



Montana Public Service Commission

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PSC Considering NorthWestern Propane Rate Increase at June 25 Hearing in Townsend

Increasing propane rates is the topic of a June 25 Public Service Commission (PSC) hearing in Townsend. NorthWestern Energy (NWE) is requesting to increase their propane rates, beginning September 1, to \$15.62 per dekatherm (dkt) in the winter and \$14.88 per dkt during the summer to reflect the actual cost of propane delivered to Townsend customers. The hearing is at the Broadwater County Courthouse and begins at 5:00 pm. The public will have the opportunity to comment.

Townsend customers had been paying \$8.74 per dkt for propane through February of this year. On March 1, the PSC approved a temporary rate increase to \$14.26 per dkt, which more closely reflected NWE's supply cost at the time of \$21.42 per dkt. In addition to rate increases, the company is requesting the ability to adjust customer rates annually based on the market price of propane.

Commissioner John Vincent, whose PSC District includes Townsend said, "We need to hear from the community about the proposal; this is an important decision that will directly affect all NWE propane customers in Townsend. I hope the public can make it to the hearing and share their views with the Commission, allowing us to make the most informed decision possible."

Written remarks can be sent to the PSC at P.O. Box 202601, Helena, Montana 59620-2601 or through the PSC's web-based comment form at <http://psc.mt.gov/Customers/comments>. Additional information about the company's proposal can be found under docket D2008.12.142 on the PSC website at <http://psc.mt.gov/eDocs>.

The Commission anticipates ruling on the proposal before the heating season begins in the fall.

Made up of 5 elected commissioners, the PSC works to ensure that Montanans receive safe and reliable service from regulated public utilities while paying reasonable rates. Utilities regulated by the PSC generally include private investor-owned natural gas, electric, telephone, water, and sewer companies. In addition, the PSC regulates certain motor carriers, and oversees natural gas pipeline safety and intrastate railroad safety.

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