

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

IN THE MATTER OF THE FILING BY)
NORTHWESTERN PUBLIC SERVICE)
COMPANY FOR APPROVAL OF REFUND)
PLAN RELATING TO RATE CASE REFUNDS)
RECEIVED FROM NORTHERN NATURAL GAS)
COMPANY)

**ORDER APPROVING
REFUND PLAN**

NG99-007

On October 8, 1999, the Public Utilities Commission (Commission) received a filing from NorthWestern Public Service Company (NWPS) for approval of a refund plan relating to rate case refunds received from Northern Natural Gas Company in the amount of \$507,041, inclusive of interest. According to the filing, "The purchased gas cost adjustment clause provisions of Section No. 3, Sheet No. 9 of NWPS' South Dakota Gas Tariff state that any refund received by the Company from a supplier of charges paid and applicable to natural gas purchased for resale shall be refunded to the customer as a reduction in billings over the succeeding twelve month period or other period determined appropriate. Per the currently effective tariff, where a refund exceeds \$500,000 the Company shall file a refund plan before the Commission and the Commission shall determine the method of refund. NWPS seeks Commission approval to net the refund dollars against the current true-up balance, thus spreading the refund to customers, with interest, over a twelve month period beginning with service billings after November 1, 1999. Based on annual weather normalized sales, this will have the effect of reducing rates for residential and small commercial customers by \$0.0104 per therm. A typical residential customer using 100 therms will see a \$1.04 per month reduction in their monthly gas bill."

Commission Staff reviewed the filing and on October 12, 1999, requested further information from NWPS. At its regularly scheduled meeting on November 15, 1999, the Commission considered this matter. Commission Staff recommended approval.

The Commission finds that it has jurisdiction over this matter pursuant to SDCL 49-34A-4 and 49-34A-6. The Commission further finds that the filing is just and reasonable and shall be approved. As the Commission's final decision in this matter, it is therefore

ORDERED, that the above mentioned proposed refund plan is approved and is effective for service rendered on and after December 1, 1999.

Dated at Pierre, South Dakota, this 8th day of December, 1999.

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, by facsimile or by first class mail, in properly addressed envelopes, with charges prepaid thereon.
By: <u>Aldine Kalbo</u>
Date: <u>12/8/99</u>
(OFFICIAL SEAL)

BY ORDER OF THE COMMISSION:

James A. Burg
JAMES A. BURG, Chairman

Pam Nelson
PAM NELSON, Commissioner

Laska Schoenfelder
LASKA SCHOENFELDER, Commissioner

