

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, January 21, 2025 8:39 PM
To: PUC-PUC <PUC@state.sd.us>
Subject: [EXT] Docket HP24-001

I respectfully submit the attached letter related to Docket HP24-001

Thank you.

Jerry Schmitz

[REDACTED]
Vermillion, SD 57069
[REDACTED]

January 18, 2025

Docket HP24-001

Dear SD PUC Commissioners,

It is with utmost respect for each of you that I compose this letter. You should be frequently commended for earnestly accepting the mission of an essential societal task that often exposes you, and your families, to complaints and ridicule.

I recognize that there have been many proposals over the years that were controversial and divisive. The dams, interstate system, and utilities to name only a few. But I cannot recall, in my lifetime, an issue that has been so openly contentious and divisive between friends, neighbors, and even family members as the Carbon Pipeline. This letter is to neither show support nor opposition for the Carbon Pipeline, but to provide some reference to the controversy while thanking you for managing such an emotional issue.

South Dakotans have always shown great pride and leadership in their ability to navigate tough issues respectfully and politely. In my experience, frustration and emotion have typically been directed at the policy, not people. When a direction was decided, all sides have mostly respected the process, and eventually, one another.

Respect, civility, and honest intent to present factual information have become collateral damage during the Carbon Pipeline issue. Individuals on both sides of the issue should feel shame and embarrassment. I have witnessed friends and strangers employ character assassination on social media to discredit and belittle others with whom they disagree. (in my experience, it has been employed more by individuals on the opposing side, but honestly, it has happened on both sides)

In recent months, several people (family members/friends) have asked me for information about this issue. The facts they hear in informational meetings, watch on the news, or read on social media are usually conflicting and often intended to evoke emotion. Many people didn't know which way to vote on R21. Many are very uncomfortable admitting they support the pipeline for fear of being painted as money-hungry or ignorant, publicly and on social media.

The Carbon Pipeline issue has been so divisive that last year law enforcement recommended that a SD commodity organization hire private security for their annual meeting as a safety precaution since some community Carbon Pipeline meetings had become extremely contentious. Within the past year, the issue has digressed to the point that individuals and groups now withhold their opinions for fear of current and future retribution and outright character assassination. Even the complexion of our legislature has changed, in part, due to information/disinformation related to this issue.

Thank you, Gary, Chris, and Kristie for accepting the mantle of leadership for South Dakota and making the difficult decisions that few would want to

shoulder. I wish you great strength during the decision process and peace in knowing that whatever you decide, it is the best choice based on the information available to you.

 Sincerely,

Jerry Schmitz



Vermillion, SD 57059

