



California Public Utilities Commission

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News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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PUC ENDORSES PROGRAM TO PROMOTE DIVERSITY BY PROVIDING EDUCATIONAL AND MENTORING OPPORTUNITIES TO STUDENTS

SAN FRANCISCO, June 21, 2007 – The California Public Utilities Commission (PUC), in its ongoing efforts to promote diversity in hiring practices, today endorsed the California Aspire Achieve Lead Pipeline Project (CaAAL Pipeline Project), a creative statewide program that provides for educational opportunities for students in pre-school through graduate school.

Recognizing that California's labor market demands an increasing population of highly-educated workers and that diversity in that workforce is good for businesses and communities, the PUC determined that there is an urgent need for both immediate- and long-term strategic approaches to provide for educational opportunities leading to successful careers in the legal, investment/finance, technological, and political communities.

The CaAAL Pipeline Project grew out of studies that show students of diverse backgrounds are failing early on to gain the tools that will lead to successful completion of higher education and thus are failing to be successful in a professional career.

"California is a very diverse state and our workforce should be a mirror of our population. I have long been a supporter of ensuring that the PUC and the utilities it regulates promote diversity in their hiring practices," said PUC President Michael R. Peevey. "The CaAAL Pipeline Project will help young people focus on critical thinking and reading and writing skills and will provide professionals as mentors and role models."

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“This issue is very important to me and I am proud to be part of a program that will help California have a workforce that reflects its diverse population,” said PUC Commissioner Timothy Alan Simon. “By supporting the CaAAL Pipeline Project we are establishing resources to target students to place in the pipeline and diversify the pool of available candidates for the workforce and leadership opportunities.”

For the past two years, the PUC has placed a particular focus on helping its major energy and telecommunications utilities meet goals set by the PUC for procurement of legal and financial services from certified woman, minority, and disabled veteran-owned businesses (WMDVBEs). This focus has led to a strong commitment by the top management of these utilities to address the obstacles to meeting or exceeding the PUC’s overall 21.5 percent goal for procurement from WMDVBEs, including a commitment to address the “pipeline” problems as strategies are adopted to begin recruiting large numbers of employees to replace the growing wave of retiring Baby Boomers in the workforce.

The founding partners for the CaAAL Pipeline Project are the PUC and the California Public Employment Retirement System.

The CaAAL Pipeline Project will be organized as a California non-profit corporation with an arm called the California Pipeline Fund with 501(c)(3) status to focus on the fundraising aspect. Nominations for Board participation will be publicly sought. Once organized, the Board will solicit support from other stakeholders, including issuing a Request for Proposal to identify a leading California university to serve as its educational partner and as the leading center on pipeline activities and evaluation in the state and nation.

The CaAAL Pipeline Project report is available at www.cpuc.ca.gov/PUBLISHED/REPORT/69331.htm.

For more information on the PUC, please visit www.cpuc.ca.gov.

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