

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

[REDACTED]

From: PUC
Sent: Thursday, December 22, 2016 2:13 PM
To: 'Gary'
Subject: NG16-014

Mr. Knutson:

Thank you for your message and letter regarding the farm taps matter, docket NG16-014. I understand your concern about the possibility of losing your farm tap and natural gas supply for your home and out buildings. I encourage you to monitor this docket as it is reviewed and information is gathered by the commission.

This Informational Guide was designed to assist farm tap customers in understanding the filing of this docket and the PUC's process: <http://www.puc.sd.gov/commission/dockets/naturalgas/2016/ng16-014/informationguide.pdf>.

The commission held a hearing last week with testimony provided by Northern Natural Gas and NorthWestern Energy officials as well as PUC staff members. You may wish to listen to the recording of the Dec. 14 four-hour hearing. Click on the Recording link under the Hearing subhead in the docket: <http://www.puc.sd.gov/Dockets/NaturalGas/2016/ng16-014.aspx>.

PUC staff recently filed an update on progress in resolving this matter which can be found at <http://puc.sd.gov/commission/dockets/naturalgas/2016/ng16-014/ltr122016b.pdf>. Since this is an open docket on which I will be voting, your message and my response are posted under Comments and Responses for all to read.

If you wish to communicate with a PUC staff member on this docket, please contact the commission with this request by calling 1-800-332-1782 or 605-773-3201 or emailing PUC@state.sd.us.

Chris Nelson, Chairman
South Dakota Public Utilities Commission
www.puc.sd.gov

Jason Schuchard
Consumer Off Rep.

Dear Jason:

I contacted you earlier this fall in regards
to my farm tap for my home. Docket # 16-014

I lost my husband of 69 yrs on Aug 21-2016
And it has been overwhelming.

I really do need my gas service. I guess
we depend on things like this until you
are left to make decisions on your own.
Until then you don't realize how hard it is.
The gas Co has a right away thru our
property from East to West and we never
dreamed we would have a problem. They promised to
supply gas.

I would appreciate anything you could
do to help me solve this problem.

They have an easement with the only
responsibility is to supply me gas. The
read the meter + pay the charges that
we are billed. They do not pay a penny
for the easement privileges.

I would really appreciate anything you
could do to help me out.

Sincerely + Thank You

Ella L Layne
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

RECEIVED

DEC 22 2016

SOUTH DAKOTA PUBLIC
UTILITIES COMMISSION

Docket # NG 16-001



Chris Nelson, Chairperson
Kristie Fiegen, Vice Chairperson
Gary Hanson, Commissioner

South Dakota

PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

500 East Capitol Avenue
Pierre, South Dakota 57501-5070
www.puc.sd.gov

Capitol Office
(605) 773-3201

Grain Warehouse
(605) 773-5280

Consumer Hotline
1-800-332-1782

Email
puc@state.sd.us

December 22, 2016

Ella Layne
[REDACTED]

Dear Ms. Layne:

Thank you for your letter regarding the farm taps matter, docket NG16-014. I understand your concern about the possibility of losing your farm tap and natural gas supply.

The commission held a hearing on this matter last week, with testimony provided by Northern Natural Gas and NorthWestern Energy officials as well as PUC staff members. My fellow commissioners and I stated at the close of this hearing that we would take this matter up again at our first commission meeting of the new year.

However, a letter was filed in the docket by PUC staff yesterday and here is an excerpt:

"Staff hereby informs the Commission and interested persons that Staff, Northern Natural Gas, and NorthWestern Energy have agreed to enter into discussions to negotiate for the benefit of the farm tap customers. In order to allow adequate time to have these discussions, we request that the Commission delay its decision until the regularly scheduled Commission meeting on January 17, 2017, rather than January 3, as previously intended. Staff, as the petitioner in this matter, hereby waives the 60-day requirement pursuant to ARSD 20:10:01:35. Staff has communicated with Northern, NorthWestern, and Montana-Dakota Utilities, and has received their consent to submit this request."

I encourage you to follow along as this matter is reviewed and information is gathered by the commission. You can find the public docket by going to the commission's home page at www.puc.sd.gov and clicking on Commission Actions, Commission Dockets, Natural Gas Dockets, 2016 Natural Gas Dockets, and scroll down to docket NG16-014. If you do not have internet access, please feel free to call Jason Schuchard again or another member of the PUC Consumer Affairs staff for an update.

Since this is an open docket before the commission on which I will be voting, your letter and my response will be posted under Comments and Responses for my fellow commissioners, the PUC staff analysts and attorney working on this docket, and others to read.

The enclosed Informational Guide is to assist farm tap customers in understanding the filing of this docket and the PUC's process.

If you wish to communicate with a PUC staff member regarding this docket, please contact the commission by calling 1-800-332-1782 or 605-773-3201 or emailing PUC@state.sd.us.

Sincerely,

Chris Nelson

000584

Name: John Mills

Email: [REDACTED]

Zip / Post
Code: 57071

Hi Chris,

A constituent of mine (District 4) contacted me about the threatened loss of natural gas service to his farm. Tapping onto the natural gas line across his property was used as an incentive (in 1979 I believe) to obtain the easement that Northern Natural Gas wanted. He did so at considerable expense and has enjoyed natural gas service ever since. Converting now to Propane will be costly for him.

Message: It doesn't sound like the disconnection threat came with any \$ to cover the expense of converting to LP. Anyway, this constituent would like the service to continue as is. When I asked him what the reasons were that Northwestern Energy/Northern Natural Gas gave for the possible disconnection he didn't think they offered any.

This constituent is a thoughtful man I have known for years. He is passionate about wanting to keep the service he has enjoyed and depended upon for his home and livestock/farm buildings. I saw you on the KELO report last evening. That report was from the Worthing area. The region impacted is larger than I thought as it also impacts people here (Volga/Brookings) as well. I hope that the PUC can in fact convince these two gas companies to continue the service to these farm taps.

Thank you for any help you can provide.

John Mills,
Representative Elect, District 4

From: PUC
Sent: Thursday, December 22, 2016 3:40 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: NG16-014

Representative-Elect Mills:

Thank you for your message relaying concerns from one of your constituents regarding the farm taps matter, docket NG16-014. I understand the concern of possibly losing the farm tap and natural gas supply. I encourage all affected by this to monitor the PUC's docket as it is reviewed and information is gathered and added by the commission.

The commission held a hearing last week with testimony provided by Northern Natural Gas and NorthWestern Energy officials as well as PUC staff members. The recording of the Dec. 14 four-hour hearing is available on the PUC's website. Click on the Recording link under the Hearing subhead in the docket:
<http://www.puc.sd.gov/Dockets/NaturalGas/2016/ng16-014.aspx>.

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<http://puc.sd.gov/commission/dockets/naturalgas/2016/ng16-014/ltr122016b.pdf>. Here is an excerpt:
Staff hereby informs the Commission and interested persons that Staff, Northern Natural Gas, and NorthWestern Energy have agreed to enter into discussions to negotiate for the benefit of the farm tap customers. In order to allow adequate time to have these discussions, we request that the Commission delay its decision until the regularly scheduled Commission meeting on January 17, 2017, rather than January 3, as previously intended. Staff, as the petitioner in this matter, hereby waives the 60-day requirement pursuant to ARSD 20:10:01:35.

Since this is an open docket on which I will be voting, your message and my response are posted under Comments and Responses for all to read.

If you or any of your constituents wish to communicate with a PUC staff member working on this docket, please contact the commission with this request by calling 1-800-332-1782 or 605-773-3201 or emailing PUC@state.sd.us.

Chris Nelson, Chairman
South Dakota Public Utilities Commission
www.puc.sd.gov

From: John Mills

Sent: Thursday, 22 December 2016 15:45:25 (UTC-06:00) Central Time (US & Canada)

To: PUC

Subject: Re: NG16-014

Chris,

Thanks for the quick reply. May I forward your email to my constituent? There is so much information there, that seems expedient. Let me know.

Thanks.

John

From: PUC

Sent: Thursday, December 22, 2016 4:41 PM

To: 'John Mills'

Subject: NG16-014

Representative-Elect Mills:

Yes, please feel free to share my email with your constituent as well as any others that may be interested in the farm taps matter. All the comments I receive and send on this open docket will be posted in the public docket online. Thank you.

Chris Nelson, Chairman

South Dakota Public Utilities Commission

www.puc.sd.gov