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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **PSC COLD WEATHER RULE AIDS NATURAL GAS CONSUMERS**

LINCOLN, OCTOBER 27, 2021 – Monday, November 1, marks the start of the Nebraska Public Service Commission’s (PSC) cold weather rule.

The cold weather rule provides customers of Nebraska’s [jurisdictional natural gas utilities](#) who make be facing difficulties a little extra time to pay their bills. From November 1- through-March 31, Black Hills Energy and NorthWestern Energy may not shut off service to customers without allowing an additional 30 days to pay beyond the normal bill due date.

“The cold weather rule is especially important this year as winter heating costs are forecasted to rise,” said Commission chair Dan Watermeier. “It provides an opportunity for natural gas suppliers and their customers to work together to ensure service is uninterrupted during the winter months.”

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 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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