

**Talking Points – Chairman Gladys Brown Dutrieuille**  
PA Natural Gas Choice 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Recognition  
Thursday, June 13, 2019

Today, we want to take a few minutes to highlight a significant milestone in the ongoing evolution of the Commonwealth's competitive energy markets.

20 years ago – on June 22, 1999 – Pennsylvania enacted the Natural Gas Choice and Competition Act – allowing customers to purchase gas from independent suppliers.

Just as we've seen on the electric side, activity in the competitive natural gas markets has ebbed and flowed over two decades – both in terms of the numbers of suppliers and numbers of customers served by competitive gas suppliers – and that has prompted the Commission to continually examine the process.

One of the key measures implemented by the PUC was the creation of our Office of Competitive Market Oversight, or OCMO. With representation from several key PUC bureaus, "Team OCMO" has proven to be extremely effective in promoting the development of competitive markets and facilitating resolution of disputes between Natural Gas Distribution Companies, Suppliers and customers.

It was the investigative "leg work" by OCMO that helped generate consumer protection regulations requiring more informative supplier disclosure statements as well as more timely information on contract renewal and change in terms notices – and proposed technical changes revising how capacity is assigned and addressing related issues including penalties and imbalanced trading.

Another major element of the Commission's work has been educating consumers and promoting gas competition. Each year, the PUC's consumer outreach team provides utility education and outreach to thousands of consumers.

Additionally, in February 2016, the Commission launched a new standalone website for PAGasSwitch – further enhancing the ability of online natural gas shopping customers. In just two short years as a standalone site, PAGasSwitch saw an increase of approximately 150 percent in both total and unique visitors – and a nearly 350 percent increase in website “sign up” clicks for shoppers looking to enroll with suppliers.

So, it is clear that we have come a long way in the last 20 years. More than 3 million Pennsylvanians now receive natural gas service, and more than 435,000 customers currently get their natural gas supply from a competitive Natural Gas Suppliers – accounting for nearly half of Pennsylvania's total load of natural gas usage.

As with other major undertakings, it is important to thank all the people who make this process work: PUC staff – consumer advocates – our natural gas distribution companies – the supplier community – and other key stakeholders.

Also, on behalf of my fellow Commissioners, I wish to particularly thank the Law Bureau, the Bureau of Technical Utility Services, the Bureau of Consumer Services and the Office of Communications for their efforts to implement this important law.

Rest assured, this Commission will continue its work to ensure a fair and robust marketplace for all energy customers.

###