1	THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION		
. 2	OF THE STATE OF SOUTH DAKOTA		
3			
4	IN THE MATTER OF THE APPLICATION OF		
5	BLACK HILLS POWER, INC. FOR AUTHORITY EL09-018 TO INCREASE ITS ELECTRIC RATES		
6			
7	Transcript of Proceedings June 1, 2010		
8			
9	DEPODE MUE DUDITO UMILIMIDO COMMICCION		
10	BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION,  DUSTIN JOHNSON, CHAIRMAN (by telephone)  STEVE KOLBECK, VICE CHAIRMAN		
11	GARY HANSON, COMMISSIONER ORIGINAL		
12	COMMISSION STAFF Rolayne Ailts Wiest		
13	John Smith		
14	Kara Semmler		
15	Greg Rislov Deb Gregg		
16	Dave Jacobson  Tim Binder  Jon Thurber  SOUTH DAKOTA PUBLIC  UTILITIES COMMISSION		
17	Terri Labrie Baker Demaris Axthelm		
18	APPEARANCES		
19			
20	Lee A. Magnuson, appearing on behalf of Black Hills Power, Sam Khoroosi,		
21	appearing on behalf of the Residential Consumer Coalition, Andrew Moratzka (by telephone),		
22			
23	appearing on behalf of Black Hills Industrial Interveners.		
24	Reported By Cheri McComsey Wittler, RPR, CRR		
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TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS, held in the above-entitled matter, at the South Dakota State Capitol Building, 500 East Capitol Avenue, Pierre, South Dakota, on the 1st day of June, 2010, commencing at 10:05 a.m. 

COMMISSIONER KOLBECK: We have EL09-018, In the matter of Black Hills Power for authority to increase electric rates.

Today the question posed to the Commission is how shall the Commission proceed. We had a meeting last Thursday that discussed many items with the Interveners and Black Hills Power and other people who were interested.

After that there was a meeting that was held between counsel, and I will turn to John Smith, if you want to give me an update on how that happened, and then we'll continue from there.

MR. SMITH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yeah. Following the meeting around 4 o'clock we -- the counsel for the various Interveners, Mr. Moratzka on the phone and the rest of everyone in person, met down in the conference room and had what I thought was a productive discussion primarily centering on just the practical management of the case henceforth.

We did not undertake and didn't resolve the question that was pending before you last week, at least the substantive portion of it I guess you'd call it, which was what is the hearing that we are going to have to specifically focus on in terms of its orientation.

Now we did not -- we did not really undertake

that, and we did not resolve that question. However, we did reach sort of a general understanding of many of the mechanical I guess you'd want to call it procedural issues that will attend the case no matter what direction you go.

And maybe -- Lee Magnuson for Black Hills, he undertook the task then following up of preparing a draft procedural -- what we hope will be something like a procedural Stipulation of the parties as to a procedural schedule.

I will emphasize one thing and throw this out, although you probably can't maybe handle it today scheduling-wise. I don't know. But one of the complexities of this is because we have two separate Settlement Stipulations -- and one of those was between Staff and the Applicant. The other is between the Industrial customers and Black Hills Power.

And one of the practical issues here is a need to determine the fate of the Industrial customers at some point preliminary to some of the other steps on this schedule. The reason being that your decision on that will impact the parties' preparation of their cases and what certain parties are going to have to do, particularly the Industrial Interveners more than anything else. If you approve that Stipulation in the

end -- and we just got it. I haven't even read it yet.

But after you've undertaken a consideration of that and if you approve it essentially if I'm -- and I don't want to put words in your mouth, Mr. Moratzka, but they basically perceive themselves as out of the case at that point in time which reduces the need for additional wasting of people's time and spending of money on attorneys and so forth. But also will just enable the proceeding on to the next phases of the Staff settlement agreement, if that's the way we go, without semantic complexity.

And maybe with that, Mr. Magnuson, and maybe ultimately Mr. Khoroosi too, but since you drafted this thing, do you want to explain what we went over? And, again, if I'm being objectionable here, let me know.

MR. MAGNUSON: Certainly, Mr. Smith. We have no objection to a brief discussion of the procedural order.

I assume that would be acceptable to South Dakota Peace and Justice.

MR. KHOROOSI: No objection.

MR. MAGNUSON: Thank you. The discussion that took place on Thursday was reduced to writing. I put that together. Generally speaking there were two dates that were discussed. The first date that was discussed was a due date for items that would be submitted and

filed with the Commission.

That first date was June 17 of 2010. And at that time the parties would serve, number one, a list of witnesses together with a brief summary of their proposed testimony, other than matters that were set forth in prefiled testimony.

Number two, an exhibit list setting forth the numbering of exhibits and a brief description of the exhibits.

Number three, a detailed summary of the specific remaining issues of fact and law for determination by the Commission.

And, number four, the parties and staff would meet and prepare a current summary of uncontroverted and stipulated facts which would be filed by all parties jointly. And that was to be served on or before June 17.

We were proposing subject to this Commission's approval that a prehearing conversation be held on June 21 at 11 a.m. central with the attorneys allowed to participate by phone.

That would do it for what we discussed in terms of the procedural scheduling. The only thing that I would add to the discussion Mr. Smith has is that we had looked at a possible date for a hearing before this Commission on the approval of the Settlement Stipulation

between Black Hills Power and Black Hills Industrials.
The date that we had looked at subject to this
Commission's approval was June 10.

MR. SMITH: Yeah. And I might embellish that just a minute. One of the thoughts we had -- the Commissioners will be probably, I think -- and, again, I haven't been able to discuss it with everyone, but at least a couple of Commissioners and a number of staff people will be on their way back from MARC. That concludes at noon on Wednesday.

My thought was especially since Mr. Moratzka's located in Minneapolis that, if possible, we could maybe have the venue of that be Sioux Falls, which would enable those Commissioners that have been able to make their way at least some of the way back participate in person. And also that's a relatively short drive for Mr. Moratzka over from Twin Cities.

As I understand it, Drew, you wanted to appear, if possible, in person; is that correct?

MR. MORATZKA: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Smith. That is true. And I am available to travel to Sioux Falls or Pierre, whatever is more convenient for the Commission.

But I appreciate the consideration of Sioux Falls.

COMMISSIONER KOLBECK: All right. Well, thank you. Thank you, Mr. Magnuson, Mr. Smith. We will work

out the logistics and make sure that June 10 is doable.

I understand we should -- kind of two separate items here. We need to deal with the Interveners who have settled, and then we'll deal with -- excuse me. And deal with the Interveners who have not. So thank you for that.

Mr. Khoroosi, would you like to comment on anything on the meeting that was held? I just want to give you a fair shake at everything.

MR. KHOROOSI: Oh, thank you, Mr. Commissioner.

Sam Khoroosi, appearing on behalf of the Residential Consumers Coalition.

No. Mr. Magnuson did a good job of covering everything, and we don't object to any of the stipulations that he had recited. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER KOLBECK: Thank you. So what we will focus on now is the task at hand. How shall the Commission proceed? Basically if we're going to focus on the Settlement Stipulation or not on our hearing. I'll open that up to Commissioner questions or --

I'm sorry. Staff, did you have anything to add about the meeting or anything?

MS. CREMER: No.

COMMISSIONER KOLBECK: I'll open it up to Commissioner questions or comments at this point to

determine our question of how shall the Commission proceed.

CHAIRMAN JOHNSON: Mr. Chairman, Dusty Johnson here. Is it all right if I go ahead?

COMMISSIONER KOLBECK: Absolutely.

CHAIRMAN JOHNSON: Good. I spent a lot of time reviewing the case law that I think is applicable, and, of course, I would try to remind myself that I don't get to do what I want to do necessarily but rather I need to do what the law indicates is proper.

In this instance I think the case law that is most applicable would indicate that a hearing on the Settlement Stipulation is appropriate. There is a Settlement Stipulation before us. The parties have filed that. And we should have a hearing as to whether or not those rates would meet the burden of proof under South Dakota State law. And so I would so move.

COMMISSIONER KOLBECK: Okay. We have a Motion. Discussion.

COMMISSIONER HANSON: Mr. Chairman, I think that while I appreciate very much the filings by all of the parties, I think that the Staff, Ms. Cremer's filing is extremely appropriate. And as I look through it I am concerned with just one portion and perhaps have a little bit of a discussion pertaining to that.

My Motion, and I assume that this is -- this is what the Motion is that Commissioner Johnson is providing, is in essence what was written by Ms. Cremer, and that is that the Commission should proceed to a hearing on the Joint Motion for approval of the Settlement Stipulation.

However, my concern is with the -- is including Staff in that. And I'm more prone to be comfortable with stating that we would, of course, allow Black Hills Power and Staff to present evidence in support of the Settlement Stipulation and allow the objecting party the opportunity to present evidence opposing the merits of the Settlement Stipulation. Forgive me when I read. I start speaking quickly. Sorry. Cheri. Excuse me.

However, I'm wondering if we shouldn't amend that to state that the Commission should either approve and adopt the Industrial Interveners' Settlement Stipulation or reject the Industrial Interveners' Settlement Stipulation.

I recognize -- to me there seems to be a Staff settlement, which is open to interpretation to an extent, that if we -- I recognize that Staff is approving in their briefs the Settlement Stipulation that the Industrial Interveners have entered into. But I still want Staff to have that arms-length consumer-orientated

position when we are dealing with the Residential Interveners.

So someone may need to help me out here just a little bit, but it appears to me that if Staff settles, Staff is certainly settling their position with the Industrial Interveners, but it really doesn't say that. And I don't want people to interpret this as saying Staff has settled now on this -- on this Docket. Because, in essence, we still have an Intervener which we have to go through the process with. Perhaps someone can help me with that.

MS. CREMER: Thank you. This is Karen Cremer of Staff. We actually -- our settlement with Black Hills deals with, as you said, the public interest, which is weighing between the company and the consumers of South Dakota and taking that all into account.

As for the Industrial settlement, that will be heard separately. And like they said, you know, June 10 is what they're looking at. And Staff will have a recommendation at that point on that settlement. Is that what you're --

COMMISSIONER HANSON: So when discussion -- and discussion even today has touched upon Staff's settlement.

MS. CREMER: Correct.

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              COMMISSIONER HANSON: It sounds as if Staff is
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     settling then. I mean, I recognize that Staff is only
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     settling on the Industrial Interveners' portion, that
     they're not settling on the Residential Interveners'
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     behalf. But it seems to me that there still needs -- I'm
 6
     uncomfortable saying that Staff is settling this dispute.
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              MS. CREMER: Right. We are only settling with
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     Black Hills Power.
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              COMMISSIONER HANSON: On behalf of the
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     Interveners or on behalf of all rate payers?
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              MS. CREMER: On behalf of all rate payers, which
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     would, of course --
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              COMMISSIONER HANSON: Include the Residential?
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              MS. CREMER: -- include the Residential, yes.
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     We believe we have taken their interests into account
16
     when we have settled this matter.
                                        Now --
1.7
              COMMISSIONER HANSON: But we're only settling it
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     for the Industrial Interveners.
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              MS. CREMER: On the 10th or --
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              COMMISSIONER HANSON: I'm not making myself
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     clear apparently. We have the Industrial Interveners and
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     Black Hills Power.
              MS. CREMER: Correct.
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              COMMISSIONER HANSON: Who have come before us
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     saying that they're ready to settle, and they have filed
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the -- and you have agreed with their settlement.

MS. CREMER: Yeah. We have not -- we don't have a portion in that. We have not signed on that. They will come before the Commission I believe with Contracts with Deviation, and Staff at that point will have a recommendation to the Commission. Because you will have to approve those Contracts with Deviation and the tariffs that go with that.

And so we will have a recommendation at that point with that. But we have not had anything to do -- that settlement is solely between Black Hills Power and the Industrial Interveners that got together as a group.

COMMISSIONER HANSON: So Staff -- it needs to be perfectly clear then that Staff is settling with Black Hills Power on behalf of the Industrial Interveners but not on behalf -- not in regard to any other tariffs.

MR. SMITH: Actually I think, Commissioner
Hanson, I think the situation right now is really
precisely the opposite of that. Although I don't want to
characterize it as Staff is settling on behalf of the
Residential customers. They -- at least a group that
represents some of the Residential -- as a separate party
in the case, and they have not agreed to the settlement.

But what the Staff filed settlement agreement settles is not with respect to the Industrial Interveners

but is the settlement of the general rate case, the whole thing.

COMMISSIONER HANSON: The application -- the briefs that I have received and read from Black Hills Power and the confidential briefs showed the rates as to be settled with, as I interpreted, the Industrial customers and not the Residential customers.

MR. SMITH: But that was a -- that was a settlement between the Industrial customers and Black Hills, and Staff has not yet agreed to acquiesce in that settlement. They have not. And that's the purpose of the meeting on the 10th, if we're going to have it or whenever we can schedule it, will be to consider that, by which time -- see this was just filed I believe -- I think on Friday. Because I had not seen it until this morning, and I have to say I haven't even been able to read it yet.

But the Staff settlement does not explicitly include a position on the Settlement Stipulation between Black Hills Power and Industrial Interveners because Staff had not even -- I don't think they had been presented with a copy of that until last -- late last week.

Is that a fair statement, Karen?

COMMISSIONER HANSON: Mr. Magnuson, could you --

you look compelled to speak. Perhaps you can --

MR. MAGNUSON: Thank you, Commissioner Hanson.
What we're looking at here is two separate matters.

Let's take first the matter between Black Hills Power and
Black Hills Industrial Interveners.

That settlement has been reached, and the Joint Motion requesting approval of that Settlement Stipulation was filed with this Commission just this last Friday.

In advance of that filing we had provided a copy of the Settlement Stipulation to Staff and to South Dakota Peace and Justice. But it was formally filed on Friday. That is the item that we are requesting come before this Commission on a date to be decided. We have talked about June 10 for that date.

Staff has not taken a position as yet on the settlement between Black Hills Industrials and Black Hills Power. So that would be the first Joint Motion that would be before this Commission.

The second Joint Motion that we're asking this Commission to deal with is the Settlement Stipulation between Black Hills Power and Staff regarding the general rate case. And that's the one that we are proposing be heard on June 28. That is the one that South Dakota Peace and Justice has objected to.

With that being said, the -- that's why we

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believe that it would be appropriate for this Commission to rule on the settlement between Black Hills Power and the Black Hills Industrials in advance of that. Because if that Settlement Stipulation was approved by this Commission, then Black Hills Industrials would not necessarily have to participate in the June 28th hearing.

COMMISSIONER HANSON: Thank you. I appreciate that very much. And you do earn your keep on occasion. Thank you.

MR. MAGNUSON: The one additional thing that I would mention with regard to the Black Hills Industrials' settlement with Black Hills Power.

It's the position of certainly Black Hills Power and I believe of Black Hills Industrials that that settlement in no way affects the settlement between Black Hills Power and Black Hills Staff.

COMMISSIONER HANSON: Thank you. Mr. Chairman, Chairman Johnson, your Motion is for the June 10 or June 28 hearing then?

CHAIRMAN JOHNSON: Well, and I appreciate you trying to clarify that because when I said I so move the antecedent wasn't clear. So thanks, Commissioner.

Yes. It has to do with the June 28 hearing, that we would take up whether or not the Settlement Stipulation agreed to by Staff and Black Hills Power is

in the public interest and meets all the burdens under state law.

COMMISSIONER HANSON: Thank you. That's the only questions I have then. And the June 10, just an FYI, would be a challenge for me to participate in unless it's teleconference.

COMMISSIONER KOLBECK: All right. Thank you.

Any other Commissioner comments? We do have a

Motion.

CHAIRMAN JOHNSON: Commissioner Kolbeck, I might just note I think there has been some confusion about whether or not the Commission will allow a full hearing on the merits.

And I would want to make it very clear that there isn't anything -- no matter how any Commissioner votes today, for or against the Motion, the result will be a full hearing on the merits.

You know, all parties will still have the opportunity to call whatever witnesses they want and to supply whatever evidence they want. And I don't think we're really looking at any party being prejudiced because each party can continue to put forth their case and make their argument. And at the end of the day if Black Hills Power does not meet their burden of proof, they don't get the rate that has been agreed to.

1 COMMISSIONER KOLBECK: All right. Thank you, 2 Commissioner Johnson. That was well said. That was 3 actually what I had in mind too. 4 The Settlement Stipulation actually includes 5 everything in the rate case. So just because we say that 6 it's focusing on the settlement doesn't mean that 7 anything in the settlement can't be raised. So if you 8 have 100 items in the rate case and 100 items in the 9 settlement, we're just going to focus on the things that 10 we agree on in the settlement, agree to throw those out 11 and focus on the specific contentious items. 12 Right now 26.6 percent increase is actually at 13 So we'll basically start at the 12.9 and not the 26.6 is what we're deciding here today. 14 15 Any other comments? 16 Mr. Rislov. MR. RISLOV: Just in case that would cause any 17 confusion, I believe the number is 12.7. 18 19 I'm sorry. I did COMMISSIONER KOLBECK: misspeak. Yeah. We don't want to give them .2. 20 21 about that. 2.2 Any other comments? All right. Hearing none, we'll continue to 23

25 Commissioner Hanson.

24

vote.

COMMISSIONER HANSON: Aye. COMMISSIONER KOLBECK: Commissioner Johnson. CHAIRMAN JOHNSON: Aye. COMMISSIONER KOLBECK: And Commissioner Kolbeck votes aye also. Motion passes. Thank you, everyone, for sticking with this. This is a very difficult Docket to work through, and I appreciate everyone's time. (The proceeding is concluded at 10:26 a.m.) 

1	STATE OF SOUTH DAKOTA)		
2	:SS CERTIFICATE		
3	COUNTY OF SULLY )		
4			
5	I, CHERI MCCOMSEY WITTLER, a Registered		
6	Professional Reporter, Certified Realtime Reporter and		
7	Notary Public in and for the State of South Dakota:		
8	DO HEREBY CERTIFY that as the duly-appointed		
9	shorthand reporter, I took in shorthand the proceedings		
10	had in the above-entitled matter on the 1st day of June,		
11	2010, and that the attached is a true and correct		
12	transcription of the proceedings so taken.		
13	Dated at Onida, South Dakota this 8th day of		
14	June, 2010.		
15			
16			
17	anima wa		
18	Cheri McComsey Wittler, Notary Public and		
19	Registered Professional Reporter Certified Realtime Reporter		
20	dererried Nedrerme Nepercer		
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