

**From:** Swenson, Christian P [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, September 7, 2022 9:45 AM  
**To:** PUC <[PUCPF@state.sd.us](mailto:PUCPF@state.sd.us)>  
**Subject:** Re: Xcel Rate Increase

Please accept my input as you make a decision regarding Xcel Energy's application for a rate increase.

My name is: Christian Swenson. My Mailing Address is: [REDACTED] Sioux Falls, SD 57105. My Email address is: [REDACTED]

I would urge the commission to reject the proposed rate increase. There are a host of reasons as to why the rate increase should not be approved. First, there are already so many inflationary expenses facing the citizens served by Xcel. When possible, the Public Utilities Commission should strive to aid the community members they serve by working to keep basic needs financially accessible. Though I am sure Xcel is also feeling the constraints of inflation on their budget, it is not fair for them to raise their prices by nearly 20% while their customers see meager to nonexistence pay raises. The reality of the matter is that the end users simply cannot absorb the totality of costs increases from every sector of business while only receiving 2% cost of living wage increases. Xcel needs to find some creative ways to cut costs rather than simply increase revenue.

Second, a 20% increase is a huge ask. Very few people could go to their boss and request a 20% raise. This is an illogical request. If they applied for a more reasonable increase, I would be much more inclined to give my support, however 20% is a heinous ask.

Third, an increase of 20% should not come all at once. It needs to be tiered over multiple years to allow individuals, institutions, and industry the ability to gradually adapt their budgets to the higher prices. As a teacher, I am looking at this proposal not only through the lens of an individual, but also from the standpoint of a school. Schools in SD received a 6% increase in state funding this year. That was supposed to allow school districts to raise their pay to prevent teachers and education staff from becoming economically disadvantaged as well as offset some inflationary costs incurred by schools. If schools only got a 6% increase for all of that, I struggle to understand how and why Xcel should get a nearly 20% increase.

Fourth, a 20% increase in costs to keep the lights on is going to be felt by businesses as well. As many teachers do, I have a part-time job outside of school. I have worked at Avera McKennan Hospital for over 11 years. They are already seeing increases in the costs of goods and services so severe they are having to lay-off employees to offset the extra costs. For Xcel to further contribute to the financially challenging times for businesses is rather callous. How many more jobs will need to be cut to keep lifesaving equipment and technology running?

Fifth, as people from out of state have flocked to South Dakota in the aftermath of COVID, there has been a surge in housing costs due to the increased demand - resulting in inflated property valuations. Higher valuations have led to higher property taxes. So, in addition to inflation driving up costs across the nation and world, South Dakotans have already seen significant cost increases for the basic necessity of housing. Adding a 20% influx in the cost of electricity is going to further burden families already struggling to pay their bills.

I plead to you on behalf of all the people, businesses, and organizations served by Xcel that you would represent and protect us from undue excess energy costs proposed by Xcel Energy.

Thank you for representing me well,

Christian Swenson

Christian Swenson

Woods and Home Maintenance Teacher

Jefferson High School and Lincoln High School