

Docket Number: EL26-009
Subject Matter: First Data Request
Request to: NorthWestern Energy (NWE or Company)
Request from: South Dakota Public Utilities Commission Staff
Date of Request: April 10, 2026
Responses Due: April 24, 2026

- 1-1. Refer to Attachment B. What caused the increase from budget to actual for Huron Chamber and Visitors Bureau?

This increase was attributed to increased dues from the Huron Chamber and Visitors Bureau and a local educational sponsorship.

- 1-2. Refer to Attachment B. What caused the decrease from budget to actual for Mitchell Area Chamber of Commerce and South Dakota Economic Development Professionals Association? For both these organizations, confirm the 2026 budget on Attachment A should be identical to the 2025 budget and not 2025 actual.

For the Mitchell Area Chamber of Commerce, NorthWestern Energy paid 2025 dues in late 2024 to track with the Chamber's 2024-2025 fiscal year. For the 2025-2026 fiscal year, NorthWestern Energy requested to be billed in early 2026 instead of late 2025 so 2026 payment would track with our budget process better. This is why there was no payment recorded in 2025. This should result in our bill being paid in full early in each calendar year going forward. The \$600 actual expense for 2025 came from a sponsorship request we received during 2025 that was separate from dues.

Regarding the South Dakota Economic Development Professionals Association, it had been communicated that a dues increase was likely to be coming soon, so we budgeted for that in 2025. However, it appears the budget increase will likely occur in 2026, so we budgeted for that increase in the proposed 2026 budget.

We anticipate the proposed 2026 budget will reflect the 2025 budget and not 2025 actual based on feedback from these organizations. However, it is important to note that with all organizations there is some fluidity in requests from year to year as different opportunities arise during the year.

- 1-3. Provide a thorough description of the South Dakota Renewable Energy Association and explain (with examples) how dollars invested in that association provide benefits to NWE's electric customers.

The South Dakota Renewable Energy Association is a non-profit organization that supports renewable energy development in the state. Examples include wind, solar, biofuel, hydrogen, and energy storage projects. Some of these examples, like wind and biofuels, already make up a significant portion of NorthWestern Energy's generation portfolio or are a major customer base. These, and others, are generation sources we are using, or may be considered, for meeting customer needs now and in the future.

The organization's mission is "to drive economic growth, protect our natural resources, and secure a resilient energy future for all South Dakotans". Organizational membership and leadership consist of renewable energy developers, utilities, and other industry stakeholders. The organization is active in local workforce development training and educational programs in the energy industry that help support economic development in South Dakota and in communities served by NorthWestern Energy. Industry advocacy and public outreach are other areas of focus for them as well.

The South Dakota Renewable Energy Association supports projects that produce a noteworthy amount of energy in the state that helps power economic development. These projects promote a diverse generation portfolio that is useful for our electric grid and capacity needs that can help grow rate base by adding new customers and support expansion of our existing customer base - ultimately contributing valuable jobs and tax revenue. Renewable energy projects supported by the South Dakota Renewable Energy Association also offer robust employment opportunities for communities and support value-added agriculture within our service territory and in South Dakota.