
From: James Preston [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, May 12, 2021 1:11 PM
To: PUC-PUC <PUC@state.sd.us>
Cc: Ashley Preston
Subject: [EXT] PUBLIC COMMENT RE: EL21-011

TO: South Dakota Public Utilities Commission (PUC)
RE: Docket No: EL21-011
Company Proposing Rate Increasing: Black Hills Energy

FROM: James and Ashley Preston
Mailing Addressing: [REDACTED] Rapid City, SD 57702

Dear PUC,

My wife and I have lived in our home in West Rapid City since 2013 that we purchased with my parents as we were still in graduate school and had not gotten our careers on track at that moment (my student loan debt was one issue).

However, we are finally, after 8 years in our home, ready to take over the deed and cash out refinance the home and invest in our property for years to come. For 8 years, we have been waiting to finally make our much needed projects happen to prepare for our growing family and utilize our American right to reduce our energy demand by investing in solar as our home receives ample sunlight. We have already had our general contractor walk through with the subcontractors and we are poised and ready to invest in this project, including outfitting our home with solar panels.

When I found out about this proposed measure (EL21-011), I about passed out. We would be directly impacted by this "amendment" or "tariff" or whatever you want to call it, it's a piece of job-killing, anti-American regulation that runs counter to market needs.

If the state is used to harm both small business and private property owners, as this amendment does, we have a real economic problem. America is a country where individual property rights are equivalent, if not valued higher than, to the investor-owned and traded Black Hills Energy corporation's right to profit. If passed, EL21-011 would amount to a miniscule (infinitesimal) profit percentage increase for BHE, but a massive loss to our planned investment, and a tragic loss to our community.

To be blunt, EL21-011 would be a warrantless theft of a household kilowatts that could be used to lower global carbon emissions (NASA reports that the hottest years ever recorded on Earth were 2016 and 2020). A major player in this fight

for solar is Walmart. Walmart is the American leader of solar, wind, and renewable energy with a goal to be 100% energy independent by 2035. These are the business decisions that we need for not only environmental reasons, but just make pure business sense. In the Black Hills, my understanding is that there is roughly 125 homes with solar panels at this point out of the tens of thousands without. How does this make sense?

If I change all my lightbulbs to LED from incandescent, does that give BHE the right to charge me MORE? When we lessen our demand on the grid, we are doing BHE a FAVOR by not overtaxing the energy and allowing for other usage. This town is growing FAST, so wouldn't an allowance for solar grid investments that help small local business and future solar entrepreneurs be a positive market strategy at a time when demand, despite any solar offsetting, continues to raise?

And, what will happen when electric car begin requiring eV charging stations in people's garages that draw HUGE amounts of energy (at night) when solar panels do not? Remember, 2020 tied 2016 for the hottest year on record. Henceforth, solar energy is not going away and is going to be seen as a requirement, not a luxury, in the near future and already is in many places.

As a business owner (MBA from U of S. Dakota), federal consultant, global citizen, American, and overall careful investor, what BHE is trying to do sets a dangerous, unprecedented and callous rule change for our state and others. PUC, you cannot let this happen.


Please, do the right thing and say NO to this. BHE needs to do the right thing and invest in solar themselves instead of trying to turn each and every solar home now and in the future into an extension of their utility network of supply. I will not pretend to know the details of managing a regulated energy industry supplying power to thousands of customers (who do not get to choose their supplier) in the area, but it sure makes a lot of sense for them to adapt to market realities instead of trying to poison the seeds of solar before they even have a chance to grow.

DO NOT let this happen. It is un-American to its core. Do not allow this company to impose a tax on solar. This is bad for business, bad for property rights, and bad for the environment. It's even more vile to think that they would do this at a time when their CEO makes over \$2.2 million USD per year according to Yahoo Finance. That's just flat wrong.

Please, throw out this proposed amendment EL21-011.

Thank you,

James & Ashley Preston


Rapid City, SD 57702