

Attention Public Utilities Commission:

My name is Gary Knutson and I own and operate a farm operation 5 miles west and one mile north of Volga, South Dakota. I am writing to you with a recent concern brought to my attention regarding a potential discontinuation of service from Northern Natural Gas who supplies the gas to our farm which has been serviced by NorthWestern Energy.

Originally, Northern Natural Gas was granted an easement to run a main line directly through our home quarter with a promise of being allowed to tap in for our own consumption. In 1979, at our own expense, we took advantage of said agreement and tapped into their line as the main source of heat for our farm which includes heat for our house, three furnaces in two-outbuildings, two water heaters and two fireplaces. All of the infrastructure for that above mentioned uses of their gas, including over three-eighths of a mile of line placed under ground to supply these sources, were paid out 100% as per our expense.

Recently, we received a letter from both NorthWestern Energy and Northern Natural Gas referencing the possibility of eliminating the use of our farm tap along with 195 other farm taps, which in effect, should be a violation of the original easement granted to landowners to run a main line on our property in the first place. I do not feel it should be allowed for NorthWestern Energy to be allowed to profit from servicing only the larger municipalities by making use of a main gas line that was required to first run through private rural property for such service.

Additionally, I feel all of those involved should be aware of a potential scare tactic lingering in the background as means for NorthWestern to call for a rate hike in exchange for maintaining current taps. If that is the case, we need your help to represent us in preventing such outcome.

I am calling on you, as an elected official, to please take a firm stance against Northern Natural Gas and NorthWestern Energy, and protect the burdensome investment we have encountered through the years to be able to use their natural gas.

Sincerely,
Gary Knutson



Docket NG 16-014