

**From:** PUC  
**Sent:** Wednesday, April 8, 2026 11:33 AM  
**To:** Dennis & Michelle Schmidt [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** RE: [EXT] BHP Increase

Mr. and Mrs. Schmidt:

The South Dakota Public Utilities Commission received your comments regarding Black Hills Energy's proposed rate increase. The full docket, opened on February 19, 2026, is available on the PUC website: [EL26-003](#) - In the Matter of the Application of Black Hills Power, Inc. dba Black Hills Energy for Authority to Increase Rates For its Utility Service in South Dakota.

To help you better understand how the PUC evaluates rate increase requests, I encourage you to review the [Electric Rate Increase Request Info Guide](#) on the PUC website. This guide outlines the steps and considerations involved in our review.

We understand that affordability is a top concern for customers, especially given recent economic pressures. The Public Utilities Commission takes these matters seriously and is committed to a thorough and transparent review of the proposal. As part of this process, Black Hills Energy is required to provide detailed justification for the increase.

Commission staff analysts and legal counsel are currently conducting a comprehensive review of the company's financial data, operational needs, and the potential impact on customers. This includes multiple rounds of discovery, where staff and expert witnesses request and analyze detailed information from the utility.

Once this comprehensive review is complete, the Commission will publicly discuss the case, ask further questions, and deliberate based on the evidence presented. Each commissioner will then vote to approve, deny, or modify the requested rate increase. It's important to note that the Commission is legally obligated to base its decision on the facts and applicable law and cannot deny a rate increase request without fully vetting the record. We are required to arrive at a reasonable and legally enforceable decision.

Your comments and this response will be posted in the "Comments and Responses" section of the docket. We encourage you to follow the docket as it progresses.

*Chris Nelson, Chairman  
Public Utilities Commission  
Puc.sd.gov*