



Mr. Lee K. Pfeiffer
Huron, SD 57350

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PUC,

SOUTH DAKOTA PUBLIC
UTILITIES COMMISSION

I am writing in regard to NorthWestern Energy's proposed rate increase. After reviewing my NorthWestern bill I received this morning, I was shocked to discover the magnitude of the rate increase even though it has not been approved yet. I have a difficult time understanding how NorthWestern can implement the rate increase without your official approval.

There are two items on this bill that caught my attention. First the "Customer Service Charge" (meter charge) increased from \$5.00 in the June billing to \$9.00 in this August billing. An outrageous 80% increase! Next, the electricity rate increased from \$.108 per KWH in the July billing to \$.123 per KWH in this August billing. An unbelievable 13.9% increase! My total electricity charges are \$96.16 for 784 KWH before taxes in this August billing. For comparison purposes, the previous highest August billing for electricity since I've lived here (almost 38 years) was \$94.97 for 1128 KWH (July 1988 usage) in 1988.

How can one justify the incredible rate increase that NorthWestern is asking for? The COLA on my fixed retirement annuity was only +1.5%. If this increase is approved many low income people are going to have serious financial trouble this winter. I strongly urge you to reject NorthWestern's rate increase. Sincerely, Lee K. Pfeiffer