

John F. Coleman
Remarks Before the Senate Consumer Protection
& Professional Licensure Committee
Wednesday, June 9, 2010

Good morning, Chairman Tomlinson and members of the committee. Let me begin by thanking you for taking time from your busy schedules to meet with me as you consider my nomination to serve as a Commissioner of the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission.

First, I would like to thank Governor Rendell for nominating me to serve on the Public Utility Commission. I am also grateful to Senate Pro Tempore Scarnati and Majority Leader Pileggi for their support. I would also like to take a moment to thank Senator Corman for his kind words and, perhaps more importantly, for his confidence in me as I seek confirmation as a Public Utility Commissioner. I have worked with Senator Corman for more than a decade on a variety of community and economic development projects that in the aggregate total more than \$100 million of investment and have resulted in the creation of thousands of family-sustaining jobs in Central Pennsylvania. Senator Corman is regarded as an economic development champion, and I am honored and humbled that he is my advocate here today.

It is an honor to come before you today. I am here today because I believe that I possess the leadership qualities to be an effective PUC Commissioner. I am a Saint Francis University graduate with a degree in Business Management. I received my Economic Development Professional certification from the National Development Council in 1999 and graduated from the United States Chamber of Commerce Institute of Organizational Management in 2003. For the past 11 years, I have served as the President and Chief Executive Officer of the Chamber of Business and Industry of Centre County which, under my leadership, has become the largest business membership organization in Central Pennsylvania. The Chamber has been recognized regionally and nationally for its accomplishments. Most recently, the Chamber and I were selected as the Pennsylvania Business Central's Top 100 Organizations and Individuals for 2009.

Of course, the reason that I am here today is to instill your confidence in me as I seek confirmation as a Public Utility Commissioner. I believe that the mission of the PUC to balance the needs of consumers and utilities to ensure safe and reliable utility service at reasonable rates has never been more significant than it is today. With the pressures of moving to competitive electricity markets, the implementation of Act 129 and Act 183, along with aging utility infrastructure, the challenges before the PUC could not be greater. In fact, some have described these events as the PUC's "perfect storm." It is my view that these are events that define leaders: individuals who see adversity as an opportunity not an impediment, individuals who understand the circumstances and effectively use the resources at their disposal to plot the correct course. I believe that I am that leader.

An integral component of the PUC's mission is to protect the public interest and to educate consumers to make independent and informed utility decisions. I believe that how we process and disseminate information will be a significant measurement of our organizational effectiveness. In my view, the PUC has effectively used technology, as well as traditional mediums in disseminating information to consumers. It is evident that these outreach initiatives must continue to be a priority of the PUC.

As an economic development professional for nearly three decades, I wish to affirm the importance and significance of the PUC's mission of furthering economic development and fostering new technologies and competitive markets in an environmentally sound manner. In my view, utility capacity, reliable costs, and a clear, predictable regulatory environment are essential to attracting new investment and employment to the Commonwealth. By continuing to effectively implement its mission, the PUC will ensure smooth waters in this "perfect storm."

Let me close by saying that it would be an honor to serve with Chairman Cawley, Vice Chairman Christy, Commissioner Gardner and Commissioner Powelson. As one of five independent Commissioners, I believe that I can make a positive contribution to the good work of the PUC.

Again, allow me to thank you for this opportunity to appear before you today, and I welcome your questions.