

BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION  
OF THE STATE OF SOUTH DAKOTA

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*In the Matter of the Complaint by Oak Tree Energy LLC against  
NorthWestern Energy for refusing to enter into a Purchase Power Agreement*

EL11-006

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Responsive Testimony of

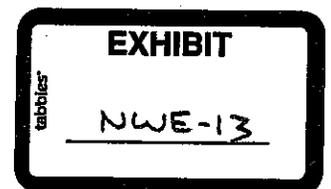
**Steven E. Lewis**

On behalf of NorthWestern Energy

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Submitted: November 28, 2012

Hearing Date: December 5, 2012



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## Exhibits

Historic Market Heat Rate (file "Ill and Big Sto.xlsx" tabs "Heat Rate" and "Heat Rate Chart") .....	Exhibit SEL-1
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Mr. Rounds Price Comparison (file "Forward Price Feb 2011 Nov-12.xlsx", tab "Comparison Chart") .....	Exhibit SEL-3

1 **Testimony**

2 **Introduction**

3 **Q: Please state your name and business address.**

4 A: My name is Steven E. Lewis. I am a principal and employee of Lands Energy Consulting. My  
5 business address is 2719 California Avenue SW Suite 5, Seattle, Washington 98116.

6 **Q: Are you the same Steven E. Lewis that has previously filed testimony in this docket?**

7 A: Yes.

8 **Purpose of Testimony**

9 **Q: What is the purpose of your testimony?**

10 A: My testimony is in response to Mr. Lauckhart's Additional Testimony on behalf of Oak Tree and  
11 Mr. Rounds's Testimony, both of which were filed on November 21, 2012.

12 **Q: Please summarize your testimony.**

13 A: This response is offered to clarify certain claims and offer additional information related to the  
14 electricity market price forecasts provided by Mr. Lauckhart and Mr. Rounds.

15 **Mr. Lauckhart's Additional Testimony**

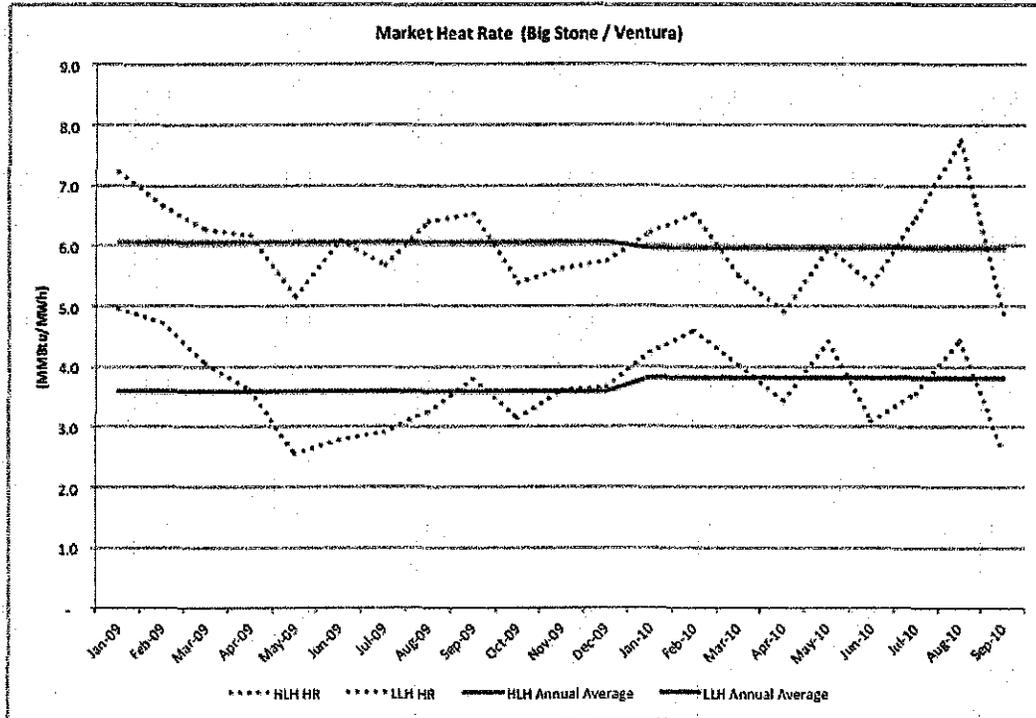
16 **Q: Did Mr. Lauckhart's forecast use your approach as claimed by Mr. Lauckhart? (See Lauckhart  
17 Testimony 8:32-9:1.)**

18 A: No. My approach utilizes the latest forward market information to develop a projection for the  
19 near term and blend that with long-term expectations on wholesale price increases over time.  
20 Mr. Lauckhart's forecast, uses the market heat rate I computed for the relationship between  
21 AECO natural gas and the Minnesota Hub but applied it to a fundamentals-based EIA natural gas  
22 forecast starting in January 2013 and ignored the available forward market information in favor  
23 of forecast data that was already out of date. In effect, Mr. Lauckhart is replacing the out-of-  
24 date Black & Veatch fundamentals forecast with the similarly out-of-date EIA fundamentals  
25 forecast veiled with a market heatrate calculation that might not be appropriate given the  
26 possibility that the build up to the delivery points for the EIA natural gas markets is likely not  
27 equivalent to the method I originally used for the AECO price with a delivery charge.

1 Q: Do you agree with Mr. Lauckhart that your "market heat rate" is very low for the 20-year  
 2 forecast? (See Lauckhart Testimony 8:27-32.)

3 A: No. The market heat rate used in the forecast reflects the relationship between the electricity  
 4 and natural gas markets at the time the forecast was prepared, or as of February 2011 in this  
 5 case. The relationship between these market prices does not reflect any specific units in the  
 6 region, but reflects the combined thinking of the marketplace regarding which units will be  
 7 necessary to meet regional loads for certain time periods in the future. It is reasonable to  
 8 expect that as new natural gas units are added to the regional portfolio of generators that their  
 9 improved efficiencies and lower heat rates will put downward pressure on the market heat rate.

10 The market heat rate Mr. Lauckhart claims as too low is 8.36 MMBtu/MWh for Heavy Load and  
 11 5.17 MMBtu/MWh for Light Load. Using the data recently assembled for Big Stone electricity  
 12 prices and Ventura natural gas prices, the observed daily market heatrate for January 2009  
 13 through September 2010 was about 6.0 MMBtu/MWh for Heavy Load and 3.7 MMBtu/MWh for  
 14 Light Load. The chart below (included in Excel format in Exhibit SEL-1) shows the monthly values  
 15 overlayed with the annual average heatrates. These values were calculated by simply dividing  
 16 the month average day-ahead electricity prices for Big Stone as reported by the Midwest ISO by  
 17 the month average day-ahead natural gas prices for Ventura as reported by The Intercontinental  
 18 Exchange. Based on this review, it would seem that the heat rate values Mr. Lauckhart  
 19 extracted from my earlier files are on the high side.



20

1 **Q: Do you believe that the EIA 2011 Early Release is not adequate to provide guidance for the**  
2 **forecast? (See Lauckhart Testimony 10:15-13:2.)**

3 No, the EIA 2011 Early Release is appropriately used in preparing the market price forecast. The  
4 EIA recognized the significant shift occurring the energy markets at that time and the natural  
5 gas projections they included in their 2011 Early Release Reference Case factored in the most  
6 recent understanding of recoverable shale gas. In fact, the first two key updates cited by the  
7 EIA in their AEO 2011 Early Release Overview are<sup>1</sup>:

- 8 • Significant update of the technically recoverable U.S. shale gas resources, more than  
9 doubling the volume of shale gas resources assumed in AEO2010, and also added new  
10 shale oil resources.
- 11 • Revision of the methodology for determining natural gas prices to better reflect a  
12 lessening of the influence of oil prices on natural gas prices, in part because of the  
13 increase in shale gas supply and improvements in natural gas extraction technologies.

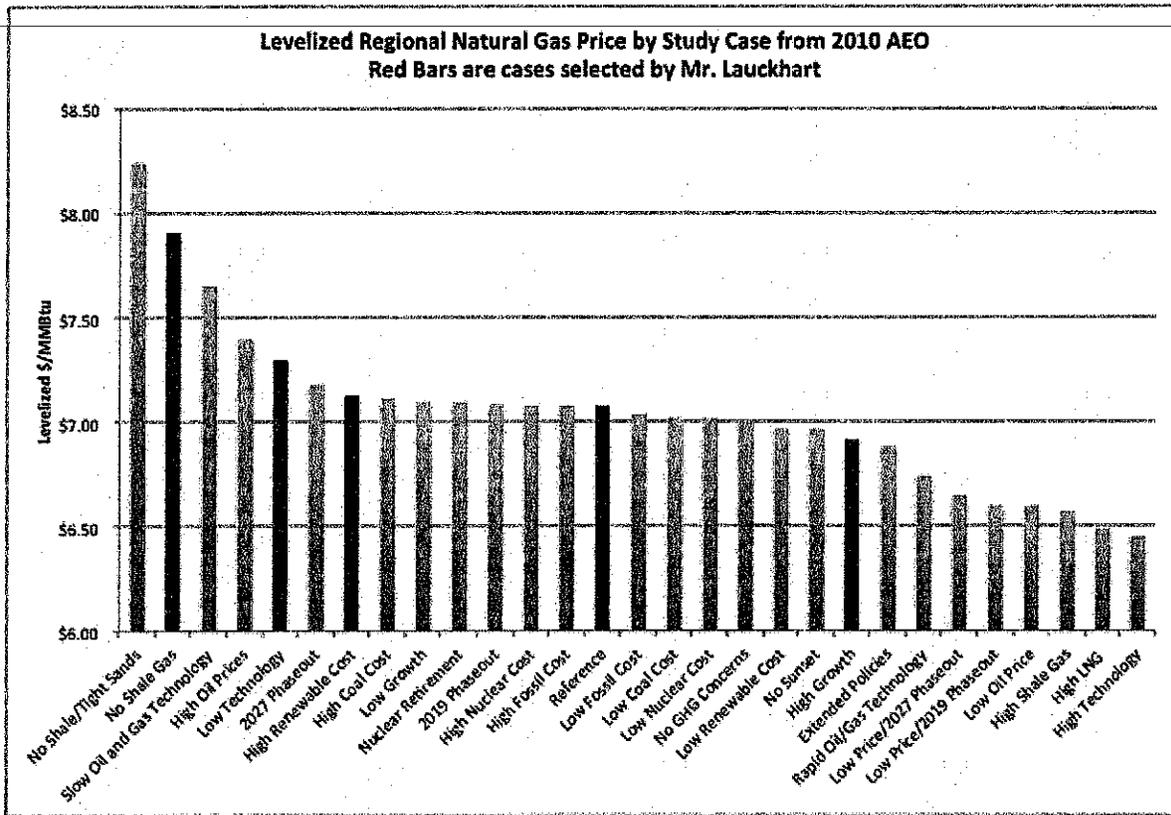
14 Additionally, the EIA forecast is only utilized in my methodology to forecast the energy price  
15 escalation for years 2021 and beyond. The first four years (2012-2015) are based on actual  
16 forward market prices for both natural gas and electricity. The next five years (2016-2020) are  
17 based on actual forward natural gas markets and the observed heat rates for the 2012-2015  
18 markets. The remaining years utilize the EIA escalation rate applied to the market prices for  
19 2020. The market prices are used because they reflect the latest information available at the  
20 time the forecast would have been prepared. This is in part due to the fact that the EIA must  
21 spend time to prepare and publish their forecasts and they are necessarily out of date due to  
22 the time lag that occurs in performing analysis and preparing their publication materials. In fact,  
23 the Henry Hub natural gas market prices obtained as of February 2011 and used for my forecast  
24 were higher than the natural gas price projections contained in the EIA AEO 2011 Early Release.

25 **Q: Have you reviewed the five 2010 AEO cases selected by Mr. Lauckhart and are they**  
26 **representative of the full range of results provided by the EIA in this outlook? (See Lauckhart**  
27 **Testimony 11:20-23.)**

28 **A:** I have reviewed the thirty West North Central natural gas forecasts from the AEO 2010. Of the  
29 thirty, one is an updated 2009 forecast so is not relevant, but of the remaining 29, Mr. Lauckhart  
30 chose cases that skew the natural gas prices higher relative to the full set. The chart below  
31 (included in Excel format in SEL-2) shows the levelized nominal natural gas forecast for the West  
32 North Central Region. The prices range between \$6.45/MMBtu and \$8.24/MMtu. Mr.  
33 Lauckhart used the "Reference Case", "High Growth", "Low Technology", "High Renewable  
34 Cost" and "No Shale Gas" cases. These cases selected by Mr. Lauckhart are shown in red. Mr.  
35 Lauckhart chose three of the seven most expensive cases, while choosing none of the seven

<sup>1</sup> The Overview can be accessed online at: [http://www.eia.gov/forecasts/archive/aeo11/er/pdf/0383er\(2011\).pdf](http://www.eia.gov/forecasts/archive/aeo11/er/pdf/0383er(2011).pdf)

1 least expensive. These five selected out-of-date cases represent half of the ten cases Mr.  
 2 Lauckhart proposes to use for computing the avoided cost.



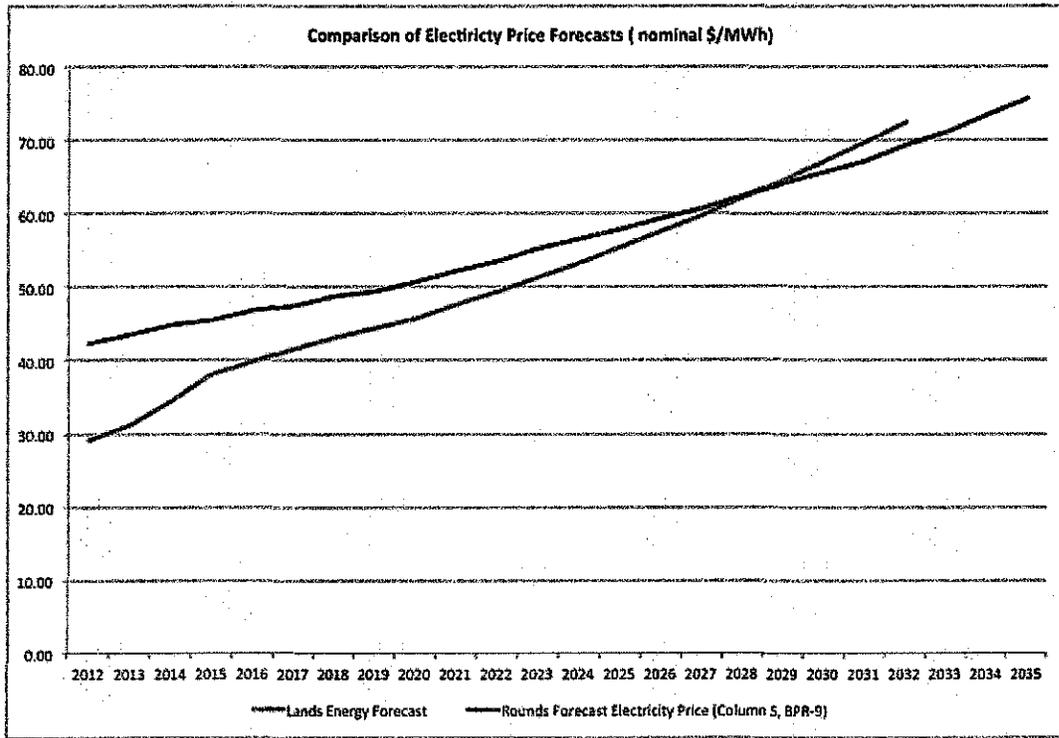
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4 **Mr. Rounds's Testimony**

5 **Q:** Are NorthWestern's costs accurately reflected in the use of the EIA's Annual Energy Outlook  
 6 (AEO) 2011 Early Release Reference Case and the Eastern Interstate Planning Collaborative  
 7 (EIPC) as an electricity market price reference for this model? (See Rounds Testimony 2:6-17.)

8 **A:** Using the AEO 2011 Early Release forecast for the escalation of a future pricing curve for years  
 9 that are not available in existing markets (electric or natural gas) is appropriate, but the EIA  
 10 forecasts do not represent the best prices available in the market as of February 2011. Mr  
 11 Rounds's use of the EIA generation component of the electricity cost build up as a substitute for  
 12 the electricity market is troublesome (See BPR-11 from Mr. Rounds's Avoided Cost Calculation  
 13 workbook, row 84). This value is the cost of all generation as seen by electricity rate payers. As  
 14 such, it has all resource types and includes fixed cost components for regulated regions or  
 15 reliability adders for regions with RTOs or ISOs. This cost build up represents a price that is not  
 16 relevant when determining the marginal cost units that will determine prevailing market prices.  
 17 If the prices in BPR-11 rows 84 through 86 are summed, they are equal to the all-sector average  
 18 electricity price reported in row 76 as expected. The use of this market projection, although

1 reduced by Mr. Rounds to account for the regional difference in cost from the national average,  
 2 still produces electricity market prices that are more than \$10/MWh higher than market prices for  
 3 2012-2014. A comparison of my forecast with Mr. Rounds's is contained in the chart below  
 4 (included in Excel format in Exhibit SEL-3), which shows the differences in the initial years of the  
 5 forecast – although, interestingly enough my forecast catches up in 2029.



6  
 7 **Q: Does this conclude your testimony?**

8 **A: Yes, it does.**

Affidavit of Steven E. Lewis

STATE OF WASHINGTON )

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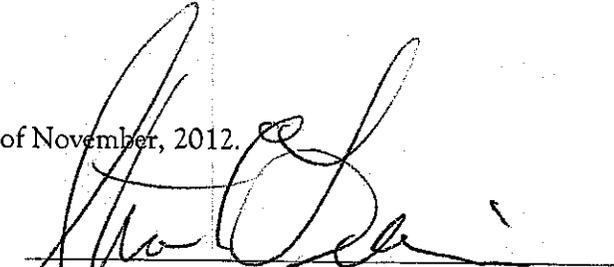
COUNTY OF KING )

Steven E. Lewis, being first duly sworn upon oath, states and alleges as follows:

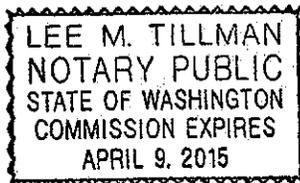
- 1) I am a principal and employee of Lands Energy Consulting.
- 2) I have read this document and am familiar with its contents, and the same are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Further affiant sayeth naught.

Dated at Seattle, Washington, this 28<sup>th</sup> day of November, 2012.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Steven E. Lewis

SIGNED AND SWORN to before me this 28 day of November, 2012, by Steven E. Lewis.



  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Notary Public, Washington  
My appointment expires: 4/9/2015