

**ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF JACKSON, MISSISSIPPI ESTABLISHING A “WATER AND SEWER RATEPAYERS BILL OF RIGHTS”.**

**WHEREAS**, the City of Jackson, Mississippi ("City"), has an obligation and is committed to providing the Citizens of Jackson, its businesses, and all other ratepayers with fair and reasonable water and service services; and

**WHEREAS**, the City finds it is obligated and committed to providing accurate bills for the water and sewer services provided to its ratepayers; and,

**WHEREAS**, the City finds that it is in the best interest of the City, its citizens, and its ratepayers to provide a fair and reasonable process for resolving issues and/or disputes ratepayers may have concerning their water and sewer bills and/or services; and

**WHEREAS**, a new section in the City of Jackson’s Code of Ordinances entitled “Water and Sewer Ratepayers Bill of Rights” should be adopted, and the City , through the Department of Public Works and/or other appropriate area within the Administration, should adopt rules and policies consistent with the afore-mentioned bill of rights. Likewise, any rules and/or policies inconsistent with the afore-mentioned bill of rights should be repealed to the extent of such inconsistency; and,

SECTION 1: This ordinance shall be referred to as the “Water and Sewer Ratepayers Bill of Rights” and shall read as follows:

1. You have the right to avoid disconnection of service for nonpayment on any Saturday or Sunday or any holiday observed by the City, unless the City is open to accept payment and restore service on those days.
2. You have the right to avoid disconnection of service for nonpayment for a period of sixty days when you provide a written notice from a medical doctor licensed to practice in the State of Mississippi, or any adjoining state, certifying that disconnection of service would create a life threatening situation for the customer or other permanent resident of the customer’s household.
3. A Water and Sewer Ratepayer has the right to a written notice from the City of Jackson about the pending disconnection of their service for nonpayment at least five days prior to disconnection of service. This notice will include a date on or after the turnoff may occur.
4. A Water and Sewer Ratepayer has the right to receive a timely and accurate bill for their water consumption and sewer usage based upon timely and accurate meter readings.
5. A Water and Sewer Ratepayer has the right to reasonable estimates of water consumption and sewer usage when actual meter readings are not available.
6. A Water and Sewer Ratepayer has the right to a clear and complete explanation of all items on their bill.

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7. A Water and Sewer Ratepayer has the right to an adjustment for water consumption attributable to leaks.

8. A Water and Sewer Ratepayer has the right to expect the City of Jackson to correct any errors on their bill.

9. A Water and Sewer Ratepayer has the right to request financial assistance from programs that they may be eligible for from the City of Jackson.

10. A Water and Sewer Ratepayer has the right to appeal the notice of pending disconnection to the Office of the City Attorney. A Water and Sewer Ratepayer has the right to avoid disconnection of service for failure to pay the amount in dispute until the appeal has been resolved.

11. A Water and Sewer Ratepayer has the right to avoid disconnection of service for nonpayment when the National Weather Service for Jackson has issued a freeze warning or an excessive heat warning as of 8:00 AM on the day of the scheduled disconnection.

12. A Water and Sewer Ratepayer has the right to have service restored by the following day after making the required payment when their service has been disconnected for nonpayment.

SECTION 2: The term “A Water and Sewer Ratepayer” means any person, individual, or entity recognized by Mississippi law who is a customer of the City of Jackson’s water and sewer utility service.

SECTION 3: Any ordinances, rules and/or policies, or portions thereof, that are inconsistent with the “Water and Sewer Ratepayers Bill of Rights” is hereby repealed to the extent of the inconsistency.

**IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED** that the City adopt the “Water and Sewer Ratepayers Bill of Rights” as described in detail herein.

**IT IS FURTHER ORDERED** that the ordinance shall be effective thirty (30) days after passage and publication thereof.

Agenda Item # \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

By: Councilman Stamps