From: Erika Young <designer@theneonowl.com>
Sent: Tuesday, September 22, 2026 8:49 AM
To: PUC-PUC <PUC@state.sd.us>
Subject: [EXT] Opposition to Black Hills Energy Rate Increases – EL26-003 and EL26-024

Dear South Dakota Public Utilities Commission:

I am writing as a Black Hills Energy residential customer in Spearfish to strongly oppose the cumulative increases associated with Dockets EL26-003 and EL26-024..

I understand that maintaining a reliable electric system requires investment. However, the magnitude and timing of these increases are simply not affordable for many South Dakota households, including mine.

My August Black Hills Energy bill makes the impact particularly clear.

I am a Rate Code 10 (SD710) residential customer. During the first portion of my August billing period, I was charged $0.08827 per kWh. Beginning August 18, my bill shows the new interim rate of $0.12602 per kWh.

That is a 42.8% increase in the residential base energy charge per kWh.

I used 1,251 kWh during that billing period. At that level of usage, applying the new base rate instead of the previous rate adds approximately $47.23 to the energy portion of my bill in a single month, before taxes and other adjustments. The monthly customer charge has also increased.

And that is only the increase already being imposed under EL26-003.

Black Hills Energy is now requesting an additional residential Phase In Plan Rate of $0.03051 per kWh under EL26-024 for the Lange II project.

At my August usage of 1,251 kWh, that surcharge would add approximately another $38.17 to my bill.

In a month with usage like mine this August, the two changes together would add approximately $86 per month to my residential charges compared with the prior base rate structure.

I cannot afford that.

Electricity is an essential service. I cannot simply stop purchasing electricity, choose another electric utility, or increase my household income every time my monopoly utility seeks another rate increase.

I am especially concerned that these increases are being reviewed through separate proceedings even though customers experience them on one bill. From a household-budget perspective, EL26-003 and EL26-024 are not separate. They are cumulative.

I respectfully ask the Commission to evaluate the total financial impact of both proceedings on residential customers before approving any additional increase.

I also ask the Commission to closely scrutinize the costs being recovered for Lange II. According to Black Hills Energy's filing, the proposed residential PIPR alone is $0.03051 per kWh and the company is seeking approximately $39.5 million annually from South Dakota customers through this mechanism.

Before placing another substantial charge on residential customers, please require Black Hills Energy to demonstrate that the costs are prudent, necessary, appropriately allocated to South Dakota, and that less costly alternatives have been adequately considered.

I also ask the Commission to consider affordability as a meaningful part of its review.

The percentage increase shown in a rate case can sound abstract. It is not abstract on my bill. I am already seeing my residential energy rate increase from 8.827 cents per kWh to 12.602 cents per kWh, and Black Hills Energy is now asking to add another 3.051 cents per kWh on top of it.

For my household, that matters.

Please reject or substantially reduce the additional increases being requested and ensure that South Dakota customers are not required to absorb an unreasonable cumulative increase in the cost of an essential service.

Erika Young
[redacted] [redacted], Spearfish, SD 57783
designer@theneonowl.com
605-431-5604

Black Hills Energy residential customer

Erika Young
Brand Architect & CEO
605-431-5604
www.theneonowl.com
Schedule time with me