

**From:** PUC  
**Sent:** Tuesday, September 8, 2026 8:01 AM  
**To:** Sara Boettcher [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** RE: [EXT] Addressing Docket EL26-003

Ms. Boettcher:

The South Dakota Public Utilities Commission received your comments regarding Black Hills Energy's proposed rate increase. The full docket 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.

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. The decision will be based on the facts. Commissioners act as administrative law judges. Their decision must be supported by evidence and grounded in principles established by statute and case law. The Commission is obligated by law to review all the documents and justification provided by a utility for such a docket to ensure the rates charged are just and reasonable to all parties, ratepayers, and the utility. The Commission must provide the utility with sufficient revenues it needs to furnish adequate, efficient, and reasonable service. Because PUC decisions can be appealed to state circuit court and then to the state supreme court, commissioners take great care to ensure their rulings are accurate and fair. This decision will be made during a public commission meeting, which will be properly noticed and open to all.

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.

Your comments along with this response will be posted in the "Comments and Responses" section of the docket.

*Chris Nelson, Chairman  
Public Utilities Commission  
[Puc.sd.gov](http://Puc.sd.gov)*