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GOVERNMENT RELATIONS UPDATE

From Milliron & Goodman Government Relations, LLC.

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Pennsylvania House Republican Leaders Comment on FY 2020-21 Budget

The Pennsylvania House of Representatives concluded the Fiscal Year 2020-21 budget process on November 20, 2020 with passage of a supplemental appropriation package that funds state government and related operations for the remaining seven months of the fiscal year.

The total appropriation for the fiscal year is \$35.5 billion with \$32.1 billion in state funds and \$3.4 billion in federal stimulus dollars.

On the passage of the budget, Pennsylvania House Republican Caucus leaders made the following statements:

Pennsylvania Speaker of the House Bryan Cutler (R-Lancaster): "Every Pennsylvanian has had to make sacrifices this year, and state government should be no different," Cutler said. "This budget doesn't just hold the line on spending but reduces total spending by hundreds of millions of dollars. It also avoids any tax increases and does not rely on borrowing."

Pennsylvania House Majority Leader Kerry Benninghoff (R-Centre/Mifflin): "When we passed our first appropriation five months ago, it was nearly inconceivable that we could have

achieved a full-year spending plan absent tax increases, public borrowing or substantial cuts. Accomplishing such a feat now is a testament to the perseverance of the people of Pennsylvania and the dedication of the members of the Pennsylvania General Assembly to work for the benefit of all Pennsylvanians.

"Despite these unprecedented times, I am proud to see Republicans and Democrats in the Legislature come together with the administration to craft a spending plan that puts the people of Pennsylvania first and funds the core functions of government without increasing taxes or relying on public borrowing.

"Our total spending plan ensures Pennsylvania's schools remain fully funded, our public health and community safety agencies have the resources they need to keep people safe during this global pandemic, and our most vulnerable populations remain protected."

House Appropriations Committee Majority Chairman Stan Saylor (R-York): "This is a responsible budget that takes into account the fiscal realities that Pennsylvania is facing," said Saylor. "With this budget, we can keep our schools and core government functions operating while respecting taxpayers by reducing other expenditures. The budget is balanced without any new or increased taxes and without any borrowing, which is important to taxpayers. Should Congress and the president decide to send additional federal funds to Pennsylvania, we pledge to work

expeditiously to drive out additional aid to Pennsylvanians struggling from the COVID-19 pandemic, including our small business owners."

Source: Speaker Cutler Press Release, 11/20/2020

Senate Approves Final Fiscal Year 2020-21 Budget

On November 20, 2020, the state Senate gave final approval to a supplemental spending bill – completing the state budget for Fiscal Year 2020-21 – and sent the measure to the Governor's desk, according to State Senator Bob Mensch.

Passage of **Senate Bill 1350**

<https://www.legis.state.pa.us/cfdocs/billInfo/billInfo.cfm?sYear=2019&sInd=0&body=S&type=B&bn=1350> finalizes the state spending plan for the current fiscal year (July 1, 2020 to June 30, 2021) that was initiated with the enactment of a five-month interim budget (**Act 1A – House Bill 2387** <https://www.legis.state.pa.us/cfdocs/legis/li/uconsC heck.cfm?yr=2020&sessInd=0&act=1A>) on May 29.

Overcoming the severe impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on Pennsylvania's economy, the final \$35.5 billion FY 2020-21 budget is balanced without the need for tax or fee increases or debt using a combination of current state revenues and resources and federal stimulus funding.

While the interim spending plan approved in May provided five months of funding for most state services and programs, it made a full-year financial commitment for education at all levels and for a variety of food security programs. Funding for basic education, special education, early education and higher education is maintained in the final spending plan at the same level as Fiscal Year 2019-20.

Spending in the final Fiscal Year 2020-21 state budget includes General Fund appropriations of \$32.1 billion and an additional \$3.4 billion in federal stimulus funds (\$2.1 billion Federal Medical Assistance Percentage (FMAP) and \$1.3 billion federal CARES funds).

After adjusting for supplemental spending that should have been in FY 2019-20, overall state spending in the final FY 2020-21 budget – including federal stimulus funds – is down more than \$760 million (2.1 percent) from FY 2019-20.

The final budget includes \$200 million to provide school property tax relief to replace the revenues those districts lost by the closure of Pennsylvania's casinos during the pandemic shutdown.

Source: Sen. Mensch Press Release, 11/20/2020

Cutler Calls on Wolf to Sign COVID-19 Protection Bill

Speaker of the House Bryan Cutler (R-Lancaster) issued the following statement upon the passage of **House Bill 1737** <https://www.legis.state.pa.us/cfdocs/billInfo/billInfo.cfm?sYear=2019&sInd=0&body=H&type=B&bn=1737>, which would provide liability protections for Pennsylvanians following state mitigation orders.

"Every sector of our economy has been forced to find a new way to operate due to the pandemic. However, our schools, employers and community leaders should not have to fear legal repercussions for following the governor's orders.

"House Bill 1737 provides necessary protections for Pennsylvanians willing to lead us through this difficult time. Whether it's by keeping their businesses operating under safe conditions so workers can continue to provide for their families, or teachers and child care providers striving to give our children a quality education, or companies answering the call to provide life-saving personal protective equipment. We owe the millions of Pennsylvanians who are leading these efforts our sincerest appreciation. Gov. Wolf can show his by signing this bill into law."

Source: Speaker Bryan Cutler Press Release, 11/20/2020

Pennsylvania's Unemployment Rate at 7.3 Percent in October

Total nonfarm jobs up 18,800 over the month

On November 20, 2020, the Pennsylvania Department of Labor & Industry (L&I) released its employment situation report for October 2020.

Pennsylvania's unemployment rate was down 1.0 percentage point over the month to 7.3 percent in October. The national rate also fell one percentage point from its September level to 6.9 percent. The commonwealth's unemployment rate was 2.7 percentage points above the October 2019 level while the national rate was up 3.3 points over the year.

Pennsylvania's civilian labor force decreased 75,000 over the month due to declines in both employment (the number of residents working) and unemployment (those who are jobless and looking for work).

Pennsylvania's total nonfarm jobs were up 18,800 over the month to 5,622,100 in October. Jobs increased in 8 of the 11 industry supersectors. The largest monthly volume gain was in trade, transportation, and utilities, up 7,300 jobs.

Over the past six months, Pennsylvania has recovered 56.3% of the total nonfarm jobs lost in March and April.

Over the year, total nonfarm jobs in Pennsylvania were down 455,900 (-7.5%) with declines in 10 of the 11 supersectors. The largest 12-month change among supersectors was a decline of 142,200 jobs in leisure & hospitality. Additional information is available on the L&I website at www.dli.pa.gov.

Note: The above data are seasonally adjusted. Seasonally adjusted data provide the most valid month-to-month comparison.

Source: PA Department of Labor & Industry,
11/20/2020

Mizgorski Transportation Bill Heads to Governor's Desk

Legislation authored by Rep. Lori Mizgorski (R-Allegheny) to help improve safety on the Commonwealth's roadways is now awaiting the governor's signature to become law.

The bill would improve safety by placing more stringent incident reporting requirements on holders of commercial driver licenses (CDL). It was also amended to expand driving opportunities for people with disabilities and assist homeless citizens by offering free state IDs.

"I first introduced this bill after learning of a tractor trailer driver who caused two fatal accidents within six months. In July of 2018, the first fatal accident occurred on Interstate 81 in Lebanon County. By the time this individual was convicted in that case, he had already caused a second fatal accident in Ohio," Mizgorski said. "We need to make sure the employers of CDL holders are promptly informed when one of their drivers is cited for breaking the law."

House Bill 2296

<https://www.legis.state.pa.us/cfdocs/billinfo/billinfo.cfm?year=2019&sind=0&body=H&type=B&BN=2296> would require that a driver of a commercial motor vehicle who is cited, arrested or charged with violating a federal or state law or local ordinance relating to motor vehicle traffic control, other than a parking violation, must notify his or her employer in writing within 30 days of the date of receiving the citation or being arrested or officially charged.

"In addition to improving the safety of our roadways, the bill would make Pennsylvanians who have certain vision challenges eligible for a learner's permit and driver's license, and it would provide an opportunity to help our homeless citizens get back on their feet by providing them with a free Pennsylvania ID card," Mizgorski said.

“I am proud of the good this legislation will do for people across the Commonwealth.”

Specifically, the bill would establish a procedure for PennDOT to issue a bioptic telescope learner’s permit or driver’s license to people who meet specific visual acuity requirements and instruction in using a bioptic telescope. Bioptic driving is a method of driving that uses both the patient’s general vision in combination with intermittent spotting through a small telescopic system that improves the sharpness of the patient’s far vision. Pennsylvania would join 28 other states in offering a bioptic telescope license.

Additionally, the bill would codify mandatory CDL training requirements to comply with federal regulations, disqualify a CDL holder convicted of human trafficking and allow PennDOT to provide free state-issued ID cards to homeless citizens. Those applying for the free ID would still have to meet all proof of identification requirements.

Source: Rep. Mizgorski Press Release, 11/19/2020

Quinn Bill to Ensure Local Emergency Services Have Pipeline Response Plans Heads to Governor’s Desk

Rep. Chris Quinn’s (R-Delaware) bill that would require pipeline companies carrying natural gas liquids through highly populated areas provide emergency response plans to local emergency management providers passed unanimously in the Senate on Thursday and now awaits Gov. Tom Wolf’s signature to become law.

“I am pleased that the Senate has moved this critical bill forward,” Quinn said. “The broad bipartisan support shows this bill is clearly aimed at safety and protecting Pennsylvanians, an issue we all agree is a priority.”

House Bill 2293

<https://www.legis.state.pa.us/cfdocs/billInfo/billInfo.cfm?sYear=2019&sInd=0&body=H&type=B&bn=2293> would require a pipeline operator to provide

emergency response plans upon request to the secretary of the Public Utility Commission, the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency and the Emergency Management Director for each county where the pipeline runs through a densely populated area. The unanimous passage in the Senate follows a unanimous vote in the House six months ago.

“Communication is critical for any response, especially when public safety is at risk,” Quinn said. “Too often communication between pipeline operators and our local emergency management professionals breaks down, so this crucial legislation will ensure that everyone has the information they need to properly respond should an issue arise. Pipelines traverse through very populated areas of Delaware County and ensuring public safety in those areas must be our top priority.”

The bill was held in the Senate due to an amendment placed on the bill by Sen. Katie Muth (D-Montgomery/Chester/Berks). Her amendment would have required the emergency plans to be submitted regardless of a request and made pipeline operators liable of costs associated with an incident, including evacuation costs. The Senate could not reach an agreement on Muth’s amendment and she eventually removed it to enable passage of the bill.

“Sen. Muth’s amendment would have strengthened my bill and I support it,” Quinn said. “Unfortunately, the legislative process is often a difficult one and we needed to get something passed to better the current situation. I appreciate Sen. Muth’s efforts and her cooperation on this matter.”

Since there are serious security concerns around pipelines, the bill would ensure all officials who review the response plan adhere to the Public Utility Confidential Security Information Disclosure Protection Act. Any pipeline operators who do not comply with the proposed law would be subject to enforcement action from the Public Utility Commission.

“This bill is a great step to ensuring our emergency responders know the best approach to dealing with an issue concerning our existing pipeline infrastructure,” Quinn said. “While there is

more we can do to ensure safety, this is a clear move in the right direction.”

Gov. Wolf will now have 10 days to decide whether to sign or veto the bill.

“Given the support on both sides of the aisle for this legislation, I am hopeful that the governor will sign this bill and help protect residents living near pipelines across this Commonwealth,” Quinn said.

Source: Rep. Chris Quinn Press Release, 11/19/2020

Committee Passes Struzzi Resolution to Formally Oppose RGGI

On November 17, 2020, state Rep. Jim Struzzi (R-Indiana) announced that the House Environmental Resources and Energy Committee has passed his resolution opposing Gov. Tom Wolf’s plan to have Pennsylvania join the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI). **House Resolution 1088** <https://www.legisstate.pa.us/cfdocs/billInfo/billInfo.cfm?sYear=2019&sInd=0&body=H&type=R&bn=1088>, if adopted by the House, would be sent to the Independent Regulatory Review Commission (IRRC) as the House’s formal disapproval of Wolf’s plan.

On Oct. 3, 2019, the governor issued an executive order directing the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection to begin the process of joining RGGI. The initiative would establish a regional cap on the amount of carbon dioxide (CO₂) pollution that power plants can emit by establishing a trading system. Each unit of trade, known as an allowance, would represent authorization for a power plant to emit one short ton (2,000 pounds) of CO₂. Power plants in RGGI member states can trade allowances, preventing the total amount of CO₂ emissions in the region from increasing. RGGI would also establish a carbon tax on fossil fuel users for the resulting CO₂ emissions.

“If Pennsylvania joins RGGI, we will quickly see thousands of family-sustaining jobs lost in our

Commonwealth due to the closure of coal-fired electric generating units and older natural gas plants. The economic repercussions would be felt throughout Pennsylvania as we see thousands of jobs and millions of dollars in local and state tax revenue lost,” said Struzzi. “The jobs that we lose will go directly to our neighboring states who are not a part of RGGI, and our remaining natural gas-fired plants will be put at a competitive disadvantage because of our participation.”

On Sep. 24, Wolf vetoed **House Bill 2025** <https://www.legis.state.pa.us/cfdocs/billInfo/billInfo.cfm?sYear=2019&sInd=0&body=H&type=B&bn=2025>, also authored by Struzzi. The bill would have required legislative approval before Pennsylvania could join into RGGI or any similar multi-state compact. The General Assembly had passed the bill with bipartisan majorities of 130-71 in the House and 33-17 in the Senate.

“A carbon tax such as RGGI can only be initiated by the General Assembly,” Struzzi continued. “This initiative is a major energy and fiscal policy decision, which must be made by the legislative branch of government with the input of the people.”

Source: Rep. Jim Struzzi Press Release, 11/17/2020

Senator Muth Elected to PA Senate Democrats Leadership Team for 2021-22 Session

On November 19, 2020, Senator Katie Muth (D-Chester) was elected by her colleagues in the Senate Democratic Caucus to serve on its leadership team as the Chair of the Policy Committee.

“Serving in the State Senate, I quickly recognized that the important and difficult policy issues facing our Commonwealth are seldom bound by the lines of our individual Senate Districts,” said Senator Muth. “I am grateful to my Senate Democratic colleagues who have entrusted me with

this influential position and will work hard to advance our shared policy issues that for far too long have remained unaddressed. I am eager to get to work collaborating with our caucus members, member of the -, stakeholders, and the people of our Commonwealth to develop a people-centric policy platform, I look forward to increasing public awareness about state governance and how it could and should function to protect and advance all Pennsylvanians."

The Senate Democratic Policy Committee travels the state holding hearings on legislative matters of interest to its members and constituents. It hears testimony from experts on both sides of those issues and offers the opportunity for members to ask questions before forming policy solutions that will later be introduced in the Pennsylvania Senate. As Chair, Senator Muth will lead those efforts and host each of those meetings.

Along with Senator Muth, the following other members of the Senate Democratic Caucus were elected to leadership roles in the caucus for the upcoming legislative session:

- **Leader** - Jay Costa, Jr.
- **Whip** - Anthony Hardy Williams
- **Appropriations Committee Chair** - Vincent Hughes
- **Chair** - Wayne D. Fontana
- **Secretary** - Maria Collett
- **Policy Committee Chair** - Katie Muth

For more information on the Policy Committee, its upcoming and previous hearings, please visit pasenate.com/policy

Source: Senator Muth Press Release, 11/19/2020

DEP Provides \$6 Million to Continue Support for Eight Counties' Accelerated Progress on Local Water Quality Improvement in Chesapeake Bay Watershed

On November 20, 2020, the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) announced its providing just over \$6 million in grant funding to eight counties to continue support for their accelerated progress in improving local water quality in Pennsylvania's share of the Chesapeake Bay Watershed.

Adams, Bedford, Centre, Cumberland, Franklin, Lancaster, Lebanon, and York counties will receive 2020 Environmental Stewardship Fund grants to build local engagement in best-practice projects to reduce nitrogen, phosphorus, and sediment pollution in local streams and rivers.

"Teams in these counties are forging through the challenges of the pandemic to make unprecedented progress in increasing communities' awareness that we can't allow nutrient and sediment runoff pollution to continue to degrade our waters without significant long-term impacts," said DEP Secretary Patrick McDonnell.

"They're reaching out and enlisting local farmers, municipalities, businesses, community organizations, colleges, and other partners to develop strategies and determine project sites and types that will benefit the landowner and community as well as water quality. They're using local data and water quality monitoring to maximize their impact and track their progress on specific pollution reduction goals. They're brainstorming all options for much needed funding support. DEP is committed to providing as much support as it can to sustain these teams and the strong momentum they've developed."

Adams, Franklin, Lancaster, and York counties completed Countywide Action Plans in 2019 and this year began to enlist partners, source funding, and break ground on projects.

Bedford, Centre, Cumberland, and Lebanon counties submitted draft plans to DEP in October. After their plans are finalized in December, they'll begin getting projects underway.

The counties may begin using these DEP grants in January 2021 to accelerate implementation of the priority initiatives specified in their Countywide Action Plans. They'll receive funding as follows for

full-time plan coordinators and a range of projects that represent scientific best practices to reduce nutrient and sediment pollution:

- Adams County: \$373,199 for a coordinator and projects in several priority areas: enhanced nutrient management to improve soil health on farms, stream restorations, streambank tree plantings, rain gardens, and livestock exclusion fencing.
- Bedford County: \$428,992 for a coordinator and projects in these priority areas: conservation landscaping, stream restoration, bioretention and rain gardens, wetland creation and restoration, pervious pavement, urban tree canopy, livestock exclusion fencing, and streambank tree plantings.
- Centre County: \$424,856 for a coordinator and projects to identify and prioritize small watersheds with agricultural impairments and carry out stream restoration, streambank buffer planting, habitat restoration projects, and agricultural best practices at up to six sites, to rapidly get streams off impaired lists.
- Cumberland County: \$490,816 for a coordinator and projects related to conservation landscaping and agricultural conservation practices to minimize nutrient and sediment runoff on multiple farms.
- Franklin County: \$756,792 for a coordinator and implementation of agricultural best practices, including animal waste management systems, barnyard runoff control, grassed and forested streambanks, prescribed grazing, and tillage management to improve soil health.
- Lancaster County: \$2,204,821 for a coordinator and projects in agricultural barnyard runoff reduction, soil health improvement, streambank tree plantings, stream restoration, floodplain reconnection, and green infrastructure in key urban areas.
- Lebanon County: \$499,061 for a coordinator and projects in several priority areas: stream

restoration, streambank tree plantings, and stormwater retrofits.

- York County: \$866,193 for a coordinator and projects in these priority areas: stream restoration, floodplain reconnection, and streambank native tree and shrub plantings.

The 2020 grants follow 2019 Environmental Stewardship Fund grants to these counties as part of multiyear agreements to support their participation in **Pennsylvania's Chesapeake Bay Phase 3 Watershed Implementation Plan** [https://www.dep.pa.gov/Business/Water/Pennsylvania%E2%80%99s%20Chesapeake%20Bay%20Program%20Office/WIP3/Pages/Phase-III-WIP-\(Watershed-Implementation-Plans\).aspx](https://www.dep.pa.gov/Business/Water/Pennsylvania%E2%80%99s%20Chesapeake%20Bay%20Program%20Office/WIP3/Pages/Phase-III-WIP-(Watershed-Implementation-Plans).aspx) to meet federal obligations to improve the health of the bay.

All or part of 43 Pennsylvania counties are in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed DEP has asked 34 to develop and carry out Countywide Action Plans to reduce their portion of nutrient and sediment pollution in the watershed. In addition to the eight counties that have completed final or draft plans, the remaining 26 counties have voluntarily signed on to complete plans.

Source: DEP Press Release, 11/20/2020

PUC Highlights Utility Scam Awareness & Education

Consumers Encouraged to Understand How Fraud Artists Operate and Remain Vigilant Against Common Utility-Related Scams

On November 20, 2020, the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission (PUC) marked **Utility Scam Awareness Day** <https://www.utilitiesunited.org/> - a national effort to educate residents and businesses about the ways that scammers use utility-related schemes to scare or trick customers into sending them money or disclosing personal information.

"Scam artists like to disguise themselves as representatives from organizations that we know and trust, including our public utilities," noted PUC

Chair Gladys Brown Dutrieuille. "They also try to force potential victims into acting quickly, without time to do additional research or verification, with threats like 'pay now, or your service will be disconnected,' or offers of 'refunds' and savings that seem too-good-to-be-true."

The arrival of colder weather - combined with the financial pressures on many families and businesses because of COVID-19 - makes this a prime time for scams that offer large savings or threaten service shutoffs.

Common Themes for Scams

Individual scam calls or emails may differ slightly, but most operate using a similar framework:

- **Official Sounding Calls** - Scam artists claim to be representatives from respected agencies, like your utility or a government entity.
- **Demands for Immediate Response** - Scammers pressure consumers into acting quickly, with threats of service interruptions or claims of large savings.
- **Unusual Payment Requests** - Many financial scammers request payment using prepaid debit cards, gift cards or wire transfers, which are generally untraceable.
- **Disclosure of Personal Information** - Offers of "refunds" or "large savings" may be used to trick consumers into disclosing utility account numbers and other personal information, which could be used for future fraud.

Awareness and education are the best tools for protecting yourself and your business against potential scams.

Scam artists try to pressure you into acting quickly, without the time to think carefully about what you are doing - like asking "why does my electric utility need payment using an iTunes gift card?"

While COVID-19 has dramatically decreased face-to-face interactions, scammers continue to aggressively use phone and online networks to target customers, and their tactics are constantly evolving.

Reporting Utility Scams

It is important that customers call their utilities directly to check on the status of their accounts if they are ever unsure about the authenticity of a caller or the identity of a service worker, or if they suspect any fraudulent activity. Consumers who suspect they have been victimized by a utility-related scam can also contact the PUC's Bureau of Consumer Services (BCS), at 1-800-692-7380.

Questionable Robocalls

An issue that the PUC continues to caution consumers about involves automated "**robocalls**" **from unidentified sources** <https://www.puc.pa.gov/press-release/2020/puc-urges-continued-high-vigilance-with-questionable-energy-marketing-emphasizes-consumer-tips-to-avoid-potential-telemarketing-scams> - making vague and potentially misleading statements about customer discounts, refunds, rebates and bonuses if the customers act immediately. The calls often appear as a local telephone number on recipients' caller ID, which is often fake or "spoofed," or the calls fail to display any number at all.

When discussing energy supply service with telemarketers, the PUC stresses that telemarketing agents must do the following:

- **Immediately Identify Themselves** - Callers must tell you who they are at the beginning of the call.
- **Explain the Call** - They must clearly explain why they are calling.
- **No False Claims** - They cannot claim to represent the PUC, another utility or other organization.

If the agent fails to do this immediately, the consumer should end the call. When facing an aggressive sales agent or suspecting a potential scam, consumers are encouraged to contact BCS at 1-800-692-7380.

More About Utility Scams

Additional information about identifying and avoiding a variety of utility-related scams is available from **Utilities United Against Scams**

<https://www.utilitiesunited.org/>, a consortium of more than 140 U.S. and Canadian electric, water, and natural gas utilities and trade associations.

About the PUC

The Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission balances the needs of consumers and utilities; ensures safe and reliable utility service at reasonable rates; protects the public interest; educates consumers to make independent and informed utility choices; furthers economic development; and fosters new technologies and competitive markets in an environmentally sound manner.

Visit the PUC's website at <http://www.puc.pa.gov/> for recent news releases and video of select proceedings. You can also follow us on Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram and YouTube. Search for the "Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission" or "PA PUC" on your favorite social media channel for updates on utility issues and other helpful consumer information.

Source: PUC Press Release, 11/20/2020

PUC Highlights Importance of Critical Utility Infrastructure Through a Pandemic, Lockdowns and Severe Storms, Pennsylvania Utilities Maintained Vital Services and Continued to Improve Key Systems

On November 19, 2020, the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission (PUC) recognized **National Critical Infrastructure Security Month** <https://www.cisa.gov/ismmonth>, noting the importance of Pennsylvania's critical utility systems and the extensive behind-the-scenes efforts by public utilities and thousands of utility workers in keeping our communities safe and secure.

"As we grappled with all the challenges of 2020, it is important to recognize the work of our public utilities, and especially the women and men who have kept essential systems operating in the face of COVID-19, severe weather, and an assortment of other physical and cyber threats," said PUC Chair Gladys Brown Dutrieuille, who also chairs the Committee on Critical Infrastructure for the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners (NARUC).

Our utilities and utility workers are the backbone of daily activities - powering our homes and businesses; fueling our heating and cooking; providing clean drinking water; transporting goods and people where they are needed; and connecting us with work, family and friends.

Continued Infrastructure Improvement

While the security and resilience of critical utility infrastructure is recognized every November, the work of keeping these critical systems secure and operating is a year-round task.

"Not only have Pennsylvania's utilities continued to provide service throughout COVID-19 shutdowns and business restrictions, but they also continued to complete critical infrastructure improvement projects," noted Chair Dutrieuille. "Along the way, they also focused on keeping their workers healthy, protecting the public during any face-to-face interactions, and enhancing their online and virtual outreach to customers."

Collectively, Pennsylvania's electric, natural gas and water utilities targeted \$1.9 billion in accelerated infrastructure improvement work during 2020 - and are on track to complete those essential projects.

Key Partnerships to Safeguard Services

Since public health concerns were first raised across Pennsylvania in early 2020, the PUC has worked with partner agencies and state leadership - including the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency, Department of Community and Economic Development, Department of Health, Department of Environmental Protection, Department of Transportation, the Governor's

Office and the Pennsylvania General Assembly - to help critical infrastructure utilities navigate COVID-19 issues impacting their operations and workforce, along with their suppliers and supply chains.

"For years, Pennsylvania has been at the forefront of efforts to gather key stakeholders in government, utilities and nonprofit organizations to collaborate and prepare for potential threats," said Chair Dutrieuille. "Much of that work was accomplished as part of statewide exercises and forums concerning cyber or natural 'Black Sky' incidents - incidents that have the potential to cause widespread disruptions to critical utility systems - but this year that preparation was extremely helpful for continuing operations during the pandemic."

National Infrastructure Security Month

This year's National Infrastructure Security Month focuses on a "Time of Transformation" - noting the transformative movement to remote work, distance learning and telemedicine, along with the importance of cybersecurity and infrastructure security.

The national campaign focuses on two important themes:

- The Security and Response during a Global Pandemic, and
- the Future of Securing Critical Infrastructure.

More information about the national campaign, and the role every organization, business and individual plays in safeguarding critical infrastructure, is available from the **U.S.**

Cybersecurity & Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA)

https://www.cisa.gov/sites/default/files/publications/ISM%202020%20In%20a%20Time%20of%20Transformation_110320_508.pdf

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Source: PUC Press Release, 11/19/2020

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