

**PENNSYLVANIA
PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION
Harrisburg, PA 17120**

**Diversity Policy Statement Revision of
52 Pa. Code §§ 69.801-69.809**

**Public Meeting held February 1, 2024
3038267-LAW
Docket No. M-2023-3038267**

STATEMENT OF COMMISSIONER KATHRYN L. ZERFUSS

Before the Commission today are the final amendments to our Diversity Policy Statement, 52 Pa. Code §§ 69.801-69.809. I would like to thank the interested parties that filed comments and letters concerning these amendments as well as our Law Bureau for the work involved in finalizing these amendments. These amendments ensure that the Policy Statement is consistent with our recent Diversity Reporting Regulations, 52 Pa. Code §§ 51.11-51.13.¹

As you may know, the Diversity Policy Statement retains important provisions that recommend major jurisdictional electric, natural gas, water and wastewater utilities, and major telecommunications utilities incorporate diversity into their business strategies in relation to their employment practices and the procurement of goods and services. These Diversity Policy Statement provisions, coupled with our Diversity Reporting Regulations, provide this Commission with valuable insight into the efforts utilities are making to attract the labor force, including the labor force generated through contracts and subcontracts, that is essential to providing safe, reasonable, efficient, and reliable service.

I would like to reiterate previous comments I have made in this proceeding that emphasize how utilities' diversity programs impact and strengthen their relationships with the customers that live and work in their communities and, ultimately, impact the way customers are served. I, again, commend the utilities for filing their first annual diversity reports last year, and I encourage them to continue with their diversity efforts and look forward to receiving their reports this year.

The Commonwealth has made some indelible marks by creating programs and opportunities to further develop a diverse workforce in Pennsylvania, such as the creation of the

¹ On April 14, 2022, the Commission voted to adopt regulations requiring regular reporting on diversity programs and efforts by major jurisdictional utilities providing electric, natural gas, water, and wastewater services. The Diversity Reporting Regulations were enacted upon publication in the Pennsylvania Bulletin, at 52 Pa. B. 5934, on September 17, 2022.

Commonwealth Workforce Transformation Program² and the Governor’s Executive Order 2023-18.³ I appreciate the Commonwealth’s recent diversity and workforce equity actions, and I am excited for the Commission to continue engaging in actions that grow our diverse workforce here, as well as our accompanying workforce development efforts. I have been engaging in conversations with the Commonwealth’s Chief Diversity Officer to see how this Commission can ensure that we are moving the needle to attract diversity of thought and diversity of perspective and to celebrate and support peoples’ differences. It is critical for us to be self-aware and mindful of our actions so that we can be an employer of choice and attract and maintain a strong workforce to ensure that Pennsylvania residents and businesses are receiving safe, reasonable, efficient, and reliable utility service.

DATE: February 1, 2024



Kathryn L. Zerfuss, Commissioner

² The Commonwealth Workforce Transformation Program aims to assist Pennsylvania in growing its diverse workforce by using the federal investments of the federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act of 2021, Pub. L. 117-169 (IIJA), and the federal Inflation Reduction Act of 2022, Pub. L. 117-169 (IRA), to create “good jobs with family-sustaining wages and equitable pathways to these good jobs for workers from all communities.” Executive Order 2023-17.

³ Executive Order 2023-18 opens up new opportunities for small businesses and small diverse businesses to compete for state contracts by making the state procurement process more accessible and taking proactive steps and outreach to help these businesses grow and succeed.