

# NACWA Communications & Public Affairs Committee

September 14, 2016

---

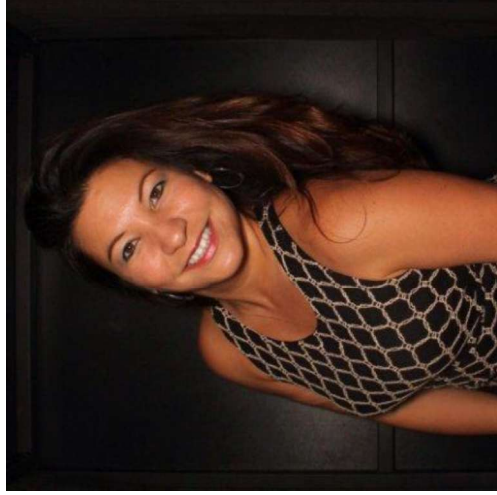
# NACWA

# NACWA Communications & Public Affairs Committee Leadership

---

**Pamela Perez**  
*Chair*

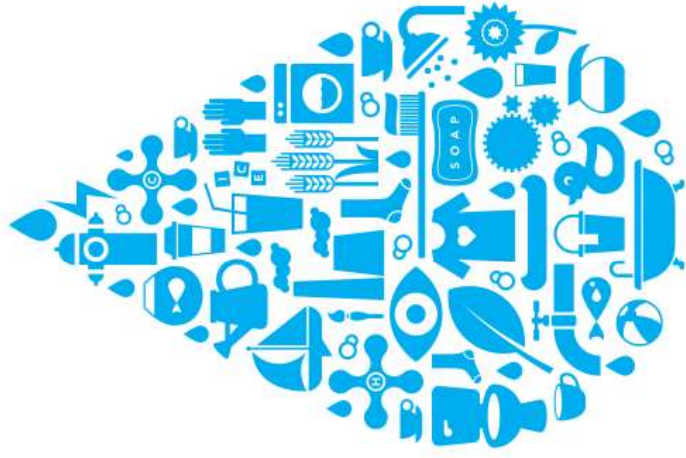
Marketing Manager  
City of Los Angeles – LA Sanitation  
Los Angeles, CA



**Andrew Bliss**  
*Vice-Chair*

Community Outreach Manager  
Capital Region Water  
Harrisburg, PA





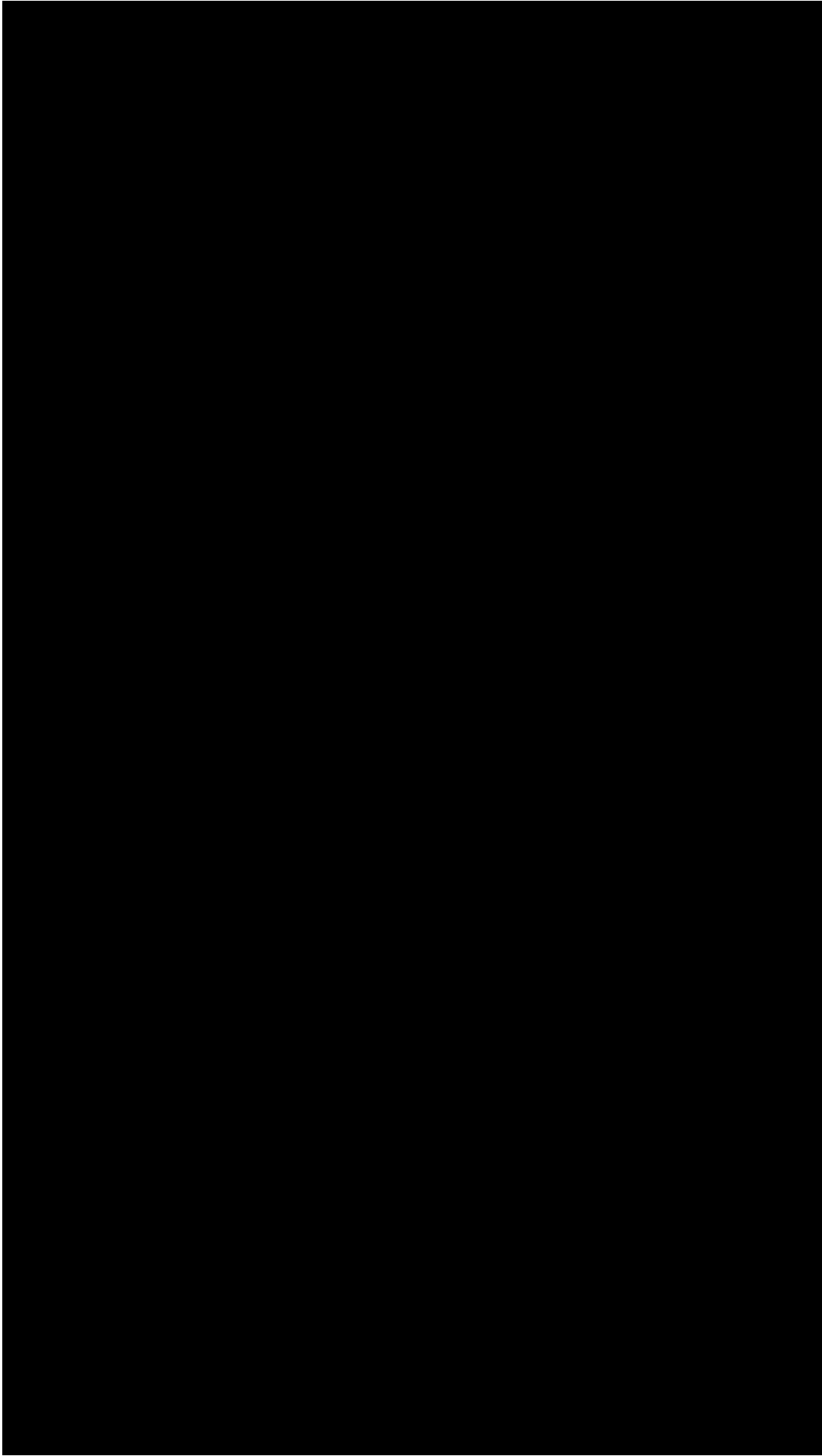
# Imagine a Day Without Water

September 15, 2016



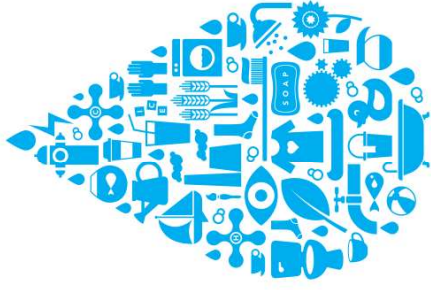
**#ValueWater**

[www.thevalueofwater.org](http://www.thevalueofwater.org)



**#ValueWater**

[www.thevalueofwater.org](http://www.thevalueofwater.org)

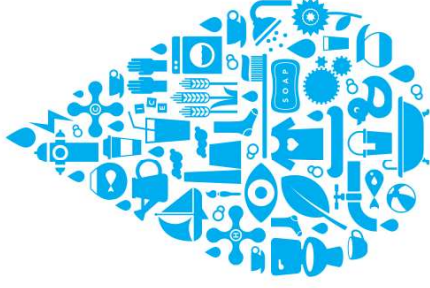


## Imagine a Day Without Water

September 15, 2016

Over **400 organizations** across the country participating in a day of action to raise awareness about the crucial **need for water infrastructure investment** to ensure no community in America is left without water or the infrastructure that brings it to and from homes and businesses





## Imagine a Day Without Water

September 15, 2016

### It's not too late to get involved! Join us by:

- Signing the [petition](#) & sharing it with your networks
- Sharing our [video](#)
- Joining the [Thunderclap](#) to get the word out via your social media platforms
- Engaging with the public on social media – [sample posts and images](#) available to download. Don't forget to tag us [#ValueWater!](#)
- [Signing up as a participant](#) in *Imagine a Day Without Water* and adding your logo to our [impressive list](#)

**For more information:**

**Contact Danielle Mayorga  
DMayorga@uswateralliance.org**

**@TheValueOfWater  
[www.facebook.com/thevalueofwater](http://www.facebook.com/thevalueofwater)**



**#ValueWater**

[www.thevalueofwater.org](http://www.thevalueofwater.org)

# Crafting Messages for Water Rate Increases

Sept 14, 2016



---

**Presented by Sapna Mulki**

Director, Water

Hahn Public

[smulki@hahnpublic.com](mailto:smulki@hahnpublic.com)





# Overview:

**Rates Research Overview**

**Key Takeaways**

**Recommendations**

**Case Study**

**Recap**



## Methodology

- Premise: Utilities often do not get the public and political support needed for entire water rate increase requested due in part to ineffective communication tactics.
- Tested 13 messages
- Sample size included:
  - 800 Customers
  - Majority homeowners
  - Diverse ethnicities and varying education levels
- Represented 350 utilities in water, electric and gas

# Utility Messaging

**FACT:** Concrete and speak to verifiable characteristics of an increase

**FEATURE:** Speaks to values that consumers derive from their relationships to the utility; security, satisfaction, convenience



# Fact and Feature Messaging

## Fact Message:

“DWP officials said the department needs to increase water revenue by \$230 million over five years to repair infrastructure.”

About Los Angeles Department of Water and Power, 2015



# Fact and Feature Messaging

Feature Message:

“We have filed...to recover the cost-effective investments we have made to replace less efficient equipment and build new generation for our community’s economic and population growth...”

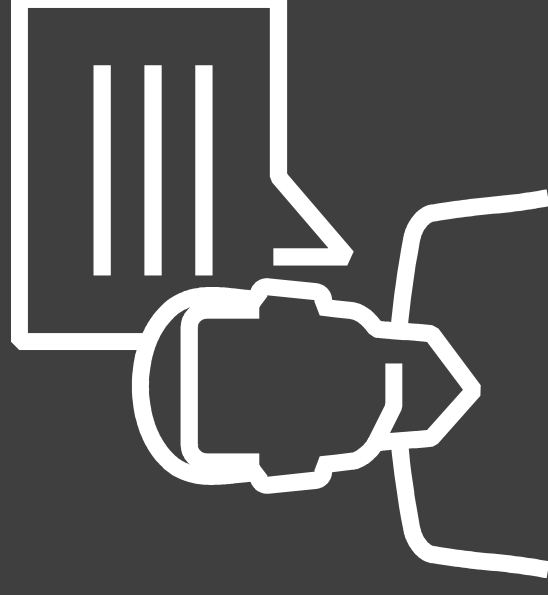
El Paso Electric, 2015



# Ratepayer Messaging

**CHARACTER:** Attacks the character of the utility being greedy or corrupt

**COMPETENCY:** Attacks the ability to perform the job; inefficient and wasteful



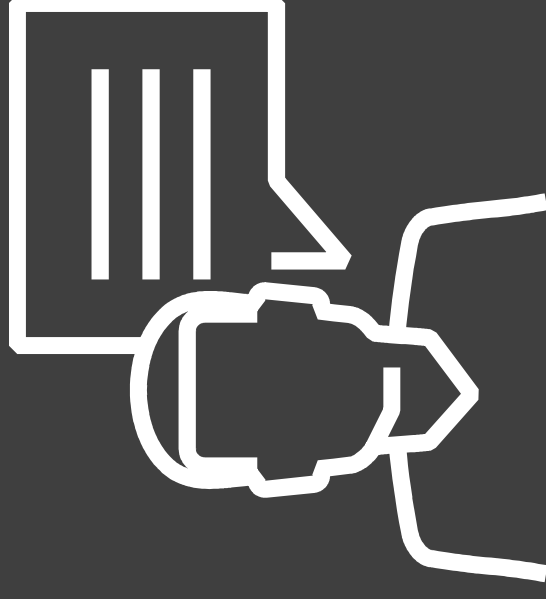


# Character and Competency Messaging

Character Message:

“...the utility company is an enemy to  
all who are impoverished...”

About Memphis Light, Gas and Water,  
2015

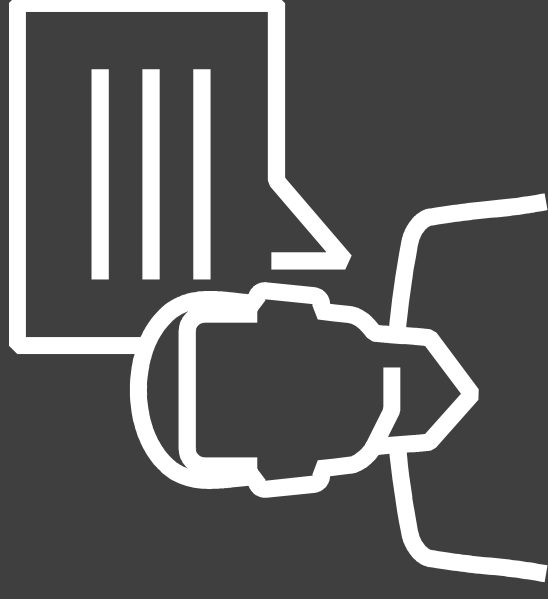


# Character and Competency Messaging

Competency Message:

“A filing this week called IPL, ‘misguided’ and ‘mismanaged,’ saying the company has spent too much on paying its investors and not enough on fixing its crumbling infrastructure that has threatened people’s safety downtown.”

About Indianapolis Power and Light,  
2015

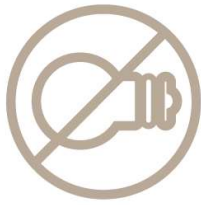


**Rates Research Overview**  
**Key Takeaways**  
**Recommendations**  
**Case Study**  
**Recap**



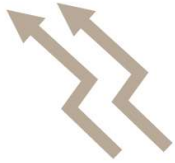
# Least Persuasive

## LEAST PERSUASIVE



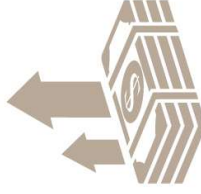
**30%**

Without increasing rates, we can't guarantee you'll have water, power or gas when you need it most.



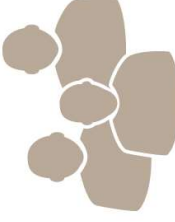
**28%**

We aim to raise rates in small increments on a regular basis.



**24%**

Your bills may seem high to you, but people with other providers pay more.

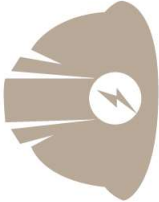


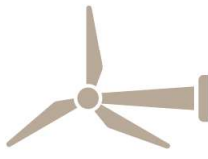


**23%**

Your utility payments help support bringing new better-paying jobs to our community.

# Most Persuasive

## MOST PERSUASIVE

			
<b>73%</b>	<b>72%</b>	<b>66%</b>	<b>65%</b>
Safety is our highest priority and governs every decision we make.	You can save money with our tips and tools to help you reduce consumption and conserve.	Technology in the utility industry is changing rapidly, and we need to invest in our system so you can benefit from those changes.	Part of your utility payment supports use of renewable energy (solar, wind, geothermal, etc.) and reclaimed water.

# Why are the messages...

## *Most Persuasive*

- Fair
- Factual
- Accurate
- Descriptive

## *Least Persuasive*

- Abstract
- Complex
- Generalized

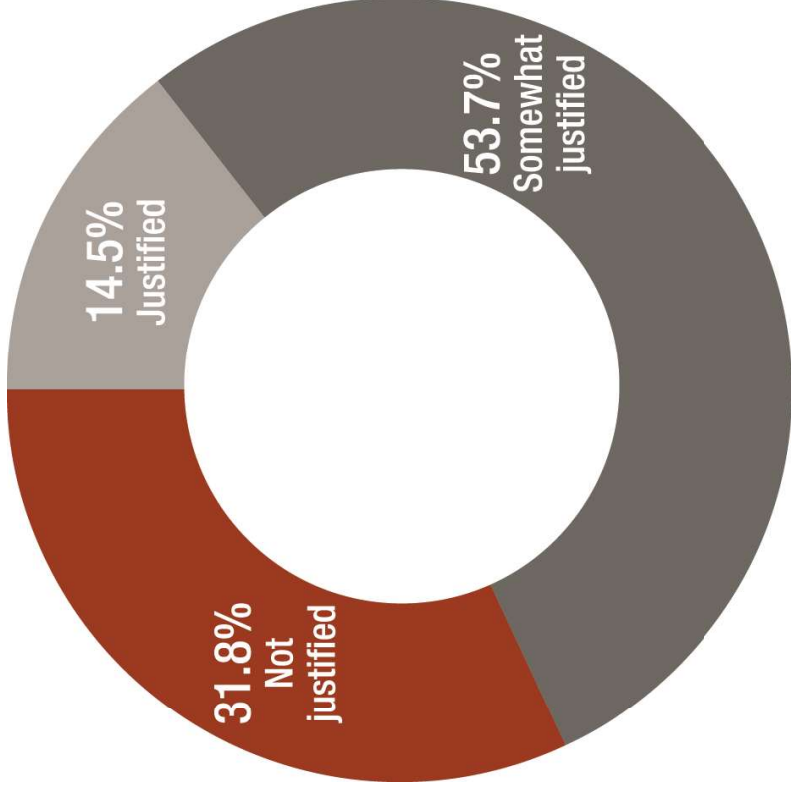


# The Twist



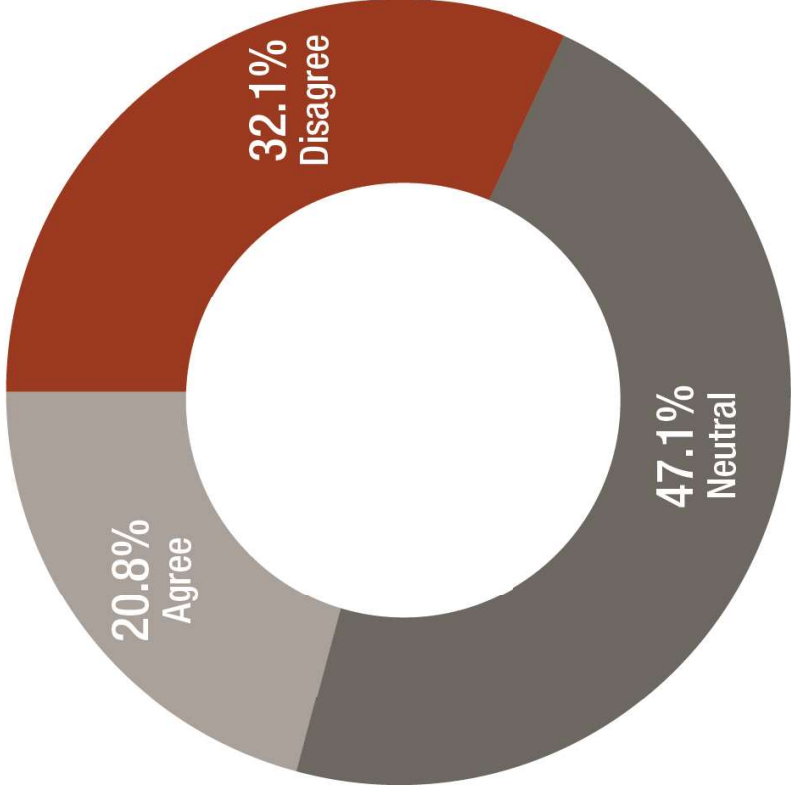
# Rate Perceptions

If Your Bill Has Increased, Do You Feel The Increase Was Justified?



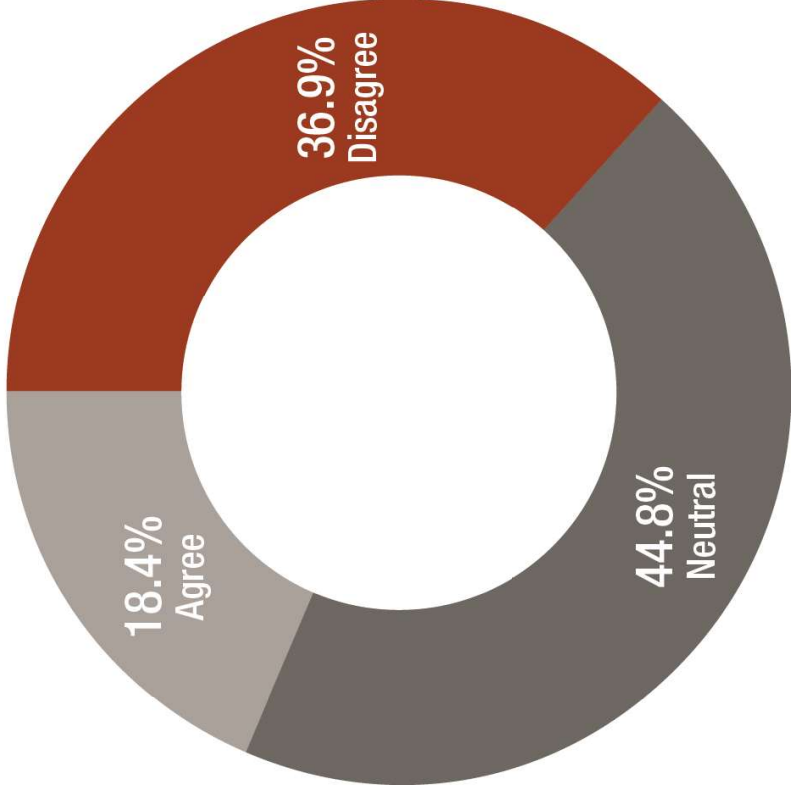
# Rate Perceptions

Do You Agree or Disagree That Your Bills Are Fair?



# Rate Perceptions

Do You Agree or Disagree That Your Providers Are Working To Keep Costs Low?



# Rate Perceptions : Social Judgment Theory



**About Hahn Public  
Rates Research Overview  
Key Takeaways  
Recommendations  
Case Study  
Recap**





## Recommendations on Messaging

- Character/Competency is not on the same plane as Fact/Feature.
- Incorporate Character/Competency messages into the utility's overall platform in order to neutralize attacks during rate case proposals
- Make safety and reliability messaging less abstract.
- Use highly specific messages - date, time, cost, reiterate value of infrastructure, ensure continued service.
- Strive to humanize the utility and use evidence based messaging.
- Neutralize opponent messages using inoculation strategy.
- Keep messages local and relevant

# Recommendations on Strategy

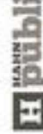
- Current messages are not creating optimal change in behavior and perceptions.
- Get to the undecideds before the opponents convert them.
- Understand the customers using data-driven and data-informed techniques
  - Using the appropriate tools for action
  - Do not be afraid to test out even the most negative of messages
- Consistent and constant communication is fundamental to preconditioning users
- Audiences do not evaluate a message purely on the merits of the argument. Their attitudes toward the message and the messenger plays a role.
  - Empower a Third Party Messenger. Limit use of utility representative as spokesperson.
  - Create an objective blue-ribbon panel of community leaders, neighborhood representatives, subject experts such as engineers, professors and financial consultants.

# Utilities Whitepaper

## Rate Case Messaging: The Character/Competency Conundrum

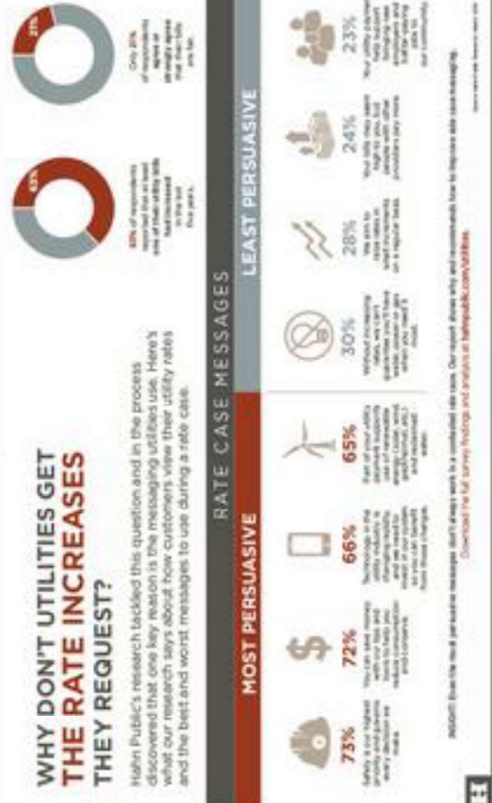


Hahn Public Research  
March 2016



### WHY DON'T UTILITIES GET THE RATE INCREASES THEY REQUEST?

Hahn Public's research tackled this question and in the process discovered that one key reason is the messaging utilities use. Here's what our research says about how customers view their utility rates and the best and worst messages to use during a rate case.



HahnPublic.com/Utilities

# Utility of the Future Today 2016 Honorees

Aarhus Vand, Denmark	Hermitage Municipal Authority, PA
Albuquerque Bernalillo County Water Utility Authority, NM	HRSD, VA
Alexandria Renew Enterprises, VA	Kent County Public Works, DE
Avon Lake Regional Water, OH	King County's Wastewater Treatment Division, WA
Baltimore City Department of Public Works, MD	Knoxville Utility Board, TN
Camden County Municipal Utilities Authority, NJ	Littleton/Englewood Wastewater Treatment Plant, CO
Miami-Dade Water and Sewer Department, FL	LOTT Clean Water Alliance, WA
City of Fayetteville, AR	Metro Vancouver BC - Liquid Waste Services, Canada
Charlotte Water, NC	Metro Council Environmental Services St. Paul, MN
City of Cedar Rapids, IA	Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago, IL
City of Fond du Lac, WI	Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District, WI
City of Grand Rapids, MI	Monterey Regional Water Pollution Control Agency, CA
City of Gresham, OR	Murfreesboro, TN Water and Sewer Department's (MWSD), TN
City of Los Angeles, LA Sanitation, WESD, One Water, CA	Narragansett Bay Commission, RI
City of Roseville, CA	New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), NY
City of San Diego Public Utilities Department, CA	Orange County Sanitation District, CA
City of San Jose – Environmental Services Department, CA	Orange Water and Sewer Authority, NC
City of San Luis Obispo Utilities Department, CA	Pima County RWRD, AZ
City of Tacoma Environmental Services, WA	Sacramento Regional County Sanitation District, CA
City of Tucson/Tucson Water, AZ	San Francisco Public Utilities Program, CA
Clayton County Water Authority, GA	Sanitation Districts of Los Angeles County, CA
Clean Water Services, OR	Santa Rosa Water, CA
Daphne Utilities, AL	Scottsdale Water, AZ
Department of Water Resources Gwinnett County, GA	Spartanburg Water, SC
District of Columbia Water and Sewer Authority (DC Water), Washington, DC	Stevens Point Wastewater Treatment Plant, WI
Downers Grove Sanitary District, IL	Trinity River Authority of Texas, TX
East Bay Municipal Utility District (EBMUD), CA	University Area Joint Authority, PA
Fairfax County Wastewater Management Program, VA	Upper Occoquan Service Authority, VA
Fairfield Suisun Sewer District, CA	VCS Denmark
Glenbard Wastewater Authority, IL	Victor Valley Wastewater Reclamation Authority (VWVRA), CA
NEW Water, WI	

Next Committee Web  
Meeting:

---

October 19, 2016

NAACWA



# Hot Topics in Clean Water Law Web Seminars



SEPTEMBER 16, 2015 | MARCH 16, 2016 | JUNE 15, 2016 | SEPTEMBER 21, 2016  
2:00 - 3:30 PM EASTERN

# NACWA



2016 NATIONAL CLEAN WATER  
LAW SEMINAR & CONSENT  
DECREE WORKSHOP

NOVEMBER 1 - 4, 2016

*Kansas City, MO*

NACWA

Thank You!

NIACOMA