



Fremont County Board of Commissioners

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Kevin Grantham
District 1

Debbie Bell
District 2

Dwayne McFall
District 3

July 24, 2024

Public Utilities Commission
1560 Broadway, Suite 250
Denver, CO 80202

Ladies and Gentlemen:

As the elected Fremont County Board of County Commissioners, we are writing to the Public Utilities Commission to express our strong opposition to the proposed rate increase by Black Hills Energy. We are deeply concerned about the adverse impact this proposed increase would have on our families, farmers and ranchers, and small businesses who form the backbone and fabric of our community.

Fremont County has recently enjoyed success in attracting several new businesses. Among the many reasons these businesses chose to locate in Fremont County is the relatively lower cost of doing business compared to more urban areas. However, the proposed rate increase threatens to undermine these efforts by substantially increasing the cost of doing business and by placing untenable financial burdens on our local workforce, existing businesses including farmers and ranchers, and the broader community.

Many households and small businesses in our district are already struggling to make ends meet. The massive increase in electric rates proposed by Black Hills Energy will stretch budgets even further, causing hardship for families and pushing some businesses into insolvency. This is particularly concerning given the economic challenges our community has faced in recent years.

To be clear, we have a positive relationship with our local Black Hills office and corporate leadership. Our complaint relates to broader corporate decisions, which in some cases have likely been influenced by misguided state and federal policies. We stand united in opposition to this proposed rate increase with our citizens, farmers and ranchers, businesses, and with other government agencies who recognize it as a clear deterrent to growth and as a threat to the sustainability of our community.

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We understand that operational costs and unrealistic mandates may necessitate a rate adjustment, but we urge the Public Utilities Commission to consider the broader economic context and the compounding effect on our community when determining the amount of that increase. The families of Fremont County simply cannot bear a 20% increase in the cost of a service they cannot choose to do without. Instead, unpleasant as it may be, perhaps it is time for Black Hills Energy to implement austerity measures, as County Government and families in our community have been doing for years.

We look forward to your thoughtful consideration, and to a resolution that promotes the sustainability of rural communities, rather than flight from them.

Sincerely,



Kevin Grantham
District One



Debbie Bell
District Two



Dwayne McFall, Chair
District Three