



Linda R. Clark
La Conner, Washington 98257

July 30, 2025

VIA HAND DELIVERY

Town of La Conner
Town Council Members
La Conner, Washington 98257

Re: Sewer Waste Fees during summer months

Dear Town Council Members:

First, this letter is getting a single pass. I will not be reviewing it for typographical or grammatical errors.

Last week, I checked at the Town Hall concerning the water bill for the dwelling in which I reside. I have endeavored to maintain a credit balance for the past few months.

Upon requesting the current balance following the June 2025 statement, I learned there was a \$60.07 balance due and owing following a \$189.54 billing amount [460 cubic foot usage]. I thought this was high and so I asked what the May 2025 bill reflected. It totaled \$149.62 [219 cubic foot usage]. I walked away and out of the Town Hall building and returned to inquire as to the April 2025 billed amount which reflected \$136.88 [142 cubic foot usage]. At this time I was offered a printout of the past 12 months of billing.

After looking at the printout I was even more perplexed. The highest usage amount reflected 147 cubic foot for January 2025¹. This was a big cleaning month for me as it always is at the beginning of the year. May 2025 should have reflected a similar amount as it is the next big cleaning month for me on a regular basis. I am

¹ The amount is not important as it will not reflect the 2025 increases.

enclosing my own table which reflects the usage from October 2024 through June 2025. As you can see, other than May and June the usage for no other month is higher than 147 cubic foot.

Upon completion of a review of the printout, I set to educate myself more fully about the charges associated with a water bill from the Town of La Conner.

Let me first state that the Town's transparency of this information is horrible. There is nothing on the water bills about the usage rates charged. The information about how the charges are calculated and assessed is minimal at best and because there is a disclaimer on the Town website that the fees can change at any time, they are not reliable. Even more disturbing is that the Public Works office relies on the rates on the website - not an independent source. Other than directing a caller to the Town Office - which is closed on Friday.

After receiving my printout last week at the Town Office, before leaving the second time I asked if the Town still initiated a cut off at a certain point of sewer waste charges during summer months to forego billing residents for water used on their gardens. I was advised by Angie and the other female employee at the Town Office they knew of no such policy.

I presented myself to the Town Office today to discuss my findings since last week and indicated that although I am having a difficult time comprehending how I could possibly have used an additional 313 cubic feet (approximately 2,400 gallons) of water on the 8 plants and 10 trees on the property where I live that unless it is discovered there is a leak or meter error I will take responsibility for that, but not the sewer waste charges for that additional 313 cubic feet.

I was informed by Angie that the meter reads both the water output and the sewer input and the 460 cubic foot reading was based on this information. Thus, the sewer waste charges were valid. This was even more perplexing to me because there is absolutely no way all of the water usage during May or June was used in the household.

Thus, I paid my \$25 toward the amount that I believed was fair and reasonable unless future information shows that I did not indeed utilize 460 cubic

feet of water inside and outside of the dwelling and went home to conduct additional research.

A call to the Public Works department confirmed my understanding that the meter records only the output of water, not the input of sewer waste. And the sewer waste usage fee is based on the water usage amount.

Additional cursory research led me to information that many municipalities charge the higher "summer" rates, until residents complain. Further information reflected that honorable municipalities utilize "winter" month sewer usage (usually a 3 month average during winter months) for calculating "summer" month sewer usage so that residents who choose to maintain their gardens during hotter months may do so without incurring sewer waste fee usage which was not utilized.

After this additional research, I presented to the Town Hall to discuss these findings with Angie. I advised her that based on this information I did not believe it reasonable that the Town of La Conner is charging residents for sewer waste fees during summer months. I further advised that the \$25 I paid earlier today is what I believe to be reasonable, even though I am still perplexed by the 313 cubic foot quantity recorded by the meter even watering the plants and trees².

I was advised by Angie that because I am choosing not to pay the remainder of the bill that the owner of the dwelling will receive a "delinquency notice" for the outstanding amount. And that any issue concerning water bill charges needs to be addressed by the Town Council members.

This letter is to advise you that the summer charges for sewer waste fees needs to be reviewed without further delay. In addition, the water bills need to be amended to provide greater transparency so that residents know exactly what they're being charged.

Best regards,

Linda R. Clark

² Kindly note that during June I recycled as much of my dish water as possible for watering these items.

<u>Month</u>	<u>Usage</u>	<u>Water base rate 3/4"</u>	<u>Usage charge</u>	<u>Sewer base rate</u>	<u>Usage charge</u>	<u>Storm Water charge</u>	<u>Charged Amount</u>
October 2024	87	\$46.82	(.0783) - 2025 (\$46.82) - 2024 \$5.94	(\$33.58) - 2025 (\$31.09) - 2024 \$31.09	(.0918) - 2025 (.085) - 2024 \$7.40	(\$29.21) - 2025 (\$27.04) - 2024 \$27.04	\$118.30
November 2024	85	\$46.82	\$5.80	\$31.09	\$7.22	\$27.04	\$118.00
December 2024	89	\$46.82	\$6.08	\$31.09	\$7.56	\$27.04	\$118.61
January 2025	147	\$46.82	\$10.04	\$31.09	\$12.50	\$27.04	\$127.50
February 2025	93	\$46.82	\$6.35	\$31.09	\$7.90	\$27.04	\$119.22
March 2025	115	\$50.57	\$9.00	\$33.58	\$10.58	\$29.21	\$132.41
April 2025	142	\$50.57	\$11.12	\$33.58	\$13.04	\$29.21	\$136.88
May 2025	219	\$50.57	\$17.15	\$33.58	\$20.10	\$29.21	\$149.62
June 2025	460	\$50.57	\$36.01	\$33.58	\$42.23	\$29.21	\$189.54

219 - 147 = 72

72 f³ = 534 gallons

\$143.01 + \$160.81 = \$303.82 (May/June with adjustment)

72 x .0918 = \$6.61

\$179.09 + \$100.00 = \$279.09 (credit)

\$149.62 - \$6.61 = \$143.01 {May balance with adjustment}

\$303.82 - \$279.09 = \$24.73 (June balance with adjustment)

460 - 147 = 313

\$24.73 + \$35.34 = \$60.07 (June balance total currently due)

313 f³ = 2,341.4 gallons

\$6.61 + \$28.73 = \$35.34 (adjustment)

12' x 30' above ground round pool = ~2,500 gallons¹

\$60.07 - \$35.34 = \$24.73 (reasonable and fair amount paid)

313 x .0918 = \$28.73

\$189.54 - \$28.73 = \$160.81 [June balance with adjustment]

¹ For illustration purposes only

