



Gary Hanson, Chairperson
Chris Nelson, Vice Chairperson
Kristie Fiegen, Commissioner

South Dakota

PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

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March 5, 2013

Rich Blechinger


Dear Mr. Blechinger:

This is in response to your message to the commissioners regarding the pending Xcel Energy rate case, EL12-046. Since this is an open docket on which commissioners will ultimately vote, I am responding to you on behalf of PUC staff. Commissioners must refrain from discussing open dockets on which they have yet to act or vote on in a public meeting.

In order for the commissioners and others interested in the rate case to see your comments, they will be made part of the official docket.

You ask for the date of the rate case review. This docket has been under review since its filing June 29, 2012. You can follow the progress of the filing by going to www.puc.sd.gov and clicking on "Commission Actions," and "Commission Dockets." Click on "Electric Dockets," "2012 Electric Dockets" and "EL12-046" to reference this rate case. You may find the Electric Rate Case Increase Requests Info Guide helpful as it explains the review process: <http://www.puc.sd.gov/commission/Publication/electricratecasehandout.pdf>

I understand your frustration regarding increased costs associated with energy and other expenses. However, the commission must investigate and act on any rate increase request filed by a regulated utility such as Xcel Energy as required by state law. See South Dakota Codified Law 49-34A at www.legis.state.sd.us/statutes.

Whether or not the commission agrees with Xcel Energy's justifications for new expenses or a portion of them will be determined in the processing and eventually, the commissioners' decisions regarding the case. None of the commissioners or staff wishes to increase utility rates for South Dakotans. They are consumers as well and understand how increased costs affect all.

I hope this helps explain how the commission is reviewing the issues you raised with the Xcel Energy rate case. Thank you for writing to make us aware of your concerns.

Sincerely,

Deb Gregg
Consumer Affairs Manager