

**Stay out of water business**

Recently, Barstow City Councilman Merrill Gracey floated the idea of the city of Barstow taking over the privately owned Golden State Water Company because "he is tired of his \$400 water bills." Mr. Gracey stated that Barstow has the talent to run the water company and he cited the wastewater treatment plant that runs "very efficiently" by the city as proof of his assertion. Mr. Gracey asked for public comment and opinion, so here is mine.

Shortly after the city took over the wastewater treatment plant, the City Council doubled our sewer bills! The City Council (two of the current members were involved) sneaked through the rate increase on the bottom of our trash bills that nobody reads. There was a huge public outcry about the rate increase, but the city through underhanded means ignored the public and doubled our sewer bills. Even though the doubling of the sewer bill was unnecessary and severely hurt many people on fixed incomes, the Council was not impressed with the public's concerns. In fact, one Councilman stated, "if someone cannot pay the new rate, he should ask his neighbors to help him out"!

Adding insult to injury, not only did the city double our sewer bills, but they hired Burrtec waste to do their billing for them. 1) Apparently the city feels that Barstow does not have the talent to do our own billing, and 2) Burrtec still cannot get their billing accurate. This is why you do not see a due date on your sewer bill! So doubling our sewer bills and hiring out to do our billing substandard is efficient?

The bottom line is that the old adage still stands; "Government has no business in business"! Can anyone out there name me even one business that is run efficiently by the government? If you want to see your water bill double, just let the city take over Golden West Water Company that is not for sale.

— *Nick Benson Sr., Barstow*

Letter to the Editor published in the Sept. 30, 2015 issue of *The Daily Press*