

**FOR IMMEDIATE
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MEDIA ADVISORY: PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION TO HOST LISTENING SESSIONS ON MDU'S REQUESTED RATE INCREASE

Public comment invited on proposed \$8.56 million increase to natural gas rates for Montana customers

HELENA, Montana — The Montana Public Service Commission will hold two listening sessions on Montana-Dakota Utilities Co.'s request for authority to increase its rates for natural gas distribution by \$8.56 million. The rates would affect 86,435 customers and cause the natural gas bill for an average residential customer to increase by \$8.24 a month, or 19.83%.

WHO: Montana Public Service Commission

WHAT: Public listening sessions (via Zoom) on MDU's request for authority to increase for natural gas service.

WHEN: Thursday, January 28, 2021, from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m., and Friday, January 29, 2021, from 12:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m.

WHERE: By audio-only conference (Zoom), which will be streamed live on the Commission's website: <http://psc.mt.gov/livestream>.

Members of the public who would like to comment must email pschelp@mt.gov or leave a telephone message at the Commission's toll-free number, 800-646-6150. A representative from the Commission will call back with instructions for participating in the Zoom meeting. The Commission will not take questions at the listening sessions. Members of the media and the general public who do not wish to make public comment are invited to stream the hearing live from the Commission's website: <http://psc.mt.gov>.

MDU filed its application for a rate increase in June 2020, after which the Montana Consumer Counsel intervened to represent the interests of customers. An evidentiary hearing for MDU and the Consumer Counsel to present witness testimony is scheduled to begin February 2, 2021.

On January 14, 2021, the Commission voted 4 to 1 to approve an interim rate increase, which will take effect on February 1. The interim rate allows MDU to charge the average residential customer about \$3.29 more per month until the Commission issues a final order on MDU's request. If the Commission determines after the hearing that the interim rates were too high, the Commission can order a refund for customers, with interest.

In total, MDU's 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

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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