

**Introductory Remarks of Wayne E. Gardner
Nominee to the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission
Before the Senate Consumer Protection & Professional Licensure Committee
June 27, 2008**

Chairman Tomlinson, Chair Boscola and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I am honored that Governor Rendell nominated me to serve on the Public Utility Commission. And I thank Senate Leadership and all members of the Senate for their consideration.

I am an alternative energy entrepreneur, a former utility executive, a utility customer, and someone who knows how to get things done and who pushes to get things done.

For the past two-and-a-half-years, I have been developing wind power projects in South Africa. Before that, I served as vice president and general manager of Franklin Fuel Cells Inc., an alternative energy technology company, whose patented technology was spun out of the University of Pennsylvania. I have served as a management consultant and entrepreneur with expertise in power generation, renewable and clean energy technologies, and demand response/demand-side management systems.

Moving up through the ranks during a 20-plus-year career at PECO Energy Company, I ultimately served in managerial capacities, including venture capital investments, strategy and new business development, customer service, and power plant operations.

I consider my most important qualification to be that I am a Pennsylvania utility customer. The PUC has a certain responsibility to ensure our utilities remain viable and attractive businesses and employers, but the PUC has an even bigger role to preserve and protect the health and welfare of all of the citizens of this Commonwealth, including its corporate citizens.

As I told the Governor and Members of the Senate, I accepted this nomination because I want to get things done for the people of Pennsylvania. If confirmed, I will be an independent thinker. I will focus on price competitiveness, security of supply, and customer service for the consumers and utilities of the Commonwealth, as well as utility reliability, strong consumer protections and other policies as developed by the legislature.

From elected officials to my neighbors, everyone is talking to me about utility prices. People are paying more at the gas pump and more at the grocery store. Then, they read that natural gas prices will increase, that rate caps will soon expire, and that their electric bills, too, could go up. Commercial and industrial customers are trying to make some decisions, sometimes hard decisions, about their budgets. The Commission has identified these issues as high-priority concerns. The Governor has proposed his energy strategy. And the General Assembly is in the midst of a special session on energy. If confirmed, I will roll up my sleeves to help solve these emerging energy issues.

The mission of the PUC is to balance the needs of consumers and utilities to ensure safe and reliable utility service at reasonable rates; protect the public interest; educate consumers to make independent and informed utility choices; further economic development; and foster new technologies and competitive markets in an environmentally sound manner. This is a serious job. In fact, this is a very serious job.

It takes every Commissioner and every expert on staff to fulfill this mission and to get this job done. If confirmed, I will be highly visible throughout the Commission and work with all of its employees. And I will welcome all points of view.

Cooperation with all other state agencies, such as the Department of Public Welfare, the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency, the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation, and the Department of Environmental Protection, is critical to accomplishing the PUC's mission.

And cooperation and effective communication among the Commission, the industry, consumer advocates and other government officials is essential if we are to meet the challenges ahead.

I promise to be accessible to you and to every Member of the General Assembly, and to provide you with input as requested on legislative initiatives.

It is my honor to be nominated and considered for confirmation to this Commission. And it would be an honor to sit on the Commission beside Vice Chairman Cawley, Commissioner Christy and Commissioner Pizzigrilli. This Commonwealth is better for the wealth of experience these public servants provide to the PUC. I also look forward to the opportunity to work with my fellow nominee Robert Powelson. I believe we can effectively and efficiently work together on the utility challenges facing this Commonwealth.

Thank you again for the opportunity to appear before you today and for your consideration of my nomination to the Commission. I would be happy to answer your questions.