

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

**IN THE MATTER OF THE APPLICATION OF) ORDER GRANTING PETITION
NORTHWESTERN CORPORATION DBA) TO HOLD A PUBLIC HEARING
NORTHWESTERN ENERGY FOR AUTHORITY TO)
INCREASE ITS ELECTRIC RATES)** **EL14-106**

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 individuals and entities on the Commission's PUC Weekly Filings listserv. On February 6, 2015, Toshiba America Business Solutions, Inc., Trail King industries, Inc., and Redfield Energy, LLC (collectively, the Industrial Intervenors) and Wal-Mart Stores, Inc. (Wal-Mart) filed Petitions to Intervene. On January 8, 2015, the Commission issued an Order Assessing a Filing Fee and Suspending the Operation of Proposed Rates. On March 3, 2015, the Commission granted intervention to Industrial Intervenors and Wal-Mart.

On March 20, 2015, the Commission received a petition from twenty-seven (27) NorthWestern customers requesting to suspend the proposed rate increase requested by NorthWestern and to hold a public hearing to determine if such a rate should be allowed or decreased. The Commission has jurisdiction in this matter pursuant to SDCL Chapter 49-34A, particularly 49-34A-12.

At its regularly scheduled meeting on March 31, 2015, the Commission considered this matter. Commission Staff recommended that the Commission hold a public hearing in Yankton, South Dakota, to hear customer's comments, concerns, and questions. The Commission voted unanimously to hold a public hearing in Yankton, South Dakota, with the date, time, and place for such hearing to be arranged by Staff. It is therefore

ORDERED, that a public hearing will be held in Yankton, South Dakota, to hear customers' comments, concerns, and questions, with the date, time, and place for such hearing to be arranged by Staff.

Dated at Pierre, South Dakota, this 2nd day of April, 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: <u>[Signature]</u>
Date: <u>4/2/15</u>
(OFFICIAL SEAL)

BY ORDER OF THE COMMISSION:

[Signature: Chris Nelson]

CHRIS NELSON, Chairman

[Signature: Kristie Fiegen]

KRISTIE FIEGEN, Commissioner

[Signature: Gary Hanson]

GARY HANSON, Commissioner