

From: I H [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, September 3, 2026 11:18 AM
To: PUC-PUC <PUC@state.sd.us>
Subject: [EXT] Opposition to BHE Proposed 45% Rate Increase | Docket EL26-003

I cannot believe there is a need to write an email asking that you DO NOT give Black Hills Energy a 45% rate increase. EVER. Or anyone else, for that matter.

Please remember who you work for. You work for the people of South Dakota, not the large utility companies and their highly compensated executives.

The people you represent are struggling to buy groceries, stay in their homes, pay their taxes and keep up with the ever-increasing cost of simply living. Meanwhile, Black Hills Energy is asking those same people to absorb a FORTY-FIVE PERCENT RATE INCREASE.

Forty-five percent.

That is not a reasonable increase. It is not a minor adjustment. It is a massive financial hit to the people who have no choice but to pay their utility bills.

RIDICULOUS.

And I have to question the strategy behind asking for 45% in the first place. Is the expectation to ask for an outrageous increase, negotiate it down to something like 20%, and then present that as a victory for consumers?

“See? We did you a favor.”

People are not that dumb.

A 20% increase is still a 20% increase. Calling it a compromise does not make it affordable, reasonable or acceptable.

I also believe this request deserves serious scrutiny as a potential money grab and a diversion from the real issue. Before approving any increase, I expect the Commission to thoroughly examine what Black Hills Energy actually needs, where those costs are coming from and whether customers should be responsible for paying them.

The people of South Dakota should not be expected to continually dig deeper into their pockets simply because a utility company wants to increase its revenue.

Families are cutting back. Seniors are watching every dollar. Small businesses are trying to survive. People should not have to choose between keeping the heat on, buying groceries or paying their other bills.

Please do not lose sight of who you are supposed to be protecting. Your responsibility is to the people who pay these bills, not to make sure a utility company gets the increase it is asking for.

I strongly oppose the proposed 45% rate increase and ask that you reject it.

Thank you,

Ingrid Hayward

[REDACTED]

Lead, SD

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Docket No. EL26-003