
From: Kevin Curry

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To: PUC

Subject: docket number NG10-014

To South Dakota Public Utility Commission:

I am one of 195 South Dakota farm tap customers currently receiving natural gas from Northwestern Energy (NWE) transmitted through a pipeline owned by Northern Natural Gas (NNG). I have been using natural gas from a farm tap since 1991 to heat my house and for appliance usage. At that time, a new plastic line was installed from the farm tap to my house. The pipeline to my house has been a reliable and safe source of energy for my needs.

Currently there appears to be a disagreement between NNG and NWE regarding whom is to provide natural gas service to current farm taps. From reading and researching information on the PUC website, it is my understanding the easements granted in the 1950's to the land owners for access and burial of the pipeline through their property is that the landowner had access to a supply of natural gas for personal use as long as the pipeline remained in use. NNG has sub-contracted out their responsibility of supplying natural gas to the farm taps since they are a transmission company and not a distribution company like Peoples, Aquila, Minnesota Energy and NWE. It is clear from letters received by both parties that NWE does not want to renew its contract with NNG after 2017. Leaving me to assume their decision not to renew is financial.

This leads me to ask, why can't NNG subcontract out the distribution of the gas to Mid-American Energy (MAE), a transmission and distribution company of natural gas with over 1.5 million customers in Iowa, Illinois, Nebraska and South Dakota. NNG and MAE are both subsidiaries of Berkshire Hathaway Energy, a company owned by Berkshire Hathaway. NNG and MAE currently work together in several South Dakota cities (Elk Point included) to provide natural gas to South Dakotans. When MAE purchased NNG, it purchased the gas pipeline and the responsibility of providing natural gas to the farm taps. It seems to me that NNG does not want to subcontract out the farm taps to another distribution company, including their sister company (MAE) due to financial and or safety reasons and using the claim that they are only a transmission company and not a distribution company of natural gas.

It is apparent that no distribution company wants to provide natural gas to 195 customers spread across such a broad area. We are a small minority of customers who are depending on the South Dakota Public Utility Commission to keep in mind the contractual agreements and obligations signed years ago by both parties. And we expect for the continuation of a safe and reliable source of energy.

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