

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

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 10.

2. *Written notice of increase.* All public utilities, except those exempted from rate regulation by section 476.1, 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 and prior to the time the application for the increase is filed with the board. Public utilities exempted from rate regulation by section 476.1 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 10.

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 permitted.* 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 the board.

9. *Rate levels for telephone utilities.* The board may approve a schedule of rate levels for any regulated service provided by a utility providing communication services.

10. *Temporary authority.* Upon the request of a public utility, the board shall, when required by this subsection, grant the public utility temporary authority to place in effect any or all of the suspended rates, charges, schedules or regulations by filing with the board a bond or other undertaking approved by the board conditioned upon the refund in a manner to be prescribed by the board of any amounts collected in excess of the amounts which would have been collected under rates, charges, schedules or regulations finally approved by the board. In determining that portion of the new or changed rates, charges, schedules or regulations to be placed in effect prior to a final decision, the board shall apply previously established regulatory principles and shall, at a minimum, permit rates and charges which will allow the utility the opportunity to earn a return on common stock equity equal to that which the board held reasonable and just in the most recent rate case involving the same utility or the same type of utility service, provided that if the most recent final decision of the board in an applicable rate case was rendered more than twelve months prior to the date of filing of the request for temporary rates, the board shall in addition consider financial market data that is filed or that is otherwise available to the board and shall adjust the rate of return on common stock equity that was approved in that decision upward or downward as necessary to reflect current conditions. The board shall render a decision on a request for temporary authority within ninety days after the date of filing of the request. The decision shall be effective immediately. 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 those portions that were approved by the board on a temporary basis shall be deemed finally approved by the board and the utility may place them into effect on a permanent basis, and the utility also may place into effect subject to refund and until the final decision of the board any portion of the suspended rates, charges, schedules or regulations not previously approved on a temporary basis by filing with the board a bond or other undertaking approved by the board.

A public utility may choose to place in effect temporary rates, charges, schedules, or regulations without board review ten days after the filing under this section. If the utility chooses to place such rates, charges, schedules, or regulations in effect without board review, 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 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.

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.

11. *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.

12. *Natural gas 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 natural gas procurement and contracting practices. The natural gas supply and cost review shall be conducted as a contested case pursuant to chapter 17A.

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.

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.

13. *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.

14. *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, 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.

15. 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.

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

a. Gas and electric utilities required to be rate-regulated under this chapter shall file energy efficiency plans with the board. An energy efficiency plan and budget shall include a range of 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 filed with the board.

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 department of natural resources 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.

c. The board shall conduct contested case proceedings for review of energy efficiency plans and budgets filed by gas and electric utilities required to be rate-regulated under this chapter. 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 energy efficiency plan or budget, the reviewing court shall not order a stay. Whenever a request to modify an approved plan or budget is filed subsequently by the office of consumer advocate or 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 and budgets shall be in a manner prescribed by the board.

e. 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 approved by the board, including amounts for a plan approved prior to July 1, 1996, in a contested case proceeding conducted pursuant to paragraph "c". 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 plan and budget. If a utility is not taking all reasonable actions to cost-effectively implement an approved energy efficiency 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. The utility shall not represent energy efficiency in customer billings as a separate cost or expense unless the board otherwise approves.

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.

17. *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.

18. *Energy efficiency program financing.* The board may require each rate-regulated gas or electric public utility to offer qualified customers the opportunity to enter into an agreement for the amount of moneys reasonably necessary to finance cost-effective energy efficiency improvements to the qualified customers' residential dwellings or businesses.

19. *Allocation of replacement tax costs.* The costs of the replacement tax imposed pursuant to chapter 437A 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 cost of the replacement taxes imposed by chapter 437A 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.

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.

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.

20. *Replacement tax study committee.* On or before July 1, 2000, the utilities board, in consultation with the department of revenue, shall initiate and coordinate the establishment of a replacement tax study committee and provide staffing assistance to the committee. It is the intent of the general assembly that the committee include representatives of the utilities board, department of revenue, department of management, investor-owned utilities, municipal utilities, cooperative utilities, local governments, major customer classes, and other stakeholders.

The committee shall study the effects of the replacement tax on both restructuring and the development of competition in the gas and electric industries in this state. The board shall report to the general assembly by January 1 of each year through 2003, the results of the study, and the committee's recommendations as to whether the replacement tax, in its then present form, should be continued, whether a different form of taxation of electric and gas utilities should be adopted in order to allow free and fair competition in the electric and gas industries, and fair competitive prices for all classes of consumers, whether a different basis for determination of the generation, transmission, and delivery taxes should be adopted or whether the relative share of the total replacement tax burden imposed on each of the generation, transmission, and delivery functions should be modified in order to allow free and fair competition in the electric and gas industries, and fair competitive prices for all classes of consumers, and whether the replacement tax in its then present form, appropriately accounts for the decline in value of electric power generating plants. The replacement tax study committee shall reconvene by January 1, 2006, to further study these same issues, and the board shall report the results of the study and the committee's recommendations to the general assembly by January 1, 2008.

Upon recommendation of the committee, the board may contract for services necessary to the implementation of this subsection with persons who are not state employees, including, but not limited to, facilitators, consultants, and other experts required to assist the committee. The cost of contracted services shall not be paid from appropriated funds, but shall be assessed to entities paying replacement tax pursuant to chapter 437A, subchapter II, pro rata, based on the amount of tax paid.

21. *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.

22. *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 not 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.

[C66, 71, 73, 75, § 490A.6; C77, 79, 81, § 476.6; 81 Acts, ch 156, § 6, 9, ch 157, § 13; 82 Acts, ch 1100, § 23]

83 Acts, ch 127, § 1926, 51; 84 Acts, ch 1023, § 1; 87 Acts, ch 21, § 2; 89 Acts, ch 58, § 1; 89 Acts, ch 148, § 1; 89 Acts, ch 321, § 29; 90 Acts, ch 1103, §1; 90 Acts, ch 1252, §2327; 91 Acts, ch 253, § 22; 93 Acts, ch 68, §1; 96 Acts, ch 1196, § 8, 9; 98 Acts, ch 1013, §1; 98 Acts, ch 1148, §2, 9; 98 Acts, ch 1194, §37, 40; 2001 Acts, 1st Ex, ch 4, §10, 36; 2002 Acts, ch 1162, §70, 71; 2003 Acts, ch 126, §2, 3; 2003 Acts, ch 145, §286; 2004 Acts, ch 1006, §1; 2006 Acts, ch 1030, §51; 2007 Acts, ch 168, §16, 18