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**CONTACT:** Tori Leonard  
410-767-8054  
443-829-9111 (c)  
[tori.leonard@maryland.gov](mailto:tori.leonard@maryland.gov)



**For Immediate Release**

## **Maryland Utility Companies Extend Gains in Diverse Business Procurement**

*Annual Hearing will also Examine Impacts of COVID-19 on Minority-, Women-owned Businesses*

(BALTIMORE, MD-July 21, 2020) – For the second year in a row, Maryland utility companies exceeded the Maryland Public Service Commission's supplier diversity goals, reaching nearly 30 percent and spending almost \$1.1 billion on goods and services from diverse contractors. On July 28, 2020, the Commission will hold its annual hearing for utilities to report on their spending with diverse businesses. The hearing, which will be held virtually, will begin at 10 a.m.

The proceeding will review the 2019 diverse supplier spend by participating companies, which include electric, natural gas, transportation and telecommunication providers. This year's hearing will also examine the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, in particular on minority- and women-owned businesses.

Written comments on this matter may be submitted electronically or by first-class mail by July 31, 2020. Comments submitted electronically must be submitted through the Commission's Public Comment Dropbox, instructions for which can be found on the Commission's website: <https://www.psc.state.md.us/make-a-public-comment/>

The Commission's [\*Public Conference 52 on Supplier Diversity \(PC 52\)\*](#) supports Maryland's commitment to economic development by providing women-, minority- and service-disabled veteran-owned businesses, as well as not-for-profit organizations, with greater opportunities to compete for contracts and subcontracts with public utilities. Last year, the Commission added dollars spent with LGBTQ- and veteran-owned businesses to count toward the goal.

Sixteen companies reported their diverse spend for the 2019 calendar year. Of the 16, five met or exceeded the 25 percent goal in 2019:

- Baltimore Gas & Electric Company (41.86% -- \$437.18 million diverse spend)
- Association of Maryland Pilots (40.77% -- \$407,107 diverse spend)
- Potomac Electric Power Company (37.42% -- \$221.77 million diverse spend)
- Potomac Edison Company (33.44% -- \$26.87 million diverse spend)
- AT&T (27.03% -- \$18.11 million diverse spend)

In addition to utility representatives and the Commission's Staff, presenters at the July 28 hearing will include:

Jimmy Rhee, *Secretary, Governor's Office of Small, Minority & Women Business Affairs*

Hon. Dereck Davis, *Chairman, Economic Matters Committee, Maryland House of Delegates*

Sharon Pinder, *President and CEO, Capital Region Minority Supplier Development Council*

Laurie Dowling, *Executive Director, National Utility Diversity Council*

Dionne Joyner Weems, *Founder and CEO, Audacity Group*

Tom Dvorak, *President, Dvorak, LLC*

Tony Hill, *Managing Partner, Edwards & Hill Office Furniture*

The hearing will be livestreamed on the Maryland PSC's YouTube channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/c/MarylandPSC>

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**About the Public Service Commission:**

*The Maryland Public Service Commission regulates electric and gas utilities and suppliers, telephone companies (land lines), certain water and sewer companies, passenger motor vehicle carriers for hire (sedans, limousines, buses, Uber, Lyft), taxicab companies (in Baltimore City and County, Charles County, Cumberland and Hagerstown) and bay pilot rates.*

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WILLIAM DONALD SCHAEFER TOWER · 6 ST. PAUL STREET · BALTIMORE, MARYLAND 21202-6806

410-767-8000

Toll Free: 1-800-492-0474

FAX: 410-333-6495

MDRS: 1-800-735-2258 (TTY/Voice)

Website: [www.psc.state.md.us](http://www.psc.state.md.us)