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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NOVEMBER KICKS OFF NEBRASKA'S NATURAL GAS COLD WEATHER RULE

LINCOLN, OCTOBER 26, 2020 –Beginning Sunday, November 1, the Nebraska Public Service Commission's (PSC) cold weather rule will take effect. The cold weather rule provides financially strapped customers of Nebraska's [jurisdictional natural gas utilities](#) a little extra time to pay their bills.

From November 1- through- March 31, Black Hills Energy, (including Black Hills Legacy and Black Hills Gas Distribution), and NorthWestern Energy may not shut off service to customers without allowing an additional 30 days to pay beyond the normal bill due date.

“As we to head into our winter months it is important for natural gas suppliers’ and customers to work together to help ensure service is uninterrupted,” said Commission chair Mary Ridder. “The cold weather rule is designed to facilitate that relationship by helping to provide assistance for consumers at a time when natural gas bills are often the highest.”

Customers finding it difficult to pay natural gas bills should contact the company to arrange payment. Customers can also contact local public assistance agencies for help with natural gas bills.

The PSC implemented the cold weather rule when it was given regulatory authority over the state's jurisdictional utilities in 2003. Nebraska communities served by municipally owned natural gas utilities are not subject to regulation by the PSC and are not required to comply with the cold weather rule.

Consumers are reminded that minimizing the impact of higher natural gas prices during the winter is also important. Consumers can take steps to help lower costs by setting the thermostat a little lower. Gas utilities recommend 68 degrees or lower, and to reduce thermostat setting when a home or building is unoccupied. Check gas appliances and space-heating equipment for efficient operation. Obtain a home energy audit to identify ways to conserve energy and participate in a gas company's yearly budget plan to spread costs throughout the year.

Other ideas to conserve energy costs include, improving insulation in a home by installing storm windows and doors, attaching clear plastic to the inside or outside of windows and screen doors, caulking around windows and doorframes, and covering window air conditioners. ###

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