476.6 Changes in rates, charges, schedules, and regulations — supply and cost review — water costs for fire protection — energy efficiency.

1. *Filing with board.* A public utility subject to rate regulation shall not make effective a new or changed rate, charge, schedule, or regulation until the rate, charge, schedule, or regulation has been approved by the board, except as provided in subsections 8 and 9.

2. *Written notice of increase.* All public utilities, except those exempted from rate regulation by section 476.1 and telecommunications service providers registered pursuant to section 476.95A, shall give written notice of a proposed increase of any rate or charge to all affected customers served by the public utility no more than sixty-two days prior to the time the application for the increase is filed with the board. Public utilities exempted from rate regulation by section 476.1, except telecommunications service providers registered pursuant to section 476.95A, shall give written notice of a proposed increase of any rate or charge to all affected customers served by the public utility at least thirty days prior to the effective date of the increase. If the public utility is subject to rate regulation, the notice to affected customers shall also state that the customer has a right to file a written objection to the rate increase and that the affected customers may request the board to hold a public hearing to determine if the rate increase should be allowed. The board shall prescribe the manner and method that the written notice to each affected customer of the public utility shall be served.

3. *Facts and arguments submitted.* At the time a public utility subject to rate regulation files with the board an application for any new or changed rates, charges, schedules, or regulations, the public utility also shall submit factual evidence and written argument offered in support of the filing. If the filing is an application for a general rate increase, the utility shall also file affidavits containing testimonial evidence to be offered in support of the filing, although this requirement does not apply if the public utility is a rural electric cooperative.

4. *Hearing set.* After the filing of an application for new or changed rates, charges, schedules, or regulations by a public utility subject to rate regulation, the board, prior to the expiration of thirty days after the filing date, shall docket the case as a formal proceeding and set the case for hearing unless the new or changed rates, charges, schedules, or regulations are approved by the board. However, if an application presents no material issue of fact subject to dispute, and the board determines that the application violates a relevant statute, or is not in substantial compliance with a board rule lawfully adopted pursuant to chapter 17A, the application may be rejected by the board without prejudice and without a hearing, provided that the board issues a written order setting forth all of its reasons for rejecting the application. In the case of a gas public utility having less than two thousand customers, the board shall docket a case as a formal proceeding and set the case for hearing as provided in section 476.1C. In the case of a rural electric cooperative, the board may docket the case as a formal proceeding and set the case for hearing prior to the proposed effective date of the tariff. The board shall give notice of formal proceedings as it deems appropriate. The docketing of a case as a formal proceeding suspends the effective date of the new or changed rates, charges, schedules, or regulations until the rates, charges, schedules, or regulations are approved by the board, except as provided in subsection 9.

5. *Utility hearing expenses reported.* When a case has been docketed as a formal proceeding under subsection 4, the public utility, within a reasonable time thereafter, shall file with the board a report outlining the utility’s expected expenses for litigating the case through the time period allowed by the board in rendering a decision. At the conclusion of the utility’s presentation of comments, testimony, exhibits, or briefs the utility shall submit to the board a listing of the utility’s actual litigation expenses in the proceeding. As part of the findings of the board under subsection 6, the board shall allow recovery of costs of the litigation expenses over a reasonable period of time to the extent the board deems the expenses reasonable and just.

6. *Finding by board.* If, after hearing and decision on all issues presented for determination in the rate proceeding, the board finds the proposed rates, charges, schedules, or regulations of the utility to be unlawful, the board shall by order authorize and direct the utility to file new or changed rates, charges, schedules, or regulations which, when approved
by the board and placed in effect, will satisfy the requirements of this chapter. The rates, charges, schedules, or regulations so approved are lawful and effective upon their approval.

7. Limitation on filings. A public utility shall not make a subsequent filing of an application for a new or changed rate, charge, schedule, or regulation which relates to services for which a rate filing is pending within twelve months following the date the prior application was filed or until the board has issued a final order on the prior application, whichever date is earlier, unless the public utility applies to the board for authority and receives authority to make a subsequent filing at an earlier date.

8. Automatic adjustments.
   a. This chapter does not prohibit a public utility from making provision for the automatic adjustment of rates and charges for public utility service provided that a schedule showing the automatic adjustment of rates and charges is first filed with and approved by the board.
   b. A public utility may automatically adjust rates and charges to recover costs related to transmission incurred by or charged to the public utility consistent with a tariff or agreement that is subject to the jurisdiction of the federal energy regulatory commission, provided that a schedule showing the automatic adjustment of rates and charges is first filed with and approved by the board. The board shall adopt rules regarding the reporting of transmission expenses and transmission-related activity pursuant to this paragraph.

   a. A public utility may choose to place in effect temporary rates, charges, schedules, or regulations without board review on or after ten days following the filing date under this section. If the utility chooses to place such rates, charges, schedules, or regulations in effect, the utility shall file with the board a bond or other corporate undertaking approved by the board conditioned upon the refund in a manner prescribed by the board of amounts collected in excess of the amounts which would have been collected under rates, charges, schedules, or regulations finally approved by the board. At the conclusion of the proceeding if the board determines that the temporary rates, charges, schedules, or regulations placed in effect under this paragraph were not based on previously established regulatory principles, the board shall consider ordering refunds based upon the overpayments made by each individual customer class, rate zone, or customer group. If the board has not rendered a final decision with respect to suspended rates, charges, schedules, or regulations upon the expiration of ten months after the filing date, plus the length of any delay that necessarily results either from the failure of the public utility to exercise due diligence in connection with the proceedings or from intervening judicial proceedings, plus the length of any extension permitted by section 476.33, subsection 3, then such temporary rates, charges, schedules, or regulations placed into effect on a temporary basis shall be deemed finally approved by the board and the utility may place them into effect on a permanent basis.
   b. If the board finds that an extension of the ten-month period is necessary to permit the accumulation of necessary data with respect to the operation of a newly constructed electric generating facility that has a capacity of one hundred megawatts or more of electricity and that is proposed to be included in the rate base for the first time, the board may extend the ten-month period up to a maximum extension of six months, but only with respect to that portion of the suspended rates, charges, schedules, or regulations that are necessarily connected with the inclusion of the generating facility in the rate base. If a utility is proposing to include in its rate base for the first time a newly constructed electric generating facility that has a capacity of one hundred megawatts or more of electricity, the filing date of new or changed rates, charges, schedules, or regulations shall, for purposes of computing the time limitations stated above, be the date as determined by the board that the new plant went into service, but only with respect to that portion of the suspended rates, charges, schedules, or regulations that are necessarily connected with the inclusion of the generating facility in the rate base.
   c. The board shall determine the rate of interest to be paid by a public utility to persons receiving refunds. The interest rate to be applied to refunds of moneys collected subject to refund under this subsection is two percent per annum plus the average quarterly interest rate at commercial banks for twenty-four-month loans for personal expenditures, as determined
by the board, compounded annually. The board shall consider federal reserve statistical release G.19 or its equivalent when determining interest to be paid under this subsection.

10. **Refunds passed on to customers.** If pursuant to federal law or rule a rate-regulated public utility furnishing gas to customers in the state receives a refund or credit for past gas purchases, the savings shall be passed on to the customers in a manner approved by the board. Similarly, if pursuant to federal law or rule a rate-regulated public utility furnishing gas to customers in the state receives a rate for future gas purchases which is lower than the price included in the public utility’s approved rate application, the savings shall be passed on to the customers in a manner approved by the board.

11. **Natural gas supply and cost review.**
   a. The board shall periodically conduct a proceeding for the purpose of evaluating the reasonableness and prudence of a rate-regulated public utility’s natural gas procurement and contracting practices. The natural gas supply and cost review shall be conducted as a contested case pursuant to chapter 17A.
   b. Under procedures established by the board, each rate-regulated public utility furnishing gas shall periodically file a complete natural gas procurement plan describing the expected sources and volumes of its gas supply and changes in the cost of gas anticipated over a future twelve-month period specified by the board. The utilities shall file information as the board deems appropriate.
   c. During the natural gas supply and cost review, the board shall evaluate the reasonableness and prudence of the gas procurement plan. If a utility is not taking all reasonable actions to minimize its purchase gas costs, consistent with assuring an adequate long-term supply of natural gas, the board shall not allow the utility to recover from its customers purchase gas costs in excess of those costs that would be incurred under reasonable and prudent policies and practices.

12. **Electric energy supply and cost review.** The board shall periodically conduct a proceeding for the purpose of evaluating the reasonableness and prudence of a rate-regulated public utility’s procurement and contracting practices related to the acquisition of fuel for use in generating electricity. The evaluation may review the reasonableness and prudence of actions taken by a rate-regulated public utility to comply with the federal Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990, Pub. L. No. 101-549. The proceeding shall be conducted as a contested case pursuant to chapter 17A. Under procedures established by the board, the utility shall file information as the board deems appropriate. If a utility is not taking all reasonable actions to minimize its fuel and allowance transaction costs, the board shall not allow the utility to recover from its customers fuel and allowance transaction costs in excess of those costs that would be or would have been incurred under reasonable and prudent policies and practices.

13. **Energy efficiency plans.** Electric and gas public utilities shall offer energy efficiency programs to their customers through energy efficiency plans. An energy efficiency plan as a whole shall be cost-effective. In determining the cost-effectiveness of an energy efficiency plan, the board shall apply the societal test, total resource cost test, utility cost test, rate-payer impact test, and participant test. Energy efficiency programs for qualified low-income persons and for tree planting programs, educational programs, and assessments of consumers’ needs for information to make effective choices regarding energy use and energy efficiency need not be cost-effective and shall not be considered in determining cost-effectiveness of plans as a whole. The energy efficiency programs in the plans may be provided by the utility or by a contractor or agent of the utility. Programs offered pursuant to this subsection by gas and electric utilities that are required to be rate-regulated shall require board approval.

14. **Water costs for fire protection in certain cities.**
   a. **Application.** A city furnished water by a public utility subject to rate regulation may apply to the board for inclusion of all or a part of the costs of fire hydrants or other improvements, maintenance, and operations for the purpose of providing adequate water production, storage, and distribution for public fire protection in the rates or charges assessed to consumers covered by the applicant’s fire protection service. The application shall be made in a form and manner approved by or as directed by the board. The applicant shall provide such additional information as the board may require to consider the application.
b. Review. The board shall review the application, and may in its discretion consider additional evidence, beyond that supplied in the application or provided by the applicant in response to a request for additional information pursuant to paragraph “a”, including but not limited to soliciting oral or written testimony from other interested parties.

c. Notice. Written notice of a proposed rate increase shall be provided by the public utility pursuant to subsection 2, except that notice shall be provided within ninety days of the date of application. Costs of the notice shall be paid for by the applicant.

d. Conditions for approval. As a condition to approving an application to include water-related fire protection costs in the utility’s rates or charges, the board shall make an affirmative determination that the following conditions will be met:

(1) That the service area currently charged for fire protection, either directly or indirectly, is substantially the same service area containing those persons who will pay for water-related fire protection through inclusion of such costs within the utility’s rates or charges.

(2) That the inclusion of such costs within the utility’s rates or charges will not cause substantial inequities among the utility’s customers.

(3) That all or a portion of the costs sought to be included in the utility’s rates or charges by the applicant are reasonable in the circumstances, and limited to the purposes specified in paragraph “a”.

(4) That written notice has been provided pursuant to paragraph “c” and that the costs of the notice have been paid by the applicant.

e. Inclusion within rates or charges. If the board affirmatively determines that the conditions of paragraph “d” are or will be satisfied, the board shall include the reasonable costs in the rates or charges assessed to consumers covered by the applicant’s fire protection service.

f. Written order. The board shall issue a written order within six months of the date of application. The written order shall include a recitation of the facts found pursuant to consideration of the application.

15. Energy efficiency implementation, cost review, and cost recovery.

a. (1) (a) Electric utilities required to be rate-regulated under this chapter shall file five-year energy efficiency plans and demand response plans with the board. Gas utilities required to be rate-regulated under this chapter shall file five-year energy efficiency plans with the board. An energy efficiency plan and budget or a demand response plan and budget shall include a range of energy efficiency or demand response programs, tailored to the needs of all customer classes, including residential, commercial, and industrial customers, for energy efficiency opportunities. The plans shall include programs for qualified low-income persons including a cooperative program with any community action agency within the utility’s service area to implement countywide or communitywide energy efficiency programs for qualified low-income persons. Rate-regulated gas and electric utilities shall utilize Iowa agencies and Iowa contractors to the maximum extent cost-effective in their energy efficiency plans or demand response plans filed with the board.

(b) The board shall allow a customer of an electric utility that is required to be rate-regulated to request an exemption from participation in any five-year energy efficiency plan offered by an electric utility if the energy efficiency plan and demand response plan, at the time of approval by the board, have a cumulative rate-payer impact test result of less than one. Upon receipt of a request for exemption submitted by a customer, the electric utility shall grant the exemption and, beginning January 1 of the following year, the customer shall no longer be assessed the costs of the plan and shall be prohibited from participating in any program included in such plan until the exemption no longer applies, as determined by the board.

(2) Gas and electric utilities required to be rate-regulated under this chapter may request an energy efficiency plan or demand response plan modification during the course of a five-year plan. A modification may be requested due to changes in funding as a result of public utility customers requesting exemptions from the plan or for any other reason identified by the gas or electric utility. The board shall take action on a modification request made by a gas or electric utility within ninety days after the modification request is filed.
If the board fails to take action within ninety days after a modification request is filed, the modification request shall be deemed approved.

(3) The board shall adopt rules pursuant to chapter 17A establishing reasonable processes and procedures for utility customers from any customer class to request exemptions from energy efficiency plans that meet the requirements of subparagraph (1), subparagraph division (b). The rules adopted by the board shall only apply to electric utilities that are required to be rate-regulated.

b. A gas and electric utility required to be rate-regulated under this chapter shall assess potential energy and capacity savings available from actual and projected customer usage by applying commercially available technology and improved operating practices to energy-using equipment and buildings. The utility shall submit the assessment to the board. Upon receipt of the assessment, the board shall consult with the economic development authority to develop specific capacity and energy savings performance standards for each utility. The utility shall submit an energy efficiency plan which shall include economically achievable programs designed to attain these energy and capacity performance standards. The board shall periodically report the energy efficiency results including energy savings of each utility to the general assembly.

c. (1) The board shall conduct contested case proceedings for review of energy efficiency plans, demand response plans, and budgets filed by gas and electric utilities required to be rate-regulated under this chapter.

(2) Notwithstanding the goals developed pursuant to paragraph “b”, the board shall not require or allow a gas utility to adopt an energy efficiency plan that results in projected cumulative average annual costs that exceed one and one-half percent of the gas utility’s expected annual Iowa retail rate revenue from retail customers in the state, shall not require or allow an electric utility to adopt an energy efficiency plan that results in projected cumulative average annual costs that exceed two percent of the electric utility’s expected annual Iowa retail rate revenue from retail customers in the state, and shall not require or allow an electric utility to adopt a demand response plan that results in projected cumulative average annual costs that exceed two percent of the electric utility’s expected annual Iowa retail rate revenue from retail customers in the state. For purposes of determining the two percent threshold amount, the board shall exclude from an electric utility’s expected annual Iowa retail rate revenue the revenues expected from customers that have received exemptions from energy efficiency plans pursuant to paragraph “a”. This subparagraph shall apply to energy efficiency plans and demand response plans that are effective on or after January 1, 2019.

(3) The board may approve, reject, or modify the plans and budgets. Notwithstanding the provisions of section 17A.19, subsection 5, in an application for judicial review of the board’s decision concerning a utility’s plan or budget, the reviewing court shall not order a stay.

(4) The board shall approve, reject, or modify a plan filed pursuant to this subsection no later than March 31, 2019. If the board fails to approve, reject, or modify a plan filed by a gas or electric utility on or before such date, any plan filed by the gas or electric utility that was approved by the board prior to May 4, 2018, shall be terminated. The board shall not require or allow a gas or electric utility to implement an energy efficiency plan or demand response plan that does not meet the requirements of this subsection.

(5) Whenever a request to modify an approved plan or budget is filed subsequently by a gas or electric utility required to be rate-regulated under this chapter, the board shall promptly initiate a formal proceeding if the board determines that any reasonable ground exists for investigating the request. The formal proceeding may be initiated at any time by the board on its own motion. Implementation of board-approved plans or budgets shall be considered continuous in nature and shall be subject to investigation at any time by the board or the office of the consumer advocate.

d. Notice to customers of a contested case proceeding for review of energy efficiency plans, demand response plans, and budgets shall be in a manner prescribed by the board.

e. (1) A gas or electric utility required to be rate-regulated under this chapter may recover, through an automatic adjustment mechanism filed pursuant to subsection 8, over a period not to exceed the term of the plan, the costs of an energy efficiency plan or demand response
plan approved by the board in a contested case proceeding conducted pursuant to paragraph “c”. Customers that have been granted exemptions from energy efficiency plans pursuant to paragraph “a”, shall not be charged for recovery of energy efficiency costs beginning January 1 of the year following the year in which the customer was granted the exemption.

(2) The board shall periodically conduct a contested case proceeding to evaluate the reasonableness and prudence of the utility’s implementation of an approved energy efficiency or demand response plan and budget. If a utility is not taking all reasonable actions to cost-effectively implement an approved plan, the board shall not allow the utility to recover from customers costs in excess of those costs that would be incurred under reasonable and prudent implementation and shall not allow the utility to recover future costs at a level other than what the board determines to be reasonable and prudent. If the result of a contested case proceeding is a judgment against a utility, that utility’s future level of cost recovery shall be reduced by the amount by which the programs were found to be imprudently conducted. Beginning January 1, 2019, a gas or electric utility shall represent energy efficiency and demand response in customer billings as a separate cost or expense.

f. A rate-regulated utility required to submit an energy efficiency plan under this subsection shall, upon the request of a state agency or political subdivision to which it provides service, provide advice and assistance regarding measures which the state agency or political subdivision might take in achieving improved energy efficiency results. The cooperation shall include assistance in accessing financial assistance for energy efficiency measures.

16. Filing of forecasts. The board shall periodically require each rate-regulated gas or electric public utility to file a forecast of future gas requirements or electric generating needs and the board shall evaluate the forecast. The forecast shall include but is not limited to a forecast of the requirements of its customers, its anticipated sources of supply, and its anticipated means of addressing the forecasted gas requirements or electric generating needs.

17. Allocation of replacement tax costs.

a. The costs of the replacement tax imposed pursuant to chapter 437A or 437B shall be reflected in the charges of utilities subject to rate regulation, in lieu of the utilities’ costs of property taxes. The imposition of the replacement taxes pursuant to chapter 437A is not intended to initiate any change in the rates and charges for the sale of electricity, the sale of natural gas, or the transportation of natural gas that is subject to regulation by the board and in effect on January 1, 1999. The implementation and initial imposition of the replacement taxes pursuant to chapter 437B is not intended to result in an increase in the rates and charges for the sale of water that is subject to regulation by the board and in effect on January 1, 2013.

b. The cost of the replacement taxes imposed by chapter 437A or 437B shall be allocated among and within customer classes in a manner that will replicate the tax cost burden of the current property tax on individual customers to the maximum extent practicable.

c. Upon the restructuring of the electric industry in this state so that individual consumers are given the right to choose their electric suppliers, replacement tax costs shall be assigned to the service corresponding to the individual generation, transmission, and delivery taxes. In all other respects, the allocation of the replacement tax costs among and within the customer classes shall remain the same to the maximum extent practicable.

d. Notwithstanding this subsection, the board may determine the amount of replacement tax properly included in retail rates subject to its jurisdiction. The board may determine whether the base rates or some other form of rate is most appropriate for recovery of the costs of the replacement tax, subject to the requirement that utility rates be reasonable and just. The board may also determine the appropriate allocation of the tax. Any significant modification to rate design relating to the replacement tax shall be made in a manner consistent with this subsection unless made in a contested case proceeding where the impact of such modification on competition and consumer costs is considered.

18. Recovery of management costs. A public utility which is assessed management costs by a local government pursuant to chapter 480A is entitled to recover those costs. If the public utility serves customers within the boundaries of the local government imposing the management costs, such costs shall be recovered exclusively from those customers.

19. Electric power generating facility emissions.
a. It is the intent of the general assembly that the state, through a collaborative effort involving state agencies and affected generation owners, provide for compatible statewide environmental and electric energy policies with respect to regulated emissions from rate-regulated electric power generating facilities in the state that are fueled by coal. Each rate-regulated public utility that is an owner of one or more electric power generating facilities fueled by coal and located in this state on July 1, 2001, shall develop a multiyear plan and budget for managing regulated emissions from its facilities in a cost-effective manner.

1. The initial multiyear plan and budget shall be filed with the board by April 1, 2002. Updates to the plan and budget shall be filed at least every twenty-four months.

2. Copies of the initial plan and budget, as well as any subsequent updates, shall be served on the department of natural resources.

3. The initial multiyear plan and budget and any subsequent updates shall be considered in a contested case proceeding pursuant to chapter 17A. The department of natural resources and the consumer advocate shall participate as parties to the proceeding.

4. The department of natural resources shall state whether the plan or update meets applicable state environmental requirements for regulated emissions. If the plan does not meet these requirements, the department shall recommend amendments that outline actions necessary to bring the plan or update into compliance with the environmental requirements.

b. The board shall approve a plan or update that does not meet applicable state environmental requirements and federal ambient air quality standards for regulated emissions from electric power generating facilities located in the state.

c. The board shall review the plan or update and the associated budget, and shall approve the plan or update and the associated budget if the plan or update and the associated budget are reasonably expected to achieve cost-effective compliance with applicable state environmental requirements and federal ambient air quality standards. In reaching its decision, the board shall consider whether the plan or update and the associated budget reasonably balance costs, environmental requirements, economic development potential, and the reliability of the electric generation and transmission system.

d. The board shall issue an order approving or rejecting a plan, update, or budget within one hundred eighty days after the public utility’s filing is deemed complete; however, upon good cause shown, the board may extend the time for issuing the order as follows:

1. The board may grant an extension of thirty days.

2. The board may grant more than one extension, but each extension must rely upon a separate showing of good cause.

3. A subsequent extension must not be granted any earlier than five days prior to the expiration of the original one-hundred-eighty-day period, or the current extension.

e. The reasonable costs incurred by a rate-regulated public utility in preparing and filing the plan, update, or budget and in participating in the proceedings before the board and the reasonable costs associated with implementing the plan, update, or budget shall be included in its regulated retail rates.

f. It is the intent of the general assembly that the board, in an environmental plan, update, or associated budget filed under this section by a rate-regulated public utility, may limit investments or expenditures that are proposed to be undertaken prior to the time that the environmental benefit to be produced by the investment or expenditure would be required by state or federal law.

20. **Preapproval of cost recovery for natural gas extensions — rules.** The board may adopt rules which provide for a preapproval process for cost recovery for natural gas extensions.

21. **Federal tax reduction — customer benefits.** Customers of gas and electric utilities subject to rate regulation by the board shall receive the full benefits of the utilities’ reduced federal corporate income taxes as provided in the federal Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017, Pub. L. No. 115-97, 131 Stat. 2054. Notwithstanding any other provision of law or rule to the contrary, the board shall, no later than June 1, 2018, approve any proposal filed by a rate-regulated gas or electric utility to pass such benefits on to customers. The board may
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approve rates with provision for adjustments to ensure that the rates are accurate and that customers receive the full benefits.

[C66, 71, 73, 75, §490A.6; C77, 79, 81, §476.6; 81 Acts, ch 156, §6, 9, ch 157, §1 – 3; 82 Acts, ch 1100, §23]


Referred to in §34A.7, 476.1C, 476.2, 476.10, 476.23, 476.33, 476.49, 476.52, 476.53

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Iowa Code 2023, Section 476.6 (59, 0)