

**FOR IMMEDIATE
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PSC TO CONSIDER MONTANA-DAKOTA UTILITIES' REQUEST TO INCREASE NATURAL GAS RATES

Utility seeks \$8.56 million rate increase, citing investment in safer, more reliable distribution facilities.

HELENA, Montana — Montana-Dakota Utilities Co. recently applied for an increase in its natural gas rates, which if granted, would generate an additional \$8.56 million in revenue from its customers in Montana. Under the proposed new rates, the natural gas bill for an average residential customer would increase by \$8.24 a month, or 19.83%.

The application, filed on June 22, 2020, and assigned Docket 2020.06.076, will be subject to the Montana Public Service Commission's review and approval process.

The Commission will establish a nine-month review process to consider the application. The Commission's review process will include opportunities for public input, an evidentiary hearing, and a detailed analysis of the application by the Commission. The Commission is considering options for safely taking public comment in the utility's service area during the COVID-19 pandemic. In the meantime, the Commission encourages the public to submit comments on the application in writing through US Mail at PO Box 202601, Helena, MT 59620; through its web-based comment form at <http://psc.mt.gov> ("Comment on a Proceeding" under the "Documents & Proceedings" tab); or through e-mail at pschelp@mt.gov. Comments may also be presented at the Commission's weekly meetings. The Montana Consumer Counsel, who advocates on behalf of consumers before the Commission, can be contacted at 406-444-2771.

Interested parties have until July 17, 2020 to request permission to intervene in the Commission's formal, legal proceedings on the application. Intervenors will have the opportunity to conduct discovery and participate in the Commission's technical hearing, where the utility company and intervenors will present witness testimony and legal arguments concerning the application. After the technical hearing, the Commission will deliberate during a

public meeting on the evidence presented and decide whether the application should be granted, granted with changes, or denied.

The Commission's decision will be issued as a written, final order, after which the utility will adjust its rates accordingly. A decision is expected by late March 2021.

In total, the rates are designed to raise the utility company's annual revenue in Montana by 13.42%. According to MDU's application, the additional revenue will fund the utility's continued investment in distribution facilities to improve safety and reliability. As part of the application review process, the Commission will evaluate the prudence of the utility's recent investments and planned future investments in its distribution facilities.

MDU has also requested an interim rate increase while the Commission considers the application. If approved, the temporary, interim rate would take effect on February 21, 2021 and generate \$4.9 million in revenue, at an average monthly cost of \$3.29 per household.

The Commission regulates private investor-owned natural gas, electric, telephone, water, and sewer companies, certain motor carriers, and oversees natural gas pipeline safety and intrastate railroad safety. The Commission works to ensure that Montanans receive safe and reliable service from regulated public utilities while paying reasonable rates. For more information, visit psc.mt.gov or contact the Commission at 1-800-646-6150. Follow the Commission at [Twitter.com/@MT_PSC](https://twitter.com/MT_PSC) or visit [Facebook.com/MontanaPSC](https://facebook.com/MontanaPSC).

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