

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

<b>IN THE MATTER OF THE APPLICATION OF )</b>	<b>ORDER OF ASSESSMENT</b>
<b>NORTHWESTERN CORPORATION DBA )</b>	<b>OF FILING FEE AND</b>
<b>NORTHWESTERN ENERGY FOR AUTHORITY )</b>	<b>SUSPENSION OF</b>
<b>TO INCREASE ITS NATURAL GAS RATES )</b>	<b>IMPOSITION OF TARIFF</b>
<b>)</b>	<b>NG11-003</b>

On May 20, 2011, NorthWestern Corporation dba NorthWestern Energy (NorthWestern) filed with the Public Utilities Commission (Commission) for approval to increase rates for natural gas service in its South Dakota service territory by \$4,123,035 annually or 7.20% based on NorthWestern's test year ending December 31, 2010. The company states the proposed increase for a residential customer would be \$8.31 per month based on an average usage of 63 therms per month. The proposed rates may potentially affect approximately 43,750 customers in NorthWestern's South Dakota service territory.

SDCL 49-1A-8 authorizes the Commission to require a deposit of up to one hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000) in the South Dakota Public Utilities Commission's (SDPUC) regulatory assessment fee fund to defray Commission expenses incident to analyzing and ruling upon this type of filing. The Commission has jurisdiction in this matter pursuant to SDCL Chapters 1-26, 49-1A, 49-34A and ARSD 20:10:01:15.02 and 20:10:01:15.03.

At its regularly scheduled meeting of May 31, 2011, the Commission considered this matter. The Commission found that pursuant to SDCL 49-1A-8, NorthWestern shall be assessed a filing fee as requested by the Commission up to the statutory limit of \$100,000. Further, an intervention deadline of July 13, 2011, has been established. Pursuant to SDCL 49-34A-14, the Commission suspended the operation of the schedule of rates proposed by NorthWestern for 180 days beyond May 20, 2011. It is therefore

ORDERED, that Northwestern shall deposit a filing fee, to be established by the Commission, in the SDPUC regulatory assessment fee fund and shall deposit any additional amounts as requested by the Commission, not to exceed the statutory limit; it is further

ORDERED, that the proposed schedule of rates shall be suspended for 180 days beyond May 20, 2011, pursuant to SDCL 49-34A-14; and it is further

ORDERED, that the deadline for filing petitions to intervene in this case is July 13, 2011.

Dated at Pierre, South Dakota, this 17<sup>th</sup> day of June, 2011.

**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.

By: *Brent A. Adahl*

Date: 6-17-11

(OFFICIAL SEAL)

BY ORDER OF THE COMMISSION:

*Steve Kolbeck*  
STEVE KOLBECK, Chairman

*Gary Hanson*  
GARY HANSON, Commissioner

*Chris Nelson*  
CHRIS NELSON, Commissioner