

Public Comment to
Melody Ranch
Status Conference Meeting on
April 8, 2026
PRC Docket 25-00054-UT

I have been acting as a spokesperson for the residents of the Melody Ranch community. I have gone before the PRC Commissioners 3 times to express views not only related to the treatment Melody Ranch Water (MRW) has treated its customers but to let the Commissioners know the unhealthy living conditions that the residents have had to endure.

In the last Status Conference Meeting on 4-7-26, Ms Padilla, the acting operator to MRW, made several statements. The first is that the engineering firm of BohanonHouston did an evaluation of the MRW system and said that the system was not in as bad a shape as they had thought. It was also stated that with this visit that everything should move along very quickly for the transfer to EMWT.

A call was made to BohanonHouston and it was revealed that this visit did occur on Friday 4-3-26 and was attended by the certified water operator for MRW, Daniel Chavez. But in talking to BohanonHouston, it was revealed that this was the initial visit and the engineering report that needed to be filed with the Office of the State Engineer was nowhere ready to submit. It was also stated that there were documents requested from MRW that was never disclosed to the Hearing Officer.

Ms Padilla again brought up that there are 12 customers in the community that are delinquent with their bills. It was also stated by Ms Padilla that she has learned that the swimming pools in the community are now gone. Mr Schaefer let Ms Padilla know that she needed to come to these meetings prepared to answer questions. Ms Padilla agreed to furnish the PRC the rates of usage for the last 3 years and to furnish the customer consumption for each customer for the last 3 years as well. She was also ordered to find a way to make all the water bills current for each customer. Ms Padilla mentioned that she had already furnished the PRC with the monthly consumption rates going back to 2022. Again, Ms Padilla mentioned that the majority of the leaks within the system are on the customer side.

Ms Padilla did give the amount of water hauled in in February at 108,000 gallons and March at 152,000 gallons. That is 27 tankers and 38 tankers respectively. It was also stated that the well produced 150,000 and 164,000 gallons of water but it was never mentioned for what months that occurred. What was never mentioned was what the well pump is producing. At the last Status Conference Meeting it was mentioned at 4.7 gallons per minute. Ms Padilla did not sound convincing when she stated the well isn't going dry.

The things that need to be mentioned is that in December during the Status Hearing that at one point Ms Padilla said to the Hearing Officer that the entire community was delinquent with their water bills but had not been to the post office to check the mail. An inflammatory comment made against the customers of MRW that was completely uncalled for.

In that same Status Hearing Ms Padilla wanted to start shutting customers off because she was having financial difficulties paying the bills to keep the system operational. It was suggested by Mr Schaefer that MRW produce to the customers the billing that needed to be paid to keep the system operational and Ms Padilla agreed saying that was a good idea. That was on December 4, 2025, and to this date, no customer has seen anything. What the customers are told is that if you want to see the financial statements, to look online.

In this last Status Conference Meeting, Mr Schaefer said that this utility needs to develop trust with its customers. I ask all parties involved, how are the customers supposed to trust this utility? Need I remind all the parties involved that from the middle of May with the loss of water, the only communication that the residents received was when we were going to be allowed trickles of water for a couple of hours, and that was not on a daily basis. This community went sometimes with 30-40 hours of water for the month, during the summer, with no explanation from MRW. That in itself is unheard of, even in third world countries.

If it wasn't for the residents making complaints to the PRC, the initial investigation by the PRC would not have happened. If the Commissioners would not have made the order for a Hearing Officer and for an Order To Show Cause, and with the initial orders from the Hearing Officer for MRW to communicate with the customers, where would we be?

The initial Town Hall Meeting with MRW that was set up by the PRC, not MRW as it should have been, nothing was said by Ms Padilla, a true sign of the respect that MRW has for its customers, and we are supposed to trust this utility? How? Ms Padilla was cornered as she was making her way out of that meeting and was asked why documents that EMWT was requesting hadn't been turned over. Ms Padilla finally said something and said that the documents in question had been given to EMWT 2 weeks prior. That meeting was on a Wednesday early afternoon. At the following Status Conference Meeting Ms Padilla said that all the records that EMWT was requesting had been sent on the Thursday after the Town Hall Meeting.

So the question is now, how long will BohanonHouston have to wait for the records that they have requested and who is going to make sure these records are turned over quickly? Who is going to be the watch dog to make sure MRW is doing everything possible to expedite this transfer and again, how is MRW supposed to develop a trust with its customers and the customers knowing this. Will the water usage records that Mr Schaefer has ordered MRW to turn over be correct and with the customers wanting answers, the customers are keeping a close eye on the results.

On April 3, 2026, I sent an email to Mr Schaefer that might have been a start for trust between the community and MRW. That email will be attached. In that letter it was mentioned that because MRW is listed as a Private for Profit utility, that they should actually be responsible and find a venue for a Town Hall Meeting to be done in the evening hours. The reasoning behind this is very simple. There are a lot of residents in our community that work during the daytime. They deserve to have their voices heard, questions answered and to be able to make comments known to MRW. The residents are tired of being held hostage by MRW and not being able to be heard yet are responsible to make their monthly payment for water. Ms Padilla is now asking the PRC for permission to do shut offs for some customers.

The community of Melody Ranch is under an Executive Order from the Governor for a temporary restoration of water service. How can Ms Padilla shut down customers with water that is being supplemented by the state so we, the residents can feel like human beings? Keep in mind also that I have advocated

for the residents to keep up with their water bills and that was before the Executive order came into play.

Another question that I have is how are the residents supposed to trust this utility when if it wasn't for the diligent efforts by members of the community, our state legislators and the work by the PRC and NMED. What is missing? What exactly did MRW do to help with getting water restoration to the community? NOTHING! And the community is supposed to trust this utility or is that this utility is supposed to trust its customers?

In my lifetime there is one thing that I have learned. Trust is earned as is respect. How can an entire community not only trust a utility let alone respect the utility when the "owner" refuses to do something for the community that has a possibility of not only starting a trust but respect. It has been asked of Ms Padilla in Town Hall Meetings in the past to have a Meeting with the entire community. This falls under the order from the Hearing Officer to communicate with the community. Not by email, not by US mail, but face to face. This community has been lied to, has had to endure Ms Padilla laughing at different times in Status Conference Meetings all the while that the customers of MRW are uncertain of what to expect. This is not a laughing matter nor has it been from the beginning. The time has come for Ms Padilla to do exactly as the Hearing Officer has stated.

The time has come for Ms Padilla to not only apologize to the entire community for the reckless manner that we have been treated for the last year, but also to have this utility develop a trust with its customers. As far as success that MRW has with its customers, this community has had to endure water outages at least once a year for maybe a few days to as much as weeks. I ask you, what has the success of MRW really been within its customers. We receive mail for the "updates" but nothing is signed. Ms Padilla as the "owner" needs to show some responsibility. Not only with the customers, but with all the different entities involved.

From day one, this utility has acted in an irresponsible manner, has put the community at risk and still does every day. Has agreed to things from the Hearing Officer and has not followed through. If this utility can afford the services of Pete Domenici Jr to act as their attorney, they can afford to spend some money on their customers. Ms Padilla who as the "administrator" of this company has to

answer to the customers and not just sit there as was done in the first Town Hall Meeting. It is not up to counsel for MRW to answer questions but to take note of what their client has done to the good people of this community.

Thank You
Bruce Sanchez