

Service Date: February 6, 2013

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SERVICE REGULATION
BEFORE THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION
OF THE STATE OF MONTANA

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IN THE MATTER OF NorthWestern Energy's) REGULATORY DIVISION
Application for Approval of Unreflected Gas)
Cost Account Balance and Projected Gas Cost;) DOCKET NO. D2012.5.48
And Gas Transportation Adjustment Clause)
Balance)

NOTICE OF OPPORTUNITY TO COMMENT AND REQUEST A HEARING

On May 29, 2012, NorthWestern Corporation d/b/a NorthWestern Energy (NWE) submitted its annual Natural Gas Cost Tracker filing. NWE is requesting approval of a rate change: (a) reflecting rate treatment for unreflected gas costs for the 12-month period ending June 30, 2012; (b) reflecting gas cost projections for the 12-month period ending June 30, 2013; (c) reflecting rate treatment for amortization of the gas transportation adjustment clause balance as of April 30, 2012; and requesting approval to continue to collect the costs of its interest in Battle Creek natural gas field on an interim basis. The projected natural gas price for the 12-month period starting July 1, 2012, is \$0.39401 per therm, compared with the 12-month period starting July 1, 2011, of \$0.51354 per therm. On June 19, 2012, the Montana Public Service Commission (PSC) issued Interim Order No. 7218 approving interim rates pending a final decision in this docket.

A copy of NWE's application is available for inspection at the PSC, 1701 Prospect Avenue, Helena, Montana 59601; and the Montana Consumer Counsel (MCC), 111 North Last Chance Gulch, Suite 1B, P.O. Box 201703, Helena, Montana 59620-1703, telephone (406) 444-2771. The MCC is available and may be contacted to assist and represent the interests of the consuming public in this matter. Any person directly affected by the application may submit comments or request a hearing on the matter by filing comments or a Request for Hearing with the PSC, 1701 Prospect Avenue, P.O. Box 202601, Helena, Montana 59620-2601, no later than March 1, 2013. Any Request for Hearing must be electronically submitted (e-filed) on the PSC's

website at <http://psc.mt.gov> (go to “Electronic Documents” tab, then “Account Login/Registration”). The filing party must also deliver or mail the original Request for Hearing in paper format to the PSC so that it is received by the filing deadline. The PSC will upload e-filed documents to the PSC’s website after the paper original has been officially received at the PSC office. One copy must be served on NWE at 40 East Broadway Street, Butte, Montana 59701 and the MCC at the above address. If a hearing is properly requested, hearing procedures will be later implemented. If no hearing is requested, the PSC may issue a default order, consider the matter based on NWE’s application, or conduct a hearing on its own motion.

Any interested person who prefers not to formally participate in the matter may submit written comments on the matter to the PSC at the above address. Public comments may also be submitted to the PSC through the PSC’s web-based comment form at <http://psc.mt.gov/consumers/comments/>. Public comments, written or electronic, or a request for hearing must be received by the PSC no later than March 1, 2013.

The PSC’s jurisdiction over this matter is provided at Title 69, MCA. The substantive and procedural law applicable is Title 69, MCA, especially at Ch. 3 (public utilities), ARM Title 38, Ch. 5 (utilities), Title 2, Ch. 4, MCA (MAPA), ARM Title 38, Ch. 2 (PSC procedural rules), and any prior orders of the PSC which may bear on the issues presented.

BY THE MONTANA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

W. A. (BILL) GALLAGHER, Chairman
BOB LAKE, Vice Chairman
KIRK BUSHMAN, Commissioner
TRAVIS KAVULLA, Commissioner
ROGER KOOPMAN, Commissioner