

Maryland Public Service Commission Encouraged to Adopt Procurement Standards

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Washington, DC (**CapitalWirePR**) July 29, 2008-- Testifying before the Maryland Public Service Commission at a recent Public Hearing, Secretary Luwanda Jenkins, of the Governor's Office of Minority Affairs, highlighted Maryland's efforts to grow state procurements with certified small businesses as well as women and minority business enterprises. Governor Martin O'Malley's Secretary for Minority Affairs went on to suggest the Commission also adopt a procurement goal of 25% from small and diversity business enterprises.

In her testimony, Secretary Jenkins said, "I certainly wanted to give Commissioner Williams our support as he moves forward with this initiative. I think it's ideal to have what we do in the public sector influence what happens in the private sector, because that's really the benefit of public sector MBE programs. It's one thing to have public policy impact state spending and spending at the local level. But to the extent that you can inspire and encourage with some level of enforcement the same type of behavior in the public sector really speaks for the economic benefit of why you have MBE programs operating in states like Maryland."

The Maryland Public Service Commission is currently considering an order setting its own procurement standards for regulated utilities serving Maryland's rate paying residents and customers.

"Driving business opportunities to small, disadvantaged and minority businesses has resulted in expanded businesses, more reliable services and higher quality suppliers for utilities in California. That environment has increased competitive pricing, enhanced innovations, and built stronger communities across our state. The rate payers are winners, but the biggest winner has been our state's economic competitiveness. I applaud Maryland's PSC for examining the diversity elements in its regulated utilities' purchases and programs. The closer the correlation between diversity procurement and the rate payer's diversity population, the better. I would encourage the Maryland PSC to seriously consider adopting the discussed goal of 25%," said Michael Peevey [Chairman, California Public Utility Commission] Co-Chair of the National Utilities Diversity Council.

The last U.S. Census shows Maryland with an ethnic population of over 40% yet that group exercises ownership of only 24.5% of businesses in the state. The census also shows that women comprise 52% of the residents, but just over 30% of the businesses are owned by women.

About NUDC: The National Utilities Diversity Council Inc. is a not for profit, 501-c-3 partner to the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners, one of the nation's oldest utility industry advocacy organizations. For more information visit www.nudc.biz.

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