

SUBJECT: Please support HB3054

I ask for your "YES" vote on HB3054.

I have owned a floating home for 19 years in Columbia County. For most of those years our increase in slip fees were in the low single digits. But in 2020 increases jumped to 10% – 13% every year. If this continues it will become impossible to live here and impossible to sell. Additionally, these increases have not resulted in improvements, nor even essential maintenance to the infrastructure.

For one snowy week in January of 2024 we were without any water and were offered no assistance from management in obtaining potable water (see attached news article). As a result, the sewer in some homes backed up to overflowing and pipes broke causing water damage. We are continuing to be subjected to erratic water service and have been told the only fix will be when a new well is installed but there is no estimate on when that will happen. Supplying potable water is a requirement of all landlords, everywhere.

Maintenance of common areas is erratic and requests for repairs are often not answered or addressed. Communication with management is one-sided: we ask, they ignore. It is disheartening when basic business etiquette fails to be a priority with management.

The lack of options for moving our homes elsewhere make us particularly vulnerable. In addition, many of us are retired and living on fixed incomes. Each rent increase results in a devaluation of our asset and has resulted in many "For Sale" signs. I do not wish to become among those with no other option but to sell my home at bargain price to escape the monthly rent increases.

"YES" on HB3054, please.

Sincerely,

Nancy Ward
34326 Johnson's Landing Road
Scappoose, OR 97056

<https://www.thechronicleonline.com/tncms/asset/editorial/3b6fa756-ba3e-11ee-9f5e-135f416b35ff/>

Weather Disruption: Marina residents experience water shortage

Will Lohre Country Media, Inc.

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McCuddy's Landing is located at 34326 Johnson's Landing Road in Scappoose.

Courtesy photo from Nancy Ward

As winter weather hit Columbia County last week, some residents of McCuddy's Landing Marina near Scappoose reported issues with access to water and sewage during the weather event.

Nancy Ward is a longtime resident of McCuddy's Landing, and she said she began experiencing issues with her water pressure on Friday, Jan. 12.

"The water went out on Friday. And by out, I mean, for me, I had no water in the kitchen, and I had a stream in the bathroom about the size of a straw," Ward said. "Every house was different, so I can not tell you what every single person experienced, other than the fact that no one had enough water to have pressure to do things like take a bath."

Ward said that "most" of the residents had enough to be able to put a pot underneath the stream of water to boil and make it drinkable. Ward said that the issues started on Jan. 12, and water was not restored by management until Jan. 19, though the marina remained on a boil notice until Jan. 23.

Ward has been a resident of McCuddy's Landing for 18 years and said that during her 18 years at the marina, she had experienced similar pauses in water service during 12 of those years. One of Ward's issues is that she feels management has "no desire to do a permanent fix."

Ward also said she feels that management has not prioritized the needs of residents during these events. When Ward contacted ownership, the McCuddy's, they told her that the roads were too hazardous to send crews to make repairs. Ward said the issue was a "habitability issue" that relates to the McCuddy's obligation as landlords to ensure residents had potable water. Ward also said that on Wednesday, the sewage began to back up.

Myron Clinton, who has lived at McCuddy's Landing since 2014, and said when the weather moved in, they had "little to no water" and then that the septic lines froze. Clinton said he understands that the weather presents complications, but he would have appreciated more preemptive communication from management.

"It just seemed to be that the tenants had to keep reaching out to the landlords to be able to get that information to figure out what was going on," Clinton said. "The response of everything seemed kind of delayed and unresponsive, and it just kind of let people down."

Another longtime resident, who preferred to remain anonymous over concerns of potential retaliation, said he has noticed that management "really don't care" about maintaining the facilities and that the marina owners take advantage of the fact that residents can't just up and leave.

"The issue I have with McCuddy's and most marinas is that they know that we're in floating homes and we can't just unhook and leave because we're disappointed in their service," the resident said. "So they can do as much or as little as they really want to. And most of the time, it's very little."

The resident said that issues with the sewage line have been persistent year after year and

that ownership hasn't taken the steps to upgrade the facilities due to the expense. One of the great frustrations that the resident and Ward have is the lack of communication from management.

"There's been no communication," the resident said. "Absolutely no communication before the weather hit or during any other time. They really do not communicate with the tenants at all about what they're doing or what their plans are."

To try to motivate change, Ward has filed a notice asking for arbitration through an arm of the Oregon State Tenants Association, which oversees mobile home parks and marinas. Ward hopes to address her concerns with McCuddy's Landing through mediation.

Hearing from management

Mark Anderson is the Harbor Master for McCuddy's Landing, and he said that the marina takes steps to try and stop water interruptions before they occur. The normal protocol, according to Anderson, is to post signs and notifications to all tenants that they should run a trickle of water from faucets to avoid freeze-ups.

Anderson said that with the temperatures being as low as they were for an extended amount of time, some waterlines freezing was unavoidable. Anderson said that crews came to try and address the issue when they heard that residents were without water, but finding water breaks was difficult with the frozen lines.

"If the line's frozen, it's not flowing until it thaws out, so we had to kind of wait for the thaw to find out where the water breaks are," Anderson said.

Regarding other preventative measure besides having tenants run water through pipes before inclement weather, Anderson said that there aren't many other measures they take.

"I've been a marina manager for almost 16 years, and this is a constant issue with all marina properties; they're just exposed to the elements, and people that live here and have lived here for a while should know that, that their water is going to be compromised because of temperatures," Anderson said.

Anderson said that the lack of response is more a result of the limited staff that McCuddy's Marinas has at its disposal. McCuddy's Marina, which is the company that owns McCuddy's Landing, has seven properties, and Anderson said there are not enough maintenance staff to "handle all of these emergencies all at once."

To help address the staffing issue, Anderson said he brought in outside help with the approval of owners to fix the issues of water loss and sewage backups at the property.

Mark McCutty is one of the sons of McCuddy's Marina Owner, Mike McCuddy, and he handles the management of the business. McCuddy detailed what led to the loss of water at McCuddy's Landing.

"When everybody was running water, it caused the well to run dry, and so at that point, the water pressure went low, and the waterlines froze," McCurdy said.

McCuddy said that with everyone running their water to avoid freezes, there is no well that is "engineered to supply that kind of water in those conditions." McCuddy said that delays in service were a result of not wanting to send their crews out on the road due to the

dangerous conditions.

"I do not send my people out on the roads when it's dangerous, and I know it's not a life-threatening situation. I knew these people would be OK. They had ample opportunity to load up on bottled water or what have you," McCuddy said. "They can also use river water to flush their toilets. I wasn't going to put my people in jeopardy because some people were uncomfortable."

When asked about residents having concerns over the lack of communication from management, McCuddy said that they "communicate pretty well." He did say that he expects people who live in a marina to be "as aware of the weather and forecasts" as anybody.

"We put out snow shovels, we put out snow melt, we drain lines when it's appropriate; we do a lot of stuff in preparation for the bad weather, but we can't hold everybody's hand through a storm," McCuddy said.