
Alan Kightlinger

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Sturgis, SD 57785

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South Dakota Public Utilities Commission

Capitol Building First Floor
500 E Capitol Ave
Pierre, SD 57501-5070

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**SOUTH DAKOTA PUBLIC
UTILITIES COMMISSION**

Dear Commissioners

I just learned that Black Hills Energy is asking for a 25% increase in rates. We are Black Hills Energy customers. We built our house in 1990. We tried to use all the most energy efficient construction. We have 2X6 walls, energy efficient windows, and we installed a demand limit device into our wiring to shut off different appliances and heaters if our electric use got too high. We also have a stand-alone propane heater along with our electric baseboard heating system.

For several decades our average electric bill each month was around \$100. After their last rate increase our average bill is between \$130 and \$140. In the past we have gotten more efficient appliances and installed more efficient lighting. I do believe we are using less electricity now than we did before. But our bills keep going up. In the past everyone would say "conserve, conserve". Why? Our electricity use goes down and our bill goes up.

My mother-in-law lives in southwestern Colorado 700 miles from here. While visiting her I have seen Black Hills Energy trucks driving around down there. They obviously bought a utility down there. I was at my daughter's place in Westminster, Colorado last year and was reading in the paper that people in Pueblo were protesting an electric rate increase by Black Hills Energy! They must have bought a utility there also. The argument was the average bill per household was \$80. The rate increase would drive this higher than the rest of the area served by a different energy company. I don't know if the PUC in Colorado let that rate increase go into effect. It seems to me that my \$130 bill is already much higher than \$80. Do you agree? I don't know how many utilities Black Hills Energy has bought up since their last rate increase but it seems to me that the people of Western South Dakota are paying for these purchases that don't benefit us.

My wife and I are both retired and on fixed incomes. If this rate increase goes into effect - and they are talking about a 25% increase- our bill will be over \$33 more so about \$160/month. Not to mention the extra costs on all the businesses in our area. Their rates will go up also and they will have to raise their rates for services. Grocery stores which have many coolers that use lots of energy will likely have to raise the price of groceries and right now people want that to go down! This is going to have a ripple effect.

I don't know how many more utilities in the country they plan on buying with this next rate increase but I think they should concentrate on our area.

This brings up another subject.-Data Centers! They are planning one by Rapid City. I have heard both sides of the argument- "It won't raise rates!" and on the other side "It will raise rates!" It looks to me like it WILL raise rates!

Please consider these arguments. I don't think this rate increase is good for the people of South Dakota.

Thank you.

Alan Kightlinger

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Alan Kightlinger". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial "A".