

PETITION TO PROTECT NEWPORT UTILITIES CUSTOMERS

TO: The Tennessee State Legislature, Governor Bill Lee, and the Tennessee Comptroller.

WE, THE UNDERSIGNED, are customers and stakeholders of Newport Utilities (NU). We pay the rates that fund the operations, infrastructure, and salaries of this Utility. We live in Cocke, Greene, Sevier, and Jefferson counties.

WE OBJECT to the Newport City Council's attempt to change the City Charter to seize control of the Newport Utilities Board. We believe it is fundamentally unjust for a City Council elected by less than 17% of the customer base to have total control over a regional asset.

WE REMEMBER that the last time the Newport City Council interfered (2014-2015), it cost the ratepayers a minimum \$900,000 in settlements. We do not want our utility rates to increase to pay for more political lawsuits and interference.

WE DEMAND:

1. That the State Legislature **REJECT** any Charter Change that increases Newport City Council's control over NU.
2. That NU be restructured as a **UTILITY AUTHORITY**, governed by a Board that equitably represents all customers within its service area (Cocke, Jefferson, Greene, Sevier). Each party served shall have representation on the Board, and governance shall not be controlled solely by City representatives nor any currently elected officials. County representation shall be allocated proportionally based on each county's share of the NU customer base. Board seats shall include a balanced mix of community members and business leaders drawn from across the service area. Board member terms shall be staggered to prevent the replacement of the entire Board at any one time. The nomination of Board members shall be overseen by a nominating committee selected through a lottery system. Board member terms should be reduced to a 4-year term and Board members should also be limited to 2 consecutive terms.

Name (Printed): _____

County: _____

Signature: _____

Date: ____/____/____

Do you confirm that you are you a Newport Utilities customer?

☐ Yes, I am a Newport Utilities customer. ☐ No, I am not a Newport Utilities customer.