System-wide Overview
Corporate Management Impact on Water Users

Considering Corporate Impact

Summarizing how "Corporate" contracts affect water user bills, especially for small communities in Washington. A small table helps compare examples. We have 5 key cited statements to keep focus.

Summary table of Cascadia Water's impact on customer bills before the Utility Transport Commission

Area / systems (WA)	Requested increase	Approved / likely increase	Notable customer impact
Corporate systems statewide (multiple small systems, incl. Whidbey)	Up to 75–107% overall revenue increase sought in recent cases	Regulators pushed this down to ~49% revenue increase overall	Bills rising from double-digit to over 100% increases on some systems
Highest-impact systems within Corporate portfolio	Proposed rate hikes from 13% up to 142% over three years	Rejected by UTC as excessive and insufficiently justified	Some customers would have seen bills more than double or nearly triple
Whidbey Island Corporate customers	Company initially sought ~107% increase in rates	Final order allowed ~49.1% increase after heavy public pushback	Many households still face roughly 50% higher bills despite partial regulatory relief

What's actually happening to bills when a Corporate For Profit Water Company takes over

When a Corporate For Profit Water Company (CFPWC) acquires or manages small HOA or community systems, it typically files a general rate case with the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission (UTC) seeking substantial revenue increases to cover capital projects, debt service, and corporate return. In a recent statewide case, CFPWC sought a revenue increase of about 75%, which would have translated into customer rate hikes ranging from 13% to 142% across its various systems over a three-year plan.

On Whidbey specifically, a CFPWC requested rate increases equivalent to roughly 107% for some customers, but after a long adjudication—multiple rounds of testimony, hearings, and hundreds of public comments—the UTC cut this back to an allowed 49.1% revenue increase. Even so, the commission acknowledged that customers will still see significant bill increases, just not as extreme as the CFPWC originally proposed.

For small HOA-scale systems, that pattern means this: when CFPWC steps in, bills often jump sharply in the first major rate case. In some communities, the proposed increases would have more than doubled or nearly tripled monthly bills before regulators intervened. Even after regulatory trimming, many customers end up paying 30–50% more than before, with the steepest impacts on lower-income households and fixed-income residents who were used to locally managed, low-overhead systems.

Why the increases hit small communities so hard

1. Consolidation of many tiny systems under a corporate model
The CFPWC's business model aggregates numerous small, previously volunteer-run or lightly managed systems into a regulated utility portfolio. That brings professional management, compliance, and capital investment—but also layers in corporate overhead, return on equity, and standardized rate structures that are often much higher than legacy HOA dues or informal water fees.

2. Catch-up capital spending and regulatory compliance
Many small systems have deferred maintenance, aging infrastructure, or incomplete records. CFPWC's rate cases often justify large hikes by pointing to needed capital projects, new wells, treatment upgrades, and system interconnections. Regulators have pushed back when documentation is thin, but they still recognize that some level of increased spending is necessary, which translates into higher monthly bills.

3. Regulatory guardrails help—but don't erase the shock
The UTC has twice rejected local CFPWC most aggressive proposals, forcing the company to scale back revenue requests and provide better justification. Yet even the "compromise" outcomes—like the 49.1% increase approved for CFPWC customers including those on Whidbey—leave residents with substantially higher bills than under previous local arrangements.

Deep impact on community experience and trust

For small communities, the lived experience is not just "rates went up"—it's a shift in relationship to water:

- **From neighbor-run to corporate-run:** People move from knowing the volunteer operator or HOA board to dealing with a distant company and formal rate cases.
- **From incremental costs to step-change shocks:** Instead of modest, periodic increases, residents see sudden jumps of 40–100% or more proposed in a single filing.
- **From local discretion to regulatory process:** Disputes move from HOA meetings to UTC dockets, public comment hearings, and legal testimony—processes that feel opaque and disempowering to many users.

That's why you're hearing stories of bills "quadrupling" when CFPWC takes over: in some systems, the combination of prior under-pricing, new capital plans, and corporate cost structure produces proposed increases well above 100%. Even when regulators cut those back, the psychological and financial shock remains.

How this connects to the regenerative water campaign

Th Regenerative Water Campaign strategy names a different path:

“This is not about taking over water systems.
It’s about shared stewardship.
It’s about living within our water budget.”

And earlier:

“We can choose to become a model of regenerative island water.”

The* CFPWC *story is almost a negative mirror of that vision. Instead of coordinated, community-rooted stewardship, small systems are being folded into a corporate portfolio where the primary levers are rate cases and return on investment. The result is real infrastructure investment—but also deep community resentment and fear.

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