



March 29, 2021

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

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

Dear President Batjer:

As Mayor Pro Tem, I am personally committed to making El Cerrito an inclusive city representing all of our diverse communities that make my city special. That is why I was encouraged to learn that the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) was expanding its supplier diversity procurement goals to include business enterprises owned by a person who is lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender (LGBT). I quickly transitioned to disappointment when I learned that the Commission is considering a joint utility company proposal to establish a procurement goal of only 0.5% for LGBT-owned businesses.

While I am not surprised that some utilities would offer such a meager goal, it is insulting to the LGBTQ community and the Commission's supplier diversity program. More than 30 years ago, the Utility Supplier Diversity Program was established 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. By promoting diversity and encouraging more significant economic opportunities for everyone, more than one-third 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.

After seven years, the Commission finally has the rulemaking question before them. However, the joint utility proposal of a 0.5 percent planning goal for LGBT businesses is not forward-thinking and is not representative of the LGBT community's impact. According to the National LGBT Chamber of Commerce, LGBTQ businesses contribute more than \$1.7 trillion to the nation's economy.

These accomplishments are possible, despite the biases within many industry sectors that create barriers to entry for LGBTQ business owners.

The Supplier Diversity Program is designed to break down those walls and create inclusion within the utility sector. Unfortunately, several utility companies are not even trying. Nearly one-third of all utilities have yet to procure even a single LBGT contract over the past five years. These utilities are failing to respond without a meaningful goal.

That is why I am personally urging the Commission to deny the joint utilities paltry 0.5 percent goal and establish something more reflective of LGBT community's impact within California.

By establishing an aspirational goal, the Commission can provide equity for the LGBT community while spurring economic growth throughout our great state. Thank you for your consideration of this vital issue. If you have any questions, please contact me at [gquinto@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us](mailto:gquinto@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us).

Sincerely,



Gabriel Quinto  
El Cerrito Mayor Pro Tem  
Cal Cities LGBTQ President