

## Amy Johnson

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**From:** Susann Kaltwasser <susann@kaltwasser.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, November 12, 2019 7:07 AM  
**To:** CityRecorder  
**Cc:** Irma Dowd  
**Subject:** Testimony for City Council tonight  
**Attachments:** ELNA testimony on Service fee 111219.pdf

Please find attached testimony from the East Lancaster Neighborhood Association for tonight's City Council meeting regarding the proposed service fee.

Susann Kaltwasser  
Co-president



## **EAST LANCASTER NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION (ELNA)**

November 12, 2019

To: Salem City Council and Mayor Bennett  
From: Susann Kaltwasser, co-president  
RE: 7.2 c Second reading of Ordinance Bill 12-19, creating a City Operations  
Fee to fund City services

On November 7 at their regular meeting the East Lancaster Neighborhood Association heard a presentation by Community Development Director, Norm Wright on the need for additional operating funds by the City.

He explained in detail the need to generate additional funds through two fees, an operating fee and an employee fee. Many people had questions about the proposals.

After a good discussion the members by vote authorized this letter stating their concerns. The main concern is that water is an essential service and putting this fee on that bill, creates an additional burden on low income households. They feel that the increases in water service fees on an annual basis, plus already existing additional fees such as the sidewalk and streetlight fee is becoming a problem. As one person pointed out, their water bill has quadrupled in the recent years. The reality of going from \$35 for 2 months to \$60 a month now is upsetting.

The Utility Relief Fund was discussed, but it was pointed out that most people do not qualify and even those that might often do not know about the program. There was a worry that the amount set aside is not adequate and wonder if the City is keeping records. But they also would like to see more advertisement about the program. Put it right on the bill each month who qualifies and how to apply.

Tin general they would like to see some other method for collecting necessary funds that would allow people to have more control over their budgets. Perhaps a vote of the people is better.

They also would like the city to join with other cities in Oregon to lobby the Legislature for a long-term fix to the impacts of Measures 5 and 50. If this is going to be a short

term problem, then another source of income should be sought, but if it is long-term there needs to be a more comprehensive solution that is more equitable for those on fixed incomes, or who are poor. Some people would not have a problem with paying an additional \$96 a year, but for others even \$8 a month is too much. It is regressive.

Also, adding the fee for each rental unit creates an incentive for landlords to charge extra to their rents. How can a renter know that their landlord is not assessing them more than the \$6.50 a month?

Thank you for consideration of our comments.