

**BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION  
OF THE STATE OF SOUTH DAKOTA**

<b>IN THE MATTER OF THE APPLICATION OF )</b>	<b>ORDER GRANTING</b>
<b>NORTHWESTERN CORPORATION DBA )</b>	<b>PETITION TO HOLD A</b>
<b>NORTHWESTERN ENERGY FOR AUTHORITY )</b>	<b>PUBLIC HEARING</b>
<b>TO INCREASE ITS NATURAL GAS RATES )</b>	<b>NG11-003</b>

On May 20, 2011, NorthWestern Corporation dba NorthWestern Energy (NorthWestern) filed with the Public Utilities Commission (Commission) for approval to increase rates for natural gas service in its South Dakota service territory by \$4,123,035 annually or 7.20% based on NorthWestern's test year ending December 31, 2010. NorthWestern states the proposed increase for a residential customer would be \$8.31 per month based on an average usage of 63 therms per month. The proposed rates may potentially affect approximately 43,750 customers in NorthWestern's South Dakota service territory.

On May 26, 2011, the Commission electronically transmitted notice of the filing to interested individuals and entities with an intervention deadline of July 13, 2011. On May 31, 2011, the Commission issued an Order of Assessment of Filing Fee and Suspension of Imposition of Tariff.

On September 9, 2011, the Commission received a petition from twenty-five (25) customers requesting to suspend the proposed rate increase requested by NorthWestern and to hold a public hearing to determine if such a rate should be allowed.

At its regularly scheduled meeting of September 27, 2011, the Commission considered the petition. Commission staff recommended that the Commission hold a public hearing in Scotland, South Dakota, on October 17, 2011, commencing at 7:00 PM, to hear customer's comments, concerns, and questions.

The Commission has jurisdiction in this matter pursuant to SDCL Chapters 1-26, 49-I A, 49-34A and ARSD 20:10:01:15.02 and 20:10:01:15.03.

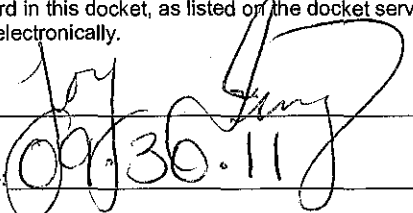
The Commission voted unanimously to hold a public hearing at the Scotland City Hall in Scotland, South Dakota, on October 17, 2011, commencing at 7:00PM. It is therefore

**ORDERED**, that a public hearing will be held at the Scotland City Hall in Scotland, South Dakota, on October 17, 2011, commencing at 7:00PM to hear customer's comments, concerns, and questions.

Dated at Pierre, South Dakota, this 30 day of September 2011.

**CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE**


The undersigned hereby certifies that this document has been served today upon all parties of record in this docket, as listed on the docket service list, electronically.

By: 

Date: 09.30.11

(OFFICIAL SEAL)

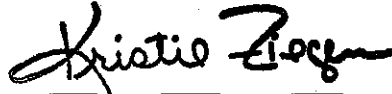
BY ORDER OF THE COMMISSION:



GARY HANSON, Chairman



CHRIS NELSON, Commissioner



KRISTIE FIEGEN, Commissioner