

Public Utilities Commission
Capitol Building, 1st floor
500 E. Capitol Ave.
Pierre, SD 57501-5070

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AUG 05 2011

**SOUTH DAKOTA PUBLIC
UTILITIES COMMISSION**

Attention: Commission Chairman Hanson

I called your office on Monday, Aug 1, to lodge a complaint regarding the exorbitant 'fuel cost charge' that appears on the Excel Energy bill (dated 7/28/11) that I recently received. I was told by a member of your staff that I would have to register this complaint in writing - so here it is.

I am 71 years old, retired and therefore living on a set, limited income. I have lived in Sioux Falls for well over 40 years and have experience an ever increasing cost of living that is now stretching my resources to the limit and beyond. In an effort to deal with that I agreed a while back to enroll in Excel's energy saving plan for air conditioning (stated as 'Res. Savers Switch' on my bill). I fully understand that there is a 'cost of doing business' that business sometimes pass on to customers - -but come on - \$56.00 - added to my Excel bill for 'fuel cost charge'! That's ridiculous! I am paying them to 'make' the electricity? Isn't that what the 'Energy Charge' is for? This \$56.00 was on top of the 'Basic Service Chg', 'Transmission Cost Recovery', 'Environmental Cost Recover', plus State and City taxes. My total bill was \$189.25!!!

According to a memo in the upper right hand corner of the Excel statement - the average temperature this year (79*) over last year (74*) was an increase of 5* per day. Yet my cost per day went up \$1.31 -from \$5.22 > \$6.53 and I maintain the thermostat in my home at the same setting as in years past. If everyone on my block got a similar charge on their bill, we're talking well over \$1,000 from our neighborhood alone - then extrapolate that to cover the city of Sioux Falls and Excel is making a pretty penny for their 'service'. And speaking of service - we've had several power-outages over the last few weeks too, so 'service' hasn't been consistently provided either.

I also hear that they are requesting that the PUC allows them to impose a 9% rate increase - so then my bill will be over \$200/mo. I have not received a COLA raise in my State retirement for 3 years, and no increase in my Social Security - but an increase in Medicare cost - - so my limited income is going backwards and these kind of expenses are rising - what would you suggest I do? Cut back on my food bill? Is it any wonder that the people of South Dakota are getting discouraged?

I strongly urge you to not approve the requested rate increase - and please do what you can to curb the costs that I've discussed in this letter. The population of our state are depending upon you to do what you can to ensure that we are able to meet our basic needs.

Sincerely,

Larry Kothe

Larry Kothe

[Redacted signature area]