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## **Wolf Administration Teams with PUC and Utilities to Highlight Efforts to Grow Veterans in the Utility Workforce**

**Harrisburg, PA** – Today Wolf Administration officials from the Pennsylvania Department of Labor & Industry (L&I) and the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs (DMVA) joined Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission (PUC) Chairman Gladys M. Brown and representatives from public utilities from across the state to highlight the importance and impact of veterans in the utility workforce.

“Pennsylvania’s veterans deserve every opportunity to continue their career success after they return home to civilian life,” Governor Tom Wolf said. “The chance to grow the veteran workforce in our public utilities demonstrates how Pennsylvania employers support and value these hard-working individuals.”

“First and foremost, our veterans have already made a tremendous contribution to keeping our nation safe and secure – and veterans play a strong role in our public utilities and overall labor force,” noted Chairman Brown. “These men and women are disciplined, mission driven, safety focused, community oriented and understand the critical nature of utility services.”

Chairman Brown noted that Pennsylvania’s workforce includes 266,000 veterans, and the state ranks eighth in the nation in the number of veterans between 18 and 64 years old. Still, there are concerns about unemployment, with about 13,000 Pennsylvania veterans without jobs right now – and many others may still be struggling to find the right civilian-sector job for themselves or their families.

The PUC, together with state agencies and utilities, is working to connect more veterans (and their families) to employers, as well as encouraging more talented workers, of all ages and backgrounds, to consider careers in the utility sector – which has a strong and growing demand for a new generation of employees.

“Our nation’s veterans have served in numerous military specialties that have direct ties to the utility industry. These include satellite/telecommunications operations, cable/fiber line installers, electrical systems, engineering and logistics,” said Maj. Gen. Tony Carrelli, Pennsylvania’s adjutant general and head of the DMVA. “They are valuable, highly skilled individuals who will greatly contribute to the utility industry workforce.”

Nationally, there are about 200,000 men and women transitioning from the military to civilian work every year – which means there is a substantial group of skilled candidates looking for opportunities. Additionally, one of the top classifications for service members looking for work in

the private sector is “Engineering, Science and Technical,” which fits very well with some of the utility industry jobs that are in the highest demand.

Working together with agencies and utilities across the state, and in conjunction with a task force created by the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners (NARUC), several issues have been identified:

The need for enhanced communication, especially helping veterans and potential employers better understand each other; “Translating” military skills and classifications into the positions and needs of the civilian sector; Greater information-sharing about job openings; Highlighting various training and apprenticeship programs; and, Identifying ways to promote Pennsylvania opportunities on a regional and national level.

As part of the effort to increase access to information, the PUC has established an enhanced [LinkedIn site](#) to highlight information about job opportunities, not only at the Commission, but also the greater spectrum of utility jobs across the state.

The other part of this equation is helping veterans, along with other potential job-seekers, understand the career potential of working in the utility sector.

“Pennsylvania’s utilities – large and small, across the state – represent tens-of-thousands of well-paying, family-supporting and community-oriented jobs,” said Chairman Brown. “These are jobs and skills that will remain in-demand well into the future, with growth and training opportunities, good wages, and the satisfaction of knowing that you are serving your local communities.”

Chairman Brown noted there is a current and growing demand for new workers, as a large percentage of our utility workforce is quickly approaching retirement age, fueling a statewide and national appetite for a long list of skills, including:

- Engineers;
- Field operations, including the people who maintain existing systems and build-out new systems;
- Plant Operators, who keep the energy and water flowing to our communities; and,
- Various technical positions, including relatively new areas of concern, like CyberSecurity.

“This is an issue that goes far beyond one agency or utility. It’s an issue that has the potential to impact us all, in terms of the reliability and cost of utility service,” said Chairman Brown. “These are systems and people we depend upon to keep our communities safe and healthy, and it is important that we do what we can to ensure that our utilities have the skilled personnel they need to meet the needs of today and tomorrow.”

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.

For recent news releases and video of select Commission proceedings or more information about the PUC, visit our website at [www.puc.pa.gov](http://www.puc.pa.gov). Follow the PUC on Twitter – @PA\_PUC for all things utility. “Like” Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission on Facebook for easy access to information on utility issues.

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