. Other Intervenors who were against the Settlement Agreement felt the same disgust.

As per usual after a day spent in the corrupt atmosphere of the ACC, when I got home I felt so psychically soiled I didn't even want to keep wearing the same clothes I had on.

PS - Residents of Sun City and Sun City West: Despite all the many comments you made to the docket, your Intervenors sold you out and were in favor of the rate increase and Settlement Agreement. Time to trow da bums out.