



Kristie Fiegen, Chairperson
Gary Hanson, Vice Chairman
Chris Nelson, Commissioner

South Dakota

PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

500 East Capitol Avenue
Pierre, South Dakota 57501-5070
<https://puc.sd.gov>

(605) 773-3201

Consumer Hotline
1-800-332-1782

Email
puc@state.sd.us

December 16, 2024

Patricia Van Gerpen
Executive Director
Public Utilities Commission
500 E. Capitol Avenue
Pierre, SD 57501

RE: NG24-005

Ms. Van Gerpen,

In order to facilitate the discussion at the December 17 Commission Meeting, I am providing some revisions to NorthWestern's proposed Customer Notice. It is my intention to request NorthWestern revise their Customer Notice to read as follows:

Recently, the South Dakota Public Utilities Commission (SDPUC) approved NorthWestern Energy's first natural gas base rate increase since 2011. NorthWestern's rates have remained the same for thirteen years.

On June 21, 2024, NorthWestern Energy requested a regulatory review by the SDPUC of natural gas rates. NorthWestern Energy's application requested a 9.1% total bill increase or a *30.0% base rate increase*, which reflects a requested increase of \$6 million in South Dakota natural gas revenues.

The SDPUC approved NorthWestern Energy's settlement agreement with SDPUC Staff, authorizing a rate increase of \$4.6 million, which is a 7.0% total bill increase or a *23.5% increase in base rates*. This increase is effective Dec. 19, 2024.

A typical residential customer using an average of 100 therms of natural gas a month will see an increase of \$6.47 in their monthly bill.

Current base rates have been in effect for thirteen years. Since that time, NorthWestern Energy has invested \$82.1 million in our South Dakota natural gas infrastructure to continue our commitment to providing reliable, sustainable energy service at the most affordable rates possible to our South Dakota customers.

NorthWestern Energy requested the regulatory rate review to ensure that our customers will continue to be served by a financially sound company with access to low-cost capital to continue efficient investments that ensure reliable, safe energy service for customers.

My hope is that this language is clearer, particularly as it differentiates between the total bill increase versus the increase to base rates.

Thank you to Staff and NorthWestern for their diligent work in getting this rate case processed so efficiently. I look forward to the discussion tomorrow.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kristie Fiegen". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kristie Fiegen
Chairperson