

**BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION  
OF THE STATE OF SOUTH DAKOTA**

IN THE MATTER OF THE COMPLAINT FILED BY ) ORDER FINDING PROBABLE  
TODD SCHAUFENBUEL, HURON, SD, AGAINST ) CAUSE  
NORTHWESTERN PUBLIC SERVICE COMPANY. ) NG97-005

On April 2, 1997, the Public Utilities Commission (Commission) received a complaint filed by Todd Schaufenbuel of 809 Nebraska Street SW, Huron, South Dakota (Complainant), against Northwestern Public Service Company (NWPS). Complainant alleges that he experienced unusually high gas utility bills in December 1996 and January 1997, and that attempts to diagnose the cause, such as changing the gas meter, have proved futile.

Pursuant to ARSD 20:10:01:08.01 and 20:10:01:09, if a complaint cannot be settled without formal action, the Commission shall determine if the complaint shows probable cause of an unlawful or unreasonable act, rate, practice or omission to go forward with the complaint.

On April 15, 1997, at its duly noticed meeting, the Commission reviewed the complaint. The Commission finds that it has jurisdiction over this matter pursuant to SDCL 49-34A-2, 49-34A-4, and ARSD 20:10:01:08.01 and 20:10:01:09. The Commission voted unanimously to find probable cause, it is therefore

ORDERED, that pursuant to ARSD 20:10:01:09, the Commission finds that there is probable cause of an unlawful or unreasonable act, rate, practice, or omission and that the complaint shall be forwarded to NWPS and NWPS shall file with the Commission its answer in writing within twenty (20) days of service of this order, and it is further

ORDERED that NWPS shall have the meter which is the subject of this complaint tested by an independent laboratory not owned or affiliated with NWPS.

Dated at Pierre, South Dakota, this 28<sup>th</sup> day of April, 1997.

<b>CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE</b>
The undersigned hereby certifies that this document has been served today upon all parties of record in this docket, as listed on the docket service list, by facsimile or by first class mail, in properly addressed envelopes, with charges prepaid thereon.
By: <u><i>Delaine Kelbo</i></u>
Date: <u>4/28/97</u>
(OFFICIAL SEAL)

BY ORDER OF THE COMMISSION:

*James A. Burg*  
JAMES A. BURG, Chairman

*Pam Nelson*  
PAM NELSON, Commissioner

*Laska Schoenfelder*  
LASKA SCHOENFELDER, Commissioner