

**BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION
OF THE STATE OF SOUTH DAKOTA**

**IN THE MATTER OF THE APPLICATION OF)
NORTHWESTERN ENERGY PUBLIC)
SERVICE CORPORATION DBA)
NORTHWESTERN ENERGY FOR)
AUTHORITY TO INCREASE RATES FOR)
NATURAL GAS UTILITY SERVICE IN)
SOUTH DAKOTA)
)
)
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**ORDER ASSESSING)
FILING FEE; ORDER)
SUSPENDING OPERATION OF)
PROPOSED RATES; ORDER)
AUTHORIZING EXECUTIVE)
DIRECTOR TO ENTER INTO)
CONSULTING CONTRACTS)

NG24-005**

On June 21, 2024, the South Dakota Public Utilities Commission (Commission) received an application by NorthWestern Energy Public Service Corporation dba NorthWestern Energy (NorthWestern) for approval to increase rates for natural gas service to customers in its South Dakota service area by approximately \$6 million annually or approximately 9.10% based on NorthWestern's 2023 historic test year. NorthWestern states a typical residential customer using 100 therms of gas per month would see an increase of \$8.38 or 7.92% per month. The proposed changes may affect approximately 49,800 customers.

On June 27, 2024, the Commission electronically transmitted notice of the filing and the intervention deadline of August 19, 2024, to interested persons and entities on the Commission's PUC Weekly Filings electronic listserv. As of the date of this order, no petitions to intervene or comments have been filed.

SDCL 49-1A-8 authorizes the Commission to require a deposit of up to \$500,000 in the Commission's Regulatory Assessment Fee fund to defray Commission expenses incident to analyzing and ruling upon an application to increase rates as part of a general rate case. The Commission has jurisdiction in this matter pursuant to SDCL Chapters 1-26, 49-1A, 49-34A and ARSD 20:10:13.

At its regularly scheduled meeting on July 2, 2024, the Commission considered this matter. Commission staff requested that the Commission assess a filing fee not to exceed \$250,000 to account for actual expenses incurred in review of this filing commencing from the filing date. NorthWestern did not object to the fee assessment. The Commission voted unanimously to assess NorthWestern a filing fee in an amount not to exceed \$250,000 to account for actual expenses incurred in the review of this filing commencing from the filing date and to suspend the operation of the schedule of rates proposed by NorthWestern pursuant to SDCL 49-34A-14 for 180 days after the Application filing date of June 21, 2024. The Commission further voted unanimously to authorize the executive director to enter into necessary consulting contracts. It is therefore

ORDERED, that NorthWestern shall be assessed a filing fee pursuant to SDCL 49-1A-8 for actual expenses incurred by the Commission commencing from the filing date not to exceed \$250,000. It is further

ORDERED, that the proposed schedule of rates shall be suspended for 180 days beyond June 21, 2024, pursuant to SDCL 49-34A-14; and it is further

ORDERED, that the executive director shall have the authority to enter into necessary consulting contracts.

Dated at Pierre, South Dakota, this 8th day of July 2024.

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE
The undersigned hereby certifies that this document has been served today upon all parties of record in this docket, as listed on the docket service list, electronically or by mail.
By: <u>[Signature]</u>
Date: <u>8 July 2024</u>

BY ORDER OF THE COMMISSION:

[Signature: Kristie Fiegen]
KRISTIE FIEGEN, Chairperson

[Signature: Gary Hanson]
GARY HANSON, Commissioner

[Signature: Chris Nelson]
CHRIS NELSON, Commissioner