

**BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION  
OF THE STATE OF SOUTH DAKOTA**

<b>IN THE MATTER OF THE APPLICATION )</b>	<b>ORDER ASSESSING FILING FEE</b>
<b>OF NORTHWESTERN CORPORATION )</b>	<b>AND SUSPENDING OPERATION</b>
<b>DBA NORTHWESTERN ENERGY FOR )</b>	<b>OF PROPOSED RATES</b>
<b>AUTHORITY TO INCREASE ITS )</b>	
<b>ELECTRIC RATES )</b>	
	<b>EL14-106</b>

On December 19, 2014, the South Dakota Public Utilities Commission (Commission) received an Application for Authority to Increase Rates for Electric Service in South Dakota (Application) filed by NorthWestern Corporation dba NorthWestern Energy (NorthWestern) for approval to increase rates for electric service customers in its South Dakota service territory by approximately \$26.5 million annually or approximately 20.24% based on NorthWestern's test year ending September 30, 2014. NorthWestern states a typical residential electric customer using 750 kWh per month would see an increase of \$16.76 per month. The proposed changes may potentially affect approximately 62,100 customers in NorthWestern's South Dakota service territory. NorthWestern proposes an effective date of March 1, 2015.

On December 24, 2014, the Commission electronically transmitted notice of the Application and the intervention deadline of February 6, 2015, to interested entities individuals and entities on the Commission's PUC Weekly Filings listserv. As of the date of this order, no petitions to intervene or comments had been filed.

SDCL 49-1A-8 authorizes the Commission to require a deposit of up to two hundred fifty thousand dollars (\$250,000) in the Commission's Regulatory Assessment Fee fund to defray Commission expenses incident to analyzing and ruling upon an application to increase rates as part of a general rate case.. The Commission has jurisdiction in this matter pursuant to SDCL Chapters 1-26, 49-1A, 49-34A, and ARSD 20:10:13.

At its regularly scheduled meeting on January 6, 2015, the Commission considered this matter. In accordance with Staff's recommendation, the Commission voted unanimously to assess NorthWestern a filing fee pursuant to SDCL 49-1A-8 up to the statutory limit of \$250,000 for expenses related to the general rate case and to suspend the operation of the schedule of rates proposed by NorthWestern pursuant to SDCL 49-34A-14 for 180 days after the Application filing date of December 19, 2014.

It is therefore

ORDERED, that NorthWestern shall be assessed a filing fee in an amount up to the statutory limit of Two Hundred Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$250,000) for expenses related to the general rate case, with payments made to the Commission's Regulatory Assessment Fee fund as periodically billed by the Commission for actual expenses incurred. It is further

ORDERED, that the proposed schedule of rates shall be suspended for 180 days after December 19, 2014, pursuant to SDCL 49-34A-14.

Dated at Pierre, South Dakota, this 4th day of January, 2015.

**CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE**

The undersigned hereby certifies that this document has been served today upon all parties of record in this docket, as listed on the docket service list, electronically or by mail.

By: \_\_\_\_\_

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

(OFFICIAL SEAL)

BY ORDER OF THE COMMISSION:

Gary Hanson  
GARY HANSON, Chairman

Chris Nelson  
CHRIS NELSON, Commissioner

Kristie Fiegen  
KRISTIE FIEGEN, Commissioner