

No. 2016-12

## AN ACT

HB 1326

Amending Title 66 (Public Utilities) of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes, in rates and distribution systems, providing for valuation of acquired water and wastewater systems for ratemaking purposes.

The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania hereby enacts as follows:

Section 1. Title 66 of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes is amended by adding a section to read:

**§ 1329. Valuation of acquired water and wastewater systems.**

*(a) Process to establish fair market value of selling utility.—Upon agreement by both the acquiring public utility or entity and the selling utility, the following procedure shall be used to determine the fair market value of the selling utility:*

*(1) The commission will maintain a list of utility valuation experts from which the acquiring public utility or entity and selling utility will choose.*

*(2) Two utility valuation experts shall perform two separate appraisals of the selling utility for the purpose of establishing its fair market value.*

*(3) Each utility valuation expert shall determine fair market value in compliance with the Uniform Standards of Professional Appraisal Practice, employing the cost, market and income approaches.*

*(4) The acquiring public utility or entity and selling utility shall engage the services of the same licensed engineer to conduct an assessment of the tangible assets of the selling utility. The assessment shall be incorporated into the appraisal under the cost approach required under paragraph (3).*

*(5) Each utility valuation expert shall provide the completed appraisal to the acquiring public utility or entity and selling utility within 90 days of execution of the service contract.*

*(b) Utility valuation experts.—*

*(1) The utility valuation experts required under subsection (a) shall be selected as follows:*

*(i) one shall be selected by the acquiring public utility or entity; and*

*(ii) one shall be selected by the selling utility.*

*(2) The utility valuation experts shall not:*

*(i) derive any material financial benefit from the sale of the selling utility other than fees for services rendered; or*

*(ii) be an immediate family member of a director, officer or employee of either the acquiring public utility, entity or selling utility within a 12-month period of the date of hire to perform an appraisal.*

*(3) Fees paid to utility valuation experts may be included in the transaction and closing costs associated with acquisition by the acquiring utility or entity. Fees eligible for inclusion may be of an amount not exceeding 5% of the fair market value of the selling utility or a fee approved by the commission.*

*(c) Ratemaking rate base.—The following apply:*

*(1) The ratemaking rate base of the selling utility shall be incorporated into the rate base of:*

*(i) the acquiring public utility during the acquiring public utility's next base rate case; or*

*(ii) the entity in its initial tariff filing.*

*(2) The ratemaking rate base of the selling utility shall be the lesser of the purchase price negotiated by the acquiring public utility or entity and selling utility or the fair market value of the selling utility.*

*(d) Acquisitions by public utility.—The following apply:*

*(1) If the acquiring public utility and selling utility agree to use the process outlined in subsection (a), the acquiring public utility shall include the following as an attachment to its application for commission approval of the acquisition filed pursuant to section 1102 (relating to enumeration of acts requiring certificate):*

*(i) Copies of the two appraisals performed by the utility valuation experts under subsection (a).*

*(ii) The purchase price of the selling utility as agreed to by the acquiring public utility and selling utility.*

*(iii) The ratemaking rate base determined pursuant to subsection (c)(2).*

*(iv) The transaction and closing costs incurred by the acquiring public utility that will be included in its rate base.*

*(v) A tariff containing a rate equal to the existing rates of the selling utility at the time of the acquisition and a rate stabilization plan, if applicable to the acquisition.*

*(2) The commission shall issue a final order on an application submitted under this section within six months of the filing date of an application meeting the requirements of subsection (d)(1).*

*(3) If the commission issues an order approving the application for acquisition, the order shall include:*

*(i) The ratemaking rate base of the selling utility, as determined under subsection (c)(2).*

*(ii) Additional conditions of approval as may be required by the commission.*

*(4) The tariff submitted pursuant to subsection (d)(1)(v) shall remain in effect until such time as new rates are approved for the acquiring public utility as the result of a base rate case proceeding before the commission. The acquiring public utility may collect a distribution system improvement charge during this time, as approved by the commission under this chapter.*

*(5) The selling utility's cost of service shall be incorporated into the revenue requirement of the acquiring public utility as part of the acquiring utility's next base rate case proceeding. The original source*

*of funding for any part of the water or sewer assets of the selling utility shall not be relevant to determine the value of said assets.*

*(e) Acquisitions by entity.—An entity shall provide all the information required by subsection (d)(1) to the commission as an attachment to its application for a certificate of public convenience filed pursuant to section 1102.*

*(f) Postacquisition projects.—The following apply:*

*(1) An acquiring public utility's postacquisition improvements that are not included in a distribution improvement charge shall accrue allowance for funds used during construction after the date the cost was incurred until the asset has been in service for a period of four years or until the asset is included in the acquiring public utility's next base rate case, whichever is earlier.*

*(2) Depreciation on an acquiring public utility's postacquisition improvements that have not been included in the calculation of a distribution system improvement charge shall be deferred for book and ratemaking purposes.*

*(g) Definitions.—The following words and phrases when used in this section shall have the meanings given to them in this section unless the context clearly indicates otherwise:*

*"Acquiring public utility." A water or wastewater public utility subject to regulation under this title that is acquiring a selling utility as the result of a voluntary arm's-length transaction between the buyer and seller.*

*"Allowance of funds used during construction." An accounting practice that recognizes the capital costs, including debt and equity funds that are used to finance the construction costs of an improvement to a selling utility's assets by an acquiring public utility.*

*"Entity." A person, partnership or corporation that is acquiring a selling utility and has filed or whose affiliate has filed an application with the commission seeking public utility status pursuant to section 1102.*

*"Fair market value." The average of the two utility valuation expert appraisals conducted under subsection (a)(2).*

*"Ratemaking rate base." The dollar value of a selling utility which, for postacquisition ratemaking purposes, is incorporated into the rate base of the acquiring public utility or entity.*

*"Rate stabilization plan." A plan that will hold rates constant or phase rates in over a period of time after the next base rate case.*

*"Selling utility." A water or wastewater company located in this Commonwealth, owned by a municipal corporation or authority that is being purchased by an acquiring public utility or entity as the result of a voluntary arm's-length transaction between the buyer and seller.*

*"Utility valuation expert." A person hired by an acquiring public utility and selling utility for the purpose of conducting an economic valuation of the selling utility to determine its fair market value.*

Section 2. This act shall take effect in 60 days.

APPROVED—The 14th day of April, A.D. 2016

TOM WOLF