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January 27, 2012

Patricia Van Gerpen
Executive Director
SD Public Utilities Commission
500 E. Capitol Ave.
Pierre, SD 57501

Re: EL11-030 – In the Matter of the Filing by NorthWestern Corporation d/b/a NorthWestern Energy for Approval of Tariff Revisions

Dear Ms. Van Gerpen:

On December 30, 2011, NorthWestern Corporation d/b/a NorthWestern Energy (NorthWestern or Company) filed for approval of revisions to its Electric Tariff. The revisions add language allowing the Company to require a customer (or a customer representative) at least the legal age of majority or 18 years of age, be present at service turn on or during any work at the customer's premise. NorthWestern also proposed to remove language regarding maintenance on customer owned lighting systems, as the Company will no longer perform such maintenance, instead referring customers to local contractors.

Upon review of the filing, Commission Staff recommends approval of the tariff revisions. Staff does not object to the revision regarding the presence of an adult on customer premises during service activation or maintenance. Second, the removal of language regarding the Company performing maintenance work on customer lighting systems is an initiative to avoid NorthWestern acting as a competitor to local contractors who would normally perform this work. Removal of this language should not result in an increased financial burden to customers as the current language requires customers to pay NorthWestern directly for all costs associated with repairs performed. In addition, if the customer cannot locate a contractor to perform the needed maintenance, NorthWestern will be willing to do so. Staff finds this request to be reasonable as it will assist in promoting economic viability of local contractors.

Sincerely,


Ryan Soye