



United States Senate

June 9, 2021

The Honorable Marybel Batjer, President
The Honorable Clifford Rechtschaffen, Assigned Commissioner
California Public Utilities Commission
505 Van Ness Avenue
San Francisco, CA 94102

By email to: Marybel.Batjer@cpuc.ca.gov
Cliff.Rechtschaffen@cpuc.ca.gov

RE: Rulemaking 21-03-010 -- LGBT Business Enterprises Opportunities

Dear President Batjer and Commissioner Rechtschaffen:

I commend the Commission for taking action in the current rulemaking proceeding to establish equal footing for LGBT businesses with other minority-owned businesses in the Commission's supplier diversity procurement program under General Order 156.

With over fifty years of public service, I have personally witnessed the discrimination the LGBT community has faced. While our nation has made significant strides, inequality still exists. Last year, I had to push back on the Trump Administration when they removed "sexual orientation" from its guidelines regarding workplace discrimination. All people should have confidence that their local, state, and federal governments are working to protect – not undermine – their rights.

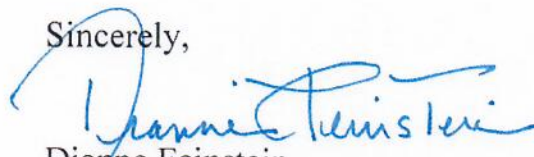
When dealing with prior inequality issues, the Commission's Supplier Diversity program adopted an aspirational approach for businesses owned by minorities, women and disabled veterans. The result of these commendable efforts by the Commission has been that procurement moved from less than 10 percent contracting for diverse businesses to more than 33 percent contacting procurement last year. By promoting diversity, there are more economic opportunities for everyone, and more competition among suppliers.

The Commission's Supplier Diversity Program under General Order 156 has had a tremendous, positive influence nationwide since it was launched in 1986. Originally encompassing minority-owned business enterprises, the program has expanded to include women and disabled veterans.

Under legislation adopted in 2014 (AB 1678), the program now is open to LGBT-owned business enterprises. By establishing aspirational goals for LGBT-owned business enterprises in the current rulemaking proceeding, the Commission will set a mark for the rest of the nation to follow. Accordingly, the aspirational goal should be set at a level that will have a positive impact on public utility industry contracting with the State's LGBT community.

Thank you for your consideration of this vital issue. If you have any questions, please contact my State Director Jim Lazarus at (415) 393-0707.

Sincerely,



Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator

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