

Notice of Ex Parte Communication

Case No. PU-20-344

Pursuant to 28-32-37, a person who has a direct or indirect interest in the outcome of the proceeding may not communicate, directly or indirectly regarding any issue in the proceeding while it is pending without notice and opportunity for all parties to participate in the communication. Consistent with the listed section, this document shall be placed in the record.

a) Party or person providing the ex parte communication:

Josh Askvig on behalf of AARP

b) Description of all written or oral communications received, all written and oral responses to the communications:

Written communication and email to Commissioner Brian Kroshus. The document provided is attached.

c) All responses made written or oral to the ex parte communication:

No response was provided

Any person desiring to rebut the ex parte communication are allowed to do so upon request within ten days after notice of the communication.

Parties, interested persons, and other persons allowed to participate that these matters: Montana-Dakota Utilities Co.; and Commission Advocacy Staff.

Reporting Staff: John M. Schuh

-Info-Public Service Commission

From: Askvig, Joshua J. <JAskvig@aar.org>
Sent: Tuesday, September 1, 2020 9:58 AM
To: Kroshus, Brian; Fedorchak, Julie L.; Christmann, Randel D.
Cc: Askvig, Joshua J.; -Info-Public Service Commission
Subject: AARP letter on Docket PU-20-344: MDU Transmission Cost Adjustment
Attachments: News Release - AARP Calls for Public Hearing in MDU Rate Hike Request 9-1-20.pdf; MDU letter FINAL on letterhead.pdf

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
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Chairman Kroshus, Commissioner Fedorchak, and Commissioner Christmann-

Please find the attached letter regarding DOCKET PU-20-344: MDU Transmission Cost Adjustment. We appreciate the opportunity to submit the letter and comment on the request by MDU.

As you will read in the letter we are requesting:

- the PSC schedule a public hearing, including a virtual option to participate and comment, so that customers have an opportunity to comment;
- reduce the ROE from 9.65% given the reduction in interest rates since the pandemic;
- order MDU to plan to exit MISO for SPP;
- order MDU to aggressively question MISO's new spending plans. MISO has apparently refused to consider the possibility of a permanent load reduction due to the pandemic in its planning, which could turn out to be a costly mistake;

Additionally, attached is the press release regarding our letter that will be sent to the media within the hour.

Thank you for your consideration and we urge you to call the public hearing.

Josh

Josh Askvig | **AARP North Dakota** | State Director
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For Immediate Release
September 1, 2020

Contact:
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AARP North Dakota
701-989-0129 (Cell)

AARP North Dakota: Public Service Commission Must Hear from Electric Customers, Stop Unfair \$15 Million Rate Hike

MDU proposal would raise residential electric bills to pay for projects in other states

BISMARCK, N.D. – AARP North Dakota today called on the state’s Public Service Commission (PSC) to host a public hearing on Montana-Dakota Utilities (MDU) Company’s proposed \$15 million rate increase. In a [letter to the PSC](#), AARP questioned the new proposed surcharges that would unfairly raise residential electric rates \$40 per year, with only a fraction of the new spending going to North Dakota projects.

“The PSC needs to hear from MDU customers before the commissioners decide on this unfair and unreasonable rate hike,” said AARP North Dakota State Director Josh Askvig. “North Dakotans are still facing [unemployment rates](#) twice as high as before the COVID-19 pandemic and the largest projected increase in [food insecurity](#) in the country. Now is not the time for the PSC to rubberstamp an electric rate hike without a public hearing.”

MDU’s proposed rate increase would pay for projects in other states with little or no benefit to North Dakota customers. Just \$5 million of the increase would fund MDU transmission projects in North Dakota. AARP also questioned whether maintaining MDU’s 9.65 percent profit level is justified in the current economic recession.

Askvig added, “AARP has a long history of fighting to prevent unfair utility rate hikes so North Dakotans 50 and older can keep more of the money they’ve earned. This is a pocketbook issue for seniors and their families, many of whom struggle to balance paying utility bills and other household expenses along with buying food and medicine.”

AARP is alerting MDU electric customers and urging them to contact the PSC to demand a public hearing on the proposed rate hikes. North Dakota residents that are MDU electric customers and concerned about the proposed rate hike can email the PSC by visiting action.aarp.org/DontRaiseOurRates.

With 86,000 members in North Dakota, AARP is the nation's largest nonprofit, nonpartisan organization dedicated to empowering people 50 and older to choose how they live as they age. With a nationwide presence and nearly 38 million members, AARP strengthens communities and advocates for what matters most to families: health security, financial stability and personal fulfillment. AARP also produces the nation's largest circulation publications: AARP The Magazine and AARP Bulletin. To learn more, visit www.aarp.org or follow @AARP and @AARPadvocates on social media.