

PETITION TO THE HOWEY IN THE HILLS CITY COUNCIL MEMBERS AND MAYOR

This petition is presented to our community leaders on behalf of the residents of Laurel Avenue and the immediate area who are served by well number three of the water system. We have suffered repeated breaks and water interruptions over the past few years which do not seem to have affected other areas of Howey.

These breaks and interruptions have caused several problems, including of course, a loss of service, sometimes for multiple days. This entails getting bottled water, boiling water for dishwashing, finding alternate places to take showers, etc. However, these inconveniences are minor compared to the money that has been spent repairing or replacing faucets, washing machines, whole-house filters and other appliances that fill up with sand and sediment from the cast iron pipes once service is restored. Even though this problem has not been caused by us, the city has not been willing to make reparations for this damage.

We are also told that the water is safe to drink as long as we run it after these incidents, but the "slight rust" that one official described is far from the situation. Our water is brown, full of sand and small rocks, and no one would think of drinking it.

Then there are the strong and repeated air bursts that have caused both immediate and long term damage. This last incident in late June broke a water meter on Laurel Avenue. One resident said it sounded like an alligator was coming up her toilet. Another's washing machine was damaged, costing over sixty dollars to repair. If you are doing washing when this occurs, the rust stains everything in the washer. There is an inordinate amount of air in the pipes, which we are still continuing to experience in our cloudy water every day. If there is a method of "bleeding" the pipes of air before service is restored, this has not been employed.

Our local taxes in Howey are the highest in Lake County, and in addition to our regular bills, we have been paying a ten-dollar "water improvement fee" for several years. Unfortunately, the water situation does NOT seem to be improving. If there are problems now, what will happen when new homes, townhouses and commercial buildings start putting additional demands on the system? Are there plans to expand the water system to meet these needs without further cost to the current residents?

Whether it is the well, the outdated pipes, or some other cause, it needs to be addressed, and a permanent solution found. We are asking the city to take this problem seriously and address our concerns.

Thank you for your consideration. We would appreciate updates on how you intend to proceed on this issue.