



City of Palm Springs

Christy Holstege, Mayor

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March 16, 2021

The Honorable Marybel Batjer
California Public Utilities Commission
505 Van Ness Avenue
San Francisco, CA 94102

RE: Establishing General Order 156 Procurement Goal At Least 1.5% for LGBT Business Enterprises

Dear President Batjer:

I am writing to urge you and your fellow Commissioner at the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) to set the procurement goal for business enterprises owned by a person who is lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender (LGBT) at 1.5% or higher. Anything less treats the LGBT community like a third-class citizen.

More than 30 years ago, the California Legislature established the Utility Supplier Diversity Program to promote diversity by creating a more inclusive and equitable system. At the inception of the program, less than ten percent of utility procurement spending went to diverse suppliers. The CPUC promoted diversity and encouraged greater economic opportunities for everyone, as well as establishing goals for investor-owned utilities to meet. As a result, more than 35% of utility procurement today goes to women, minority, or disabled veteran-owned businesses.

In 2014, then-Governor Jerry Brown signed into law Assembly Bill 1678 (Gordon), which expanded the Utility Supplier Diversity Program at the CPUC to include LGBT business enterprises. The law intended to establish equal footing for LGBT businesses with other minority-owned businesses.

Since the passage of the law, the CPUC has yet to establish an LGBT procurement goal for the investor-owned utilities. Nearly seven years have passed and three CPUC

Presidents have sat in your chair. In fact, the entire make-up of the commission has changed since the law was passed. The delay in action needs to stop.

To make matters worse, the last discussion on the subject appears that the CPUC is planning on a goal of 0.5 percent. This proposal is laughable. A goal is something to strive for and achieve. The 0.5 percent is something the program should already achieve, especially for an identified community with known discrimination.

The goal should be representative of the LGBT community's impact on the state. According to UCLA's Williams Institute, California's LGBT community represents more than five percent of the State population and well above the national average. Yet, the current CPUC proposal equates to less than a tenth of the LGBT population percentage.

The lowest procurement goal is for any other group in the Utility Supplier Diversity Program is 1.5 percent. Establishing a percentage less than the lowest goal currently offered is stating that CPUC views the LGBT community as less than all the other groups.

The CPUC needs to do better by the LGBT community. Aspirational goals need to be set and encouraged. That starts by setting a Utility Supplier Diversity goal of at least 1.5 percent for the LGBT community.

Thank you for your consideration of this issue. If you have any questions, I can be reached via email Christy.holstege@palmsspringsca.gov or by contacting my office at 760-322-8385.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Christy Holstege". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Christy Holstege, Mayor
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