

From: Robin Englehart-Bagley [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, April 22, 2025 12:32 PM
To: PUC-PUC <PUC@state.sd.us>
Subject: [EXT] Public comment on Docket EL-25-013

April 21, 2025

Public Utilities Commission
Capitol Building, 1st floor
500 E. Capitol Ave.
Pierre, SD 57501

Dear Commissioners Hanson, Nelson, and Fiegen,

I am commenting on Docket EL25-013, NorthWestern Energy's Request to Implement a Phase-In Rate Plan Rider.

In regard to NorthWestern Energy's (NWE) request to raise rates in order to evaluate the feasibility of adding small nuclear reactors (SMR) to its portfolio, I would request that the Commission deny this request as it burdens ratepayers. NWE is requesting a rate increase that would raise average residential rates \$2.27/month for a year.

SMRs are classified as those producing 300 MW or less, which is a fairly small amount for their portfolio. For example, 300 MW will power approximately 90,000 - 200,000 homes while NEW has approximately 775,000 customers in its service area. NWE should not be able to raise rates for all of its customers when only about one-quarter would be able to receive power from an SMR power plant.

Furthermore, SMR's are slow to build. NWE indicates that they wouldn't be able to start building until at least 2027 and do not expect to add the SMR power to their portfolio until 2032, which seems incredibly optimistic. Five years from start-to-finish would far exceed industry standards.

As yet, only one design has been approved by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC), NuScale, and that project was cancelled in 2023. The longer these projects take to build, the more expensive the resulting power will cost, whenever that happens.

Renewable energy, such as wind and solar, is readily available and scalable. Ratepayers should not have to pay for studies on risky and costly alternatives.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Robin Englehart-Bagley

[REDACTED]
Sturgis, SD 57785
[REDACTED]