

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

**IN THE MATTER OF THE APPLICATION ) ORDER OF ASSESSMENT OF  
OF MONTANA-DAKOTA UTILITIES CO. ) FILING FEE AND SUSPENSION  
FOR AUTHORITY TO INCREASE ITS ) OF IMPOSITION OF TARIFF  
NATURAL GAS RATES )  
)  
)**

**NG12-008**

On December 21, 2012, Montana-Dakota Utilities Co. (MDU) filed with the South Dakota Public Utilities Commission (Commission) for approval to increase rates for natural gas service to customers in its South Dakota service territory, consisting of the Black Hills and East River service areas, by approximately \$1.5 million based on MDU's test year ending June 30, 2012. MDU is also proposing to consolidate the Black Hills and East River areas into one rate jurisdiction. The Company states that a typical residential customer in the Black Hills area using 75 dk on an annual basis will see an average increase of approximately \$3.00 per month while a typical residential customer in the East River area using 61 dk on an annual basis will see an average decrease of approximately \$1.10 per month. The proposed changes may potentially affect approximately 47,600 customers in MDU's Black Hills service area and approximately 7,200 customers in MDU's East River service area. On December 28, 2012, the Commission electronically transmitted notice of the filing and the intervention deadline of February 22, 2013, to interested individuals and entities.

SDCL 49-1A-8 authorizes the Commission to require a deposit of up to two hundred fifty thousand dollars (\$250,000) in the Commission's 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 20:10:13.

At its regularly scheduled meeting on January 15, 2013, the Commission considered this matter. The Commission voted unanimously to assess MDU a filing fee pursuant to SDCL 49-1A-8 up to the statutory limit of \$250,000 as requested by Commission Staff. The Commission then voted unanimously to suspend, pursuant to SDCL 49-34A-14, the operation of the schedule of rates proposed by MDU for 180 days beyond the application filing date of December 21, 2012.

It is therefore

**ORDERED**, that MDU shall be assessed a filing fee in an amount up to the statutory limit of Two Hundred Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$250,000), with payments made to the Commission's Regulatory Assessment Fee fund as periodically billed by the Commission. It is further

ORDERED, that the proposed schedule of rates shall be suspended for 180 days beyond December 21, 2012, pursuant to SDCL 49-34A-14

Dated at Pierre, South Dakota, this 18<sup>th</sup> day of January, 2013.

<b>CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE</b>
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: <u><i>[Signature]</i></u>
Date: <u>January 18, 2012</u>
(OFFICIAL SEAL)

BY ORDER OF THE COMMISSION:

*Gary Hanson*  
GARY HANSON, Chairman

*Chris Nelson*  
CHRIS NELSON, Commissioner

*Kristie Fiegen*  
KRISTIE FIEGEN, Commissioner