

## EUC Meeting February 26, 2018 Notes

### Items 3 & 7: Update regarding water meter readings and associated high bill concerns

**Commissioner Ferchill** – Taking up Items Number 3 and 7, we are going to have an update on the water meter reading and high bill issue. And we will take up the action item at the same time to the extent that it requires any action.

**Kerry Overton, Deputy General Manager, AE** - I am Chief Customer and Compliance Officer with Austin Energy.

**Drema Gross, Division Manager, AW** – [Introduces herself].

**Kerry Overton** – This presentation for Item 3 is an update for the high water “escalations”. As we’ve been before you, we wanted to bring you up to date from our prior discussion on the items that have taken place, and give you an idea of our analytic focus around the routes that were mostly affected, in the high water escalation issues, continue to talk about what we’re doing for the customers as we’ve come to the remedy of the bill “smoothing”. Also give you any other updates from some of the customers that have actually appeared before you and what we’ve done to solve those cases, many of whom we’re still reviewing, and then talk about next steps.

**Drema Gross** – Some of this was presented in the press conference on January 31<sup>st</sup>, as well as presented to the subcommittee, the working group that you guys have formed. [This was before the WWW Commissioners were included.] We wanted to sure to take the opportunity to go through it with everyone so that you understand the results of the analysis that we’ve been working on to try to identify unusual usage patterns.

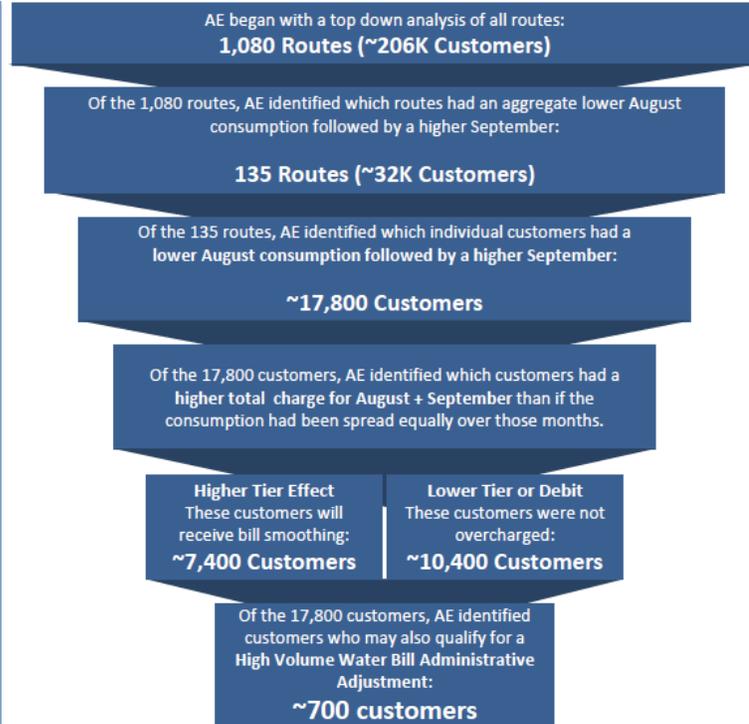
As we had mentioned at a previous Commission meeting, we were looking and didn’t really see anything that was consistent systemwide. But when we got down to looking at things on a route level, not just a billing cycle level but a route level, we did find some unusual patterns. In these cases, the August usage was lower than the September read, not what one would expect with the weather patterns. It’s not consistent with what we saw overall being used in the city. So we started looking at all of the routes, 1080 routes affected approximately 206,000 customers. Of those, we identified 135 routes where on average we saw that unusual pattern. [Page 3 of the presentation]

We then looked at the customers along those routes – it was about 17,800 accounts – looked at them individually and found those customers where August was indeed lower than September.

While sometimes there might be a reason for that – someone was on vacation, or their higher usage in September was where people were coming back in – we found that there was enough evidence that something had gone wrong with the system to be able to address those.

### Unusual Usage Patterns

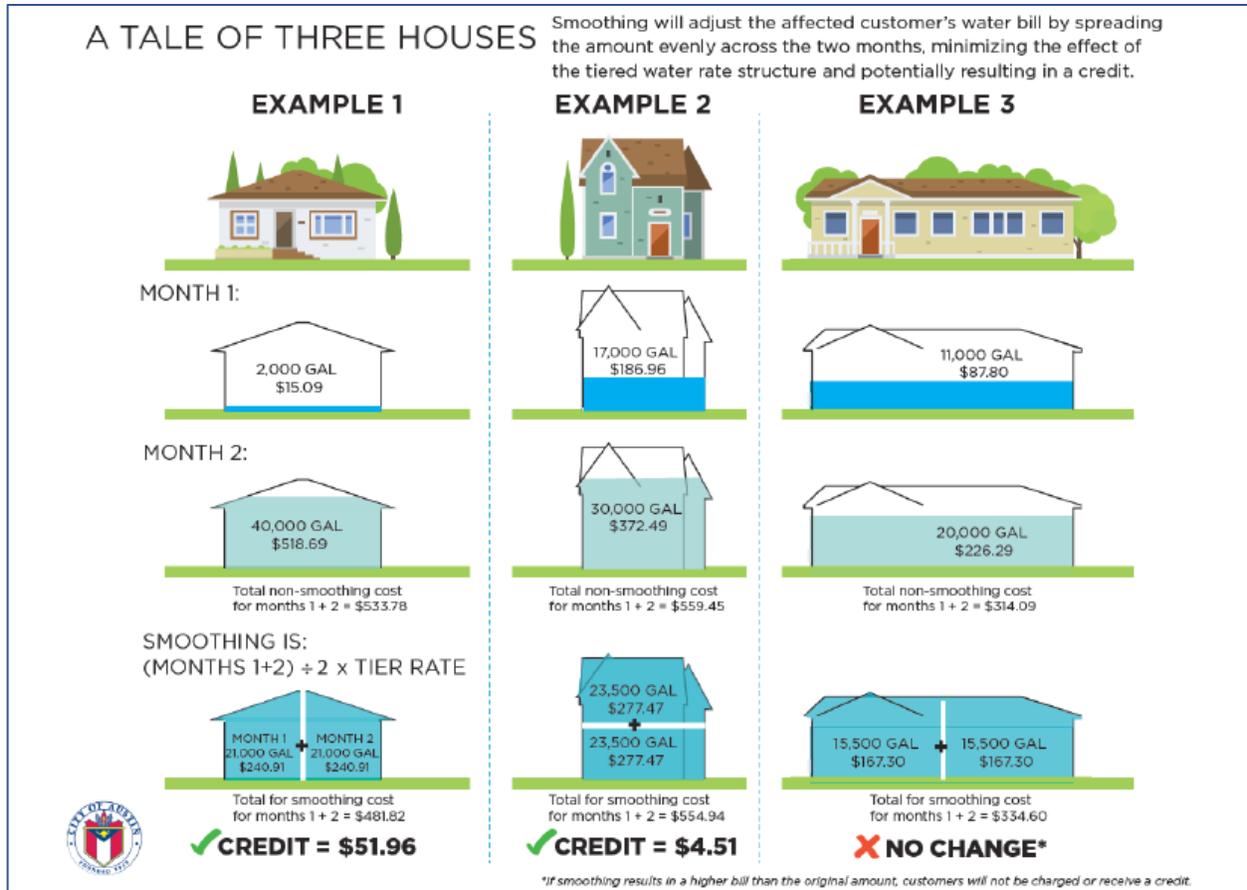
- Analysis of escalations cases identified an unusual usage pattern
- Characterized by an unusually low August read followed by higher September read
- Unusual Usage Patterns were identified in 135 routes



*Page 3 from Presentation*

So of those total 17,800 customers, we took another step to see even after the usage was “smoothed”, was it 3 times higher than their prior history, because that is what would initially qualify them potentially for a high bill administrative adjustment. We notified those customers with an additional special letter to let them know if that usage was truly unexplained, here are the processes they can follow to request a high bill administrative adjustment. [5:00 minutes into the video]

So we’re trying to make sure that on all of the customers on these identified routes that we have looked at them and provided a fair resolution and let them know the next step if they feel that the usage is still unusually high with no explanation.



Page 4 from Presentation

This is a graphic we distributed to the media to explain graphically how “smoothing” works and why some customers may receive a higher credit than others. [Page 4 of the presentation] So it gives you an illustration of a very low bill one month pushed into a much much higher tier the following month would result in a credit to a customer that is in the \$50 range.

For the second example, there is still a credit, but it’s much lower. And for the final example, this is the type of situation where, because of the fixed fees that Austin Water has – specifically the fixed fee that kicks in at 15,000 gallons or 12,000 gallons – then that would push the customer into higher fixed fees that would negate any credit from “smoothing”.

So we’ve developed this to show you what the process is, and Kerry will tell you where we are in the process of applying these bill credits.

**Kerry Overton** – One of the things to understand about the data that Drema just mentioned, the vast number of customers, that analysis includes customers whether they have reached out to us or not. If they fit into that pattern, they either received a letter or they received a call or contact

from our analytic team, our outreach team regardless of whether they contacted us initially and filed a complaint. That was not a condition of whether or not they would be heard.

In addition to that, we have even more customers we are doing the analytics on if they called as a result of the press release, and continued these meetings that we're having with the Commission and the Water Commission. If they called because of that, we are walking through their account as well.

So Commissioner Boyle, I think you were right on target when you may have mentioned to one of our customers that Austin Water – just that analytical place to get to analyze the cases that want to go to a hearing, just to continue through that process, we are a little more backlogged than normal in terms of those procedures and those letters would require, mostly because of the volume, the number of customers who were pushing into the Water back office. But we believe that over the next 4 or 5 days, I understand that they will be a little bit more on regular routine, they'll start working some of those out, and I think they'll be on schedule to get those customers scheduled with the hearing examiner. And we also can bring that up in the Joint Committee that you spoke of, where this Committee is joining with the working group of Austin Water.

As Drema mentioned, we just want to give you the high-level numbers. *[Page 5 of presentation]* Many of the customers are receiving on average about \$20 in the credit, some are going as much as \$80 in some cases. Our analysis is still holding fairly true, fairly close to about \$138,000 that are impacted as we've gone through all of the cases, and there are some new ones being analyzed, and if they fit into this pattern, they will get the associated credit or the opportunity to go to the hearing should they wish to do that.

We also have waived all late fees, the penalty queue has been removed, and so the customers are not being penalized *[How much did this all cost in Staff time and other operational costs? Was AW charged for AE failures?]*, and even after we complete this process, as we get closer to maybe March 15 or beyond that period, this will not impact customers in the future according to the Austin regulations if they require in the future to mount a high bill complaint, this will not count against those customers.

So the timeline that we're working on, since the press release on January 31<sup>st</sup>, we began the "smoothing" process that Drema mentioned, while we do the billing in about 20 cycles, so we do 1/20<sup>th</sup>, 1/20<sup>th</sup>, and working through those customers that might have been impacted. And we're well over 90%, 92% completed with sending those letters out.

Now behind that is doing the analysis of those customers that may receive an administrative adjustment, or some that had extreme cases that may not have necessarily fit into this pattern. We're still working those through. *[10:00 minutes into the video]* Ultimately there are some that will even go to hearing, and that process is continuing.

We feel very firm that by March 15<sup>th</sup>, all customers that we are aware of in the analysis that would have been affected would have received a letter by that time, if not before. So we don't see any additional delays in that notification.

**Commissioner Boyle** – You talked about the “smoothing” process with 7,400 customers. There's an additional 700, is that not also right? In a different category. That is, their increase in September, or later on, was not due to a low August reading. Is that correct?

**Drema Gross** – It's not entirely correct. If I can clarify for you: We looked at all those 17,800 customers – 7,400 of them will be getting “smoothing”, 10,000-some of those will not, because it would not have resulted in a credit.

Of that entire pool, about 360 are in the 7,400 group, 320 or so are in the 10,000 group (I may have those numbers backward). But 300 or so customers in each of those two groups would also qualify for an administrative adjustment on top of that. So as those letters are being sent out, that group of 700 is getting a very slightly different letter. It is notifying them of either they are getting a credit and you may qualify, or they are not getting a credit however you may qualify for an administrative adjustment. And then the customer needs to give us a call and fill out the form to say “yes, this was unexplained usage”. We've worked it so that these customers can process that application via the phone. They don't have yet another step to process because we've already looked at their account. We just need the confirmation that “yes, this was not intentional use, this was something that was truly unexplained”.

**Commissioner Boyle** – They basically have to answer the same thing, the questions you have when someone is applying for a high water adjustment.

**Drema Gross** – The administrative adjustment form, that's available on our website that customers can fill out, has not changed. However the verbal authorization version of it is a little simplified. So we will ask customers to certify that this is not use due to a pool or malfunctioning irrigation system, and some things of that nature. But it is simplified for these customers. We want to acknowledge that they've already had an impact and we can mitigate that somewhat by allowing them this other process.

**Commissioner Boyle** – So what you're saying as to some 360 customers who may qualify for an adjustment on top of the “smoothing”, is that what you're saying?

**Drema Gross** – Yes.

**Commissioner Boyle** – And is it their September usage is much greater than you might expect if it had been caused just by the low August usage?

**Drema Gross** – Even after their usage had been “smoothed” out, that is significantly higher than their history.

**Commissioner Boyle** – And at this point, have you gotten any feel for why those high numbers occurred?

**Drema Gross** – I don’t have that data. [The Working Group never got any information about these 700 customers.]

**Commissioner** – My question is about Corix. Did Corix fail to read some of the meters or fail to perform the last part of this contract? What’s going to be done about that?

**Commissioner** – I don’t mean to interrupt, but we have to be careful to not go too far into legal issues.

**Commissioner** – I just want to get a general idea. Are they being investigated? Is there something being done about it?

**Kerry Overton** – There is a process where we’re working with them. They are very cooperative in providing data and analytics based on our requests to them. And so we’re still reviewing all of that data, to see what were the determining factors, what could have been causations of those unusual reads. So we are in that discussion with them; they’re still providing us with data. If it is a little bit of a lag time in terms of how fast they can turn that around, you may know that Corix is no longer the meter reader, and the reason why they changed is that the contract naturally expired after it had exhausted its time period, and they’re no longer connected to our system.

So for them to actually get the data and have these exchanges with us, it’s taking a little more time than normal. They are not actually on our system any more.

**Commissioner** – I’m just hoping that there will be an analysis so that we’ll do “lessons learned” on contract [unintelligible].

**Kerry Overton** – Absolutely.

**Commissioner** – Kerry, you said that all the letters should be going out for all the backlog of requests for hearings. But I assume that is just the letter scheduling. [15:00 minutes into the video] How long do you think it will take to clear out that backlog of those hearings?

**Drema Gross** – To clarify, letters to notify customers that we’ve reviewed their account and found nothing or found it wouldn’t result in a credit are the letters we’re speaking of specifically. Austin Water staff has been working to get the higher number than usual of backlog cleared out....

**Commissioner** – I understand, but the people that are expecting that by March 15<sup>th</sup>, they will have had their hearing by then, to clarify, that’s not what you’re saying.

**Kerry Overton** – Right.

**Drema Gross** – The March 15<sup>th</sup> date is unrelated to hearings.

**Tiffany Webb** – [Introduced herself as Manager of the “Escalations” Group who oversees the Hearings Department which schedules and coordinates hearings.] I just wanted to clarify that we are working on the backlog, but it’s not going to have any impact on that March date. Looking at each one individually and we are making exceptions for anything that would have lapsed over certain time criteria.

*15 individual customers spoke at the December and January EUC meetings.  
(2 of the 15 customers spoke at both meetings)*

**9 customers had Aug / Sept Unusual Usage:**

- 1 received a High Volume Water Administrative Adjustment
- 8 received the bill smoothing correction
  - 2 of the 8 requested instructions on the Administrative Hearing Process
  - These customers have not requested a hearing at this time

**6 customers had unrelated issues:**

- 3 water meters have been exchanged due to meter malfunction
- 1 customer received a High Volume Water Administrative Adjustment for a different timeframe
- 1 customer had an irrigation audit performed, which determined irrigation settings caused high usage
- 1 customer received an adjustment of \$-12,121.76 due to a water main break

**Commissioner** – A couple questions: Some of the bills that people presented were way higher than anything that \$80 could account for, and I don't know if they are necessarily falling within this group that you are looking at or not. Are you in any way limiting? Because some of these bills were in the thousands of dollars.

**Kerry Overton** – No, we're not limiting. If you go to Slide 6 [Page 6 of the presentation], we put this in very specifically to look at several of the customers who actually came before the Commission, and others, as we said, calling, but who might not have appeared here. They expressed some concerns thinking that they had a high bill – we reviewed those accounts. **But of the customers that you heard that made testimony before the Commission, about 9 of those were directly related to this unusual usage and they were resolved accordingly, and you can see the breakdown. Six of those customers had unrelated issues and considering even one of them had a large water adjustment, and that is a credit that was due to a water main break.** [This last is the Saustrup bill. There was a water main break which was not on their property, but was an AW responsibility. AE did not check into the possibility of an AW line problem and billed the Saustrups for 790,000 gallons – \$12,000. When the Saustrups didn't pay the whole bill, AE took \$800 out of their bank account which at that point was emptied. What happened to the \$800? With a normal water bill of ~\$7 a month, it will take years to use up the \$800 that AE effectively stole, without notice or permission, from their bank account. A credit would not restore them for years. Staff would not talk about individual cases in Working Group meetings, so we don't know the final disposition of the Saustrup case.]

**So we've seen anything from a meter malfunction, all the way to them getting an adjustment, to performance issues around their irrigation system. So yes, there was a variety of escalations that were expressed here.** We're not limiting our communication with the customers just to the August-September unusual pattern.

**Commissioner** – I'm asking if you're not limiting it to \$80. I know that some of these say that there's additional steps here for an administrative hearing, but you are willing to go higher if need be?

**Kerry Overton** – **It's actually whatever the dollar amount is. \$80 was just giving you an average of what was happening with the total number of customers that were in that pool.** [Is that right? \$80 was the average? Other statements report ~\$20.] When we did the analysis we just gave you an average of those based on the tier they're in, based on the credit. We netted that against them, and we gave you a credit range on average. Some are much lower and some are higher than that. It's not an arbitrary number.

**Commissioner** – Secondly, what can be done, what are Austin Energy or the Water Department willing to do about the language? Because that's really concerning that someone be asked to waive due process to fill out this form.

**Drema Gross** – One of the things we've mentioned, both to our Water and Wastewater Commission as well as to the Working Group is that Austin Water is looking to changes in our service regulations, and we have some different interpretations from Legal about how our codes are written.

We agree that the intent is not to prevent a customer who is denied an adjustment, or who does not qualify for an adjustment to go for a hearing. I understand that is what the form says right now. So there's clearly some changes that need to clarify the intent. The intent however is that if somebody goes through the process and is offered the "fair resolution" according to our service regulations, that will be the "final resolution". The intent was not, I don't believe, to have someone apply for a high bill adjustment be denied, and then be unable to protest through a hearing.

So we are working through some draft service regulations changes. We hope to bring those to the Water and Wastewater Commission probably in April [I don't think the WWWC saw proposed changes in the language as brought up by Mr. Wilfong], depending on our schedules, and then take them ultimately to Council. We will be able to brief the EUC on those [20:00 minutes into the video] once the changes are finalized or near final. But we'll be asking our Commission to consider that, as well as to consider other changes in terms of how adjustments are processed. You can get 100% of your volume over your expected volume credited for a high bill adjustment, while for a leak adjustment you can get 50% of that. We've heard from some customers that doesn't seem fair to them. So we are looking at that consideration. [This was addressed in the changes brought to the WWWC in May.]

We've also heard from customers here [at EUC meetings] that don't qualify for a high bill adjustment because they have fewer than 12 months of service at an address, and so we are looking at ways to accommodate that as well and hope to bring those forward within the next 6 weeks or so. [This was addressed in the changes brought to the WWWC in May.]

**Commissioner Tuttle** – Once you get your head above water from this August-September situation, there's something about stapling yourself to your customer's invoice. What it reminds me of here is maybe some form had to get filled out, it in isolation went to Legal and language got put in there, and then all these things just got woven together, and it doesn't really think about it from the customers' perspective. What is their process (and there's a finite number of them)?

What I would like to get more comfortable with is there's got to be some finite number of "error cases", and define them. Maybe less than 100, less than 50, I have no idea, and you follow those and see what your customer experiences, and see how it really threads. You re-engineer that

process where it's far more fair, customer-friendly and not off-putting because billing is the customer interface. People don't really pay attention to their electric bill or their water, they just happen and this is your customer interface, customer interaction.

So can you explore that a little bit more, and describe how you might be able to do that? Because otherwise you're going to have some lawyer over here, drafting this part, making it onerous, make it totally covering the City's tail and not doing what you really intend to do to get the same result of having a final disposition but in a more friendly way.

**Drema Gross** – That's not something that I could today say to you that we've done that. I can say that's my role here. In my day job, I'm the Water Conservation Manager for Austin Water, and not typically involved in "escalations" or in the billing processes. One of the reasons I was assigned to this project was to look at it with fresh eyes. I am working on a customer satisfaction initiative at Austin Water. It's very clear to me that some of our customers are highly unsatisfied. I am taking that personally and taking it seriously. There will be some process, some time that it takes to dig into that, but that's exactly the sort of thing that I am looking at to improve.

**Kerry Overton** – I will just echo. We are partnering with Water to make sure that all of those customer touchpoints are reviewed. What we're doing right now in terms of our staff and Water staff is 100% we were focused first on "escalations" to try to remedy and resolve those situations based on the current policies that were in place. Now you know, some of those policies were relaxed and changed throughout the process from December even to now. And as Drema mentioned, Water is going back to their Commission to see if they can even make some more policy changes.

So we're looking at the policies and procedures.

The second thing we focused on immediately (because we have a new vendor now reading the reads into the process) is we now instituted taking photographs in 100% of the routes. Also we put in quality controls and we are now shoring those up, and we have put a lot of attention on those quality controls to the process now. I think as we free up more staff and have more eyes to take a look at the letters, the way we are communicating that – we're actually going to have to go back and make some more improvements for those initiatives. But the biggest thing was to get all hands on deck, to take care of the immediate problem, make it right for the customers, and instill new process changes that's going to have a better communication with our customers.

And we did that with our call center. Right now we've been testing that out, we really challenged our training there. And what we found is that a good number of those calls [25:00 minutes into the video] – we're actually sampling them. So those calls are going much better with our customers, so we see movement in the right direction. [The Working Group got no details on this other than they said they are beginning "empathy" training.]

**Commissioner Ferchill** – I'm looking forward to seeing changes in the process. But I will say that the immediate issue in terms of notifying customers of this, I like the way it's worked out. I received one of those letters and we never saw that. I couldn't understand why, and then I realized that it's in my wife's name. She got it and immediately brought it me and said "I get it. The letter explains everything. I understand the adjustment and the process."

So, I like what's happened on this immediate notification of the customers of their upcoming credits, etc. I think that's worked out real well. I'm looking forward to the institutional process of dealing with customer complaints getting better refined.

**Kerry Overton** – That's a good segway to the last slide we have for you [*Page 7 of the presentation*]. We are going to continue to case manage the customer "escalations" we mentioned throughout this presentation. We are still working with our previous meter reader contractor to do the investigation that we spoke of to bring more information to this Commission. We also stated that we think we will be in the entire process by March 15<sup>th</sup>. We have not determined that is simply the deadline. If something comes in after that impact, we're going to still continue to work with our customers and hear their cases out.

But that starts to give an indication that if they had not heard from us, that was the end of our formal analysis, and we believe that we would have captured 100% of those who were known to us. We'll still continue to accept calls and "escalations" until we resolve an individual issue with a customer. And we also worked with the advocacy groups in the community and we have set up groups so that our teams can directly visit with some of the customers who have more directly given us some feedback on their individual accounts, and also have provided some information that we wanted to hear from their perspective as process prospective opportunities. [The Working Group was given no information about this in meetings they had after February.] And so many of those are being scheduled.

We appreciate the opportunity to share our status and we will come back again at your next meeting. We will have a Working Group prior to our next meeting, and then when we come back to the Commissioners we'll give you an update on how we proceeded through the rest of the process.

**Commissioner** – For the community meetings, you've got Circle C on March 6, and Avery Ranch on March 13, and Aspen to be determined. Where do people find out the details of those meetings? Is this posted somewhere? [District 2 had the highest number of affected customers. Are any of these meetings in District 2?]

**Drema Gross** – What's in your backup may be outdated. The March 13<sup>th</sup> meeting was rescheduled due to some conflicts. So we have one on March 6<sup>th</sup>, March 7<sup>th</sup>, and one on March 22<sup>nd</sup>.

**Kerry Overton** – The customers that are in that surrounding area will be receiving notification, and we will also – most neighborhoods have a working group, an association – and we are working with those individuals as well. So we make direct contact and we use the association.

**Commissioner Boyle** – I just have a couple of questions.

One is about the low flags, where Shudde Fath had a number of months without any consumption on her bill. Then we had another person testify that she went several months with either very low consumption amounts or zero. Evidently there were no flags for that. Have you found out why there are no flags, why the billing system didn't flag them?

**Drema Gross** – I can't speak to those specific accounts. We do have some reports that Austin Water reviews, that Austin Energy generates for us, and I believe there were some changes being made to those. In those particular cases, why they were not found, I'm not sure. We have seen other cases (I don't think that they were either case that you mentioned) where a customer may have been building a house or out of time for a certain month [30:00 minutes into the video]. And then when there's a zero read, that same month the following year, it does not show up in the low/high flags. But we're working on some additional reports and scrutiny to try to pick those up more readily. And then in those cases where we have identified, specifically those you have mentioned, those meters have been exchanged. [In Working Group discussions, Staff said there were too many zero reads to examine every month. Our questions to Staff about zero reads were not answered responsively.]

**Commissioner Boyle** – In terms of the low reads, I guess it's 25% of the expected usage. That's how it works on a low flag, right?

**Drema Gross** – My understanding is that the low flag is 25% of that same month, prior year.

**Commissioner Boyle** – Right. And that's how you calculated the expected amount. Have you considered changing that to move it up, so that you get a warning there early enough in the process? So maybe 60% or 70% of what you would expect as opposed to 25%? I have looked at other utilities, and I know that you look at benchmark utilities and also use the Oracle system, but it seems to me, and I'm just speaking as one commissioner, that the flag for the low consumption ought to occur much before 25%.

**Drema Gross** – We've had some internal discussions about what it would take to make those flags be more robust. Austin Energy has some processes by which they review the parameters

on a regular basis, and they've accelerated the review for the high flag, changing it from 325% down to 300%. One of the challenges, and something we have to work through is to **not overgenerate flags for customers. I know that they're anticipating looking at that low flag and where the right setting is**, but percent alone may not be the right parameter, because for some customers you could drop to 25% and it would be a typical use. It would be within their range based on where they are normally. **[The Working Group got no additional information on this.]**

**So we may also want to look at some volume parameters as well as look at other data points, to where it's not just a single data point**, maybe it's one or two to catch those. All of those involve some programming and some thought and some cost to make those kind of changes.

So we're doing what we can right now, through reporting and reviewing on those things, and then continuing our discussions as a part of our ongoing improvements.

**Kerry Overton** – Where we would agree with you, Commissioner, is that as we move that up to catch more in that range of acceptance, is balancing that between ... and we were there at some point in time in years ... and balancing that between ... at the end of the day it may look usual to the pattern that they've had in the previous year. But however in contacting those customers we've found that there's a greater percentage of those, and I don't have the number, but **there are more customers that when we contact them just to simply assure, and they say "I was on vacation" or sometimes it's a very simple response on their part, and they get as frustrated if we continue to call them when it seems to be normal ... we get more of those**. But I agree with you, if we're catching some percentage, or even a small number of a few more customers that's not the norm, we continue to move that bar slowly.

**Commissioner** – I would hope that in the Working Group we would look at the high/low flags and maybe ... I think that maybe having a wider range of parameters, not just those percentages, so that we're not creating unnecessary work but catching the ones .... There are some of these that are 6 months of zeros, and compared to the previous year, that should have been a low flag 6 times. So there needs to be some refining of that. I know that where we would want to go would require programming and it may be a long term solution. But we really need to look at those flags because there needs to be more than just the percentage that we're looking at.

**Kerry Overton** – The essence of what you're saying ... we completely agree. **As it relates to those with zero consumption, I think some of that failure was just a quality control problem. I don't think it was the system, I think it came down to us ... people. So what we're doing now is looking at every one of those on a report on a 30-day basis, so every zero is definitely getting a look-at. [Contrary to what was told to the Working Group. We were told that there were too many zero reads to track and analyze.]**

So there are some exceptions, but I get the essence of what you're speaking to in terms of all those parameters.

**Commissioner** – I think it's that bucket that Dave talked about last ... you keep putting stuff in there and you get it right. And we need to refine what's in there so **when we do an "after-action" report, when you do the analysis of what occurred and how we prevent it, that's one of the things we need to look at – catching it earlier and responding earlier.** [35:00 minutes into the video]. [Despite the fact that AE Staff said elsewhere that they had an "after-action" report ready in March, they did not release it as of this writing (August 26). Working Group members had about 5 minutes to skim the report in July, and reports were all taken up by Staff during the meeting. Skimming the report, the part that I was able to read repeatedly stated that there was no way for AE Staff to know that there was anything wrong with the billing for August and September.]

I understand your concern about upsetting the customers and calling them every month with "Are you on vacation?" But we're going to have to find some way to come up with the parameters. I don't have the answer for that, but I am hoping, through the dialogue, with the Working Group and staff from both utilities, we can refine that.

**Kerry Overton** – We agree.

**Commissioner Hopkins** – I know the systems aren't the same, but if there's a strange charge on my credit card, I get a text message within 3 minutes, saying "Your account's been flagged. Respond with yes if it's fine, or call this number". Obviously there would be some cost associated with it, but you could consider some kind of alert system. **It could be voluntary, people could sign up for it. But if they sign up for text alerts, the customer receives "You have a strange water bill this month; call this number if you would like to discuss it with a team member"**. Something like that.

**Commissioner** – I think it would be a perfect solution so that no one from Austin Energy is calling, it is automatic, and if they want out of the service they decline it.

**Kerry Overton** – **We're a ways away.** But we agree that technology will help us in that process.

**Commissioner Tuttle** – Can we flag it some way, in the future, revisiting/re-engineering the customer experience? Part of that is text, part of that is just the way it all flows as far as the customer entry point.

**Commissioner Ferchill** – We're going to start by tossing that over to our working group. That's Number 1 on your agenda now.

**Unidentified Staff Member** (after someone in the audience said something) – I just want you to know that on Slide 6 that Mr. Wilfong does not believe that we characterized his case accurately and we have staff that are trying to look into it and will continue to look at his case and work with him. I want to make sure that you understood that the slide was not intended to tell you that all customers have had their case satisfactorily resolved. It's not the case; I am just clarifying that.

[Mr. Wilfong had testified that he is a retired utility attorney and Administrative Law Judge for the State in electric and water cases. He previously complained about language in the form that required applicants for a non-leak high water adjustment to "waive their right of due process under the Constitution". He also complained that his bill was still too high after a smoothing adjustment. Final disposition of his case, and of the due process issue, was not discussed with the Working Group.]