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18 July 2015

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**SOUTH DAKOTA PUBLIC
UTILITIES COMMISSION**

Mr. Chris Nelson, Chairman
So. Dakota Public Utilities Commission
Capitol Bldg., 1st Floor
500 E. Capitol Avenue
Pierre, SD 57501-5070

RE: Electric Rate Increase Request, Northwestern Energy Co.

Dear Chairman Nelson:

I write in opposition to the 20.24% electric rate increase sought by Northwestern Energy, which supplies my electricity. I submit that an increase of this magnitude in one year is per se unreasonable. I understand that the applicant has not had a rate increase for many years, but if it has been dilatory in seeking rate relief that is not the fault of its customers. If the Commission chooses to grant an increase of this magnitude at the very least it should be phased in over a period of four to five years.

Next, I bring to our attention Northwestern Energy's billing practices. It demands payment receipt not less than ten days after its billing date. My most recent electric bill was dated 14 July, bore a postmark of 15 July and was received by me here in Yankton on 17 July. Given the three-day mailing time between Yankton and Butte, Montana, I have only four days in which to get my check in the mail to be reasonably assured that it will be delivered in Butte on 24 July. This is grossly insufficient. MidAmerican Energy, my gas supplier, allows twenty-two days between billing date and due date for its bills. Northwestern Energy should be held to the same standard.

Sincerely,

