

From: PUC
Sent: Tuesday, April 2, 2024 3:35 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: EL23-020, NG23-014

Mr. Rohrer,

This is in response to your message regarding the MDU rate increase. You will find an [Information Guide](#) posted in each commission rate increase request docket explaining the review process staff undertakes whenever an investor-owned utility in the state files to request increased rates. Laws enacted by the South Dakota Legislature direct the commission regarding this process. These laws include allowing the utility to raise customer rates 180 days after their filing date. See the excerpt below.

When an investor-owned electric utility wishes to modify its rates, it must seek permission from the PUC to do so. The company begins the process by filing an application with the PUC that states the proposed rate of increase for each of its customer classes – residential, commercial and industrial, for example – and the rationale for the requested increase. The PUC has six months to investigate and make a decision about a rate request before the utility may put interim rates into effect, subject to refund depending on the PUC’s decision.

The utility filed a request to increase its electric and natural gas rates with the South Dakota Public Utilities Commission on Aug. 15, 2023. These rate increase dockets, electric: [EL23-020](#), and natural gas: [NG23-014](#), are currently under review by a team of PUC staff analysts and attorneys. You can learn more about staff’s evaluation and the discovery process by clicking on the links to these two dockets.

You may wish to read MDU’s rate increase notice with explanation filed with each increase request: [EL23-020](#) and [NG23-014](#).

I understand your concern about increased rates and your careful review of the bills you receive. That is wise and it is how the commission approaches rate increase requests. PUC staff carefully review rate increase requests such as MDU’s. This includes making several requests for additional data and information from the utility – also called discovery.

As you will learn via the dockets, the staff team has made six data requests of the utility thus far. By state law, the utility's staff is allowed up to 30 days to respond to each data request so discovery can be a lengthy process. This all takes place before my fellow commissioners and I ask further questions and make further adjustments during a publicly noticed meeting or hearing, preparing to make our decisions and to ultimately vote on each rate increase requested.

Your email and my response will be posted under Comments and Responses in these online dockets.

Thank you for reaching out regarding the work of the commission.

Kristie Fiegen, Chairperson
South Dakota Public Utilities Commission
PUC.sd.gov