



**ILLINOIS UTILITIES BUSINESS  
DIVERSITY COUNCIL**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT:

Alejandra Moran 708.715.6495

**Illinois Utilities Come Together to Create More Opportunities  
for Diverse Suppliers**

*New Utilities Business Diversity Council Focused on Collaboration and Best Practices*

**CHICAGO** (June 11, 2015) – Illinois utility leaders announced today the formation of the Illinois Utilities Business Diversity Council designed to grow business opportunities for diverse suppliers through closer collaboration, technical development and sharing of best practices.

The Illinois Utilities Business Diversity Council members include Ameren Illinois, ComEd, Illinois American Water, Nicor Gas, North Shore Gas and Peoples Gas. In 2014, these companies spent a combined total of approximately \$708 million on goods and services provided by minority, women and veteran-owned businesses. In addition, the companies spent approximately \$440 million with small businesses.

Growth in utilities' spend with diverse suppliers is due in part to the Energy Infrastructure Modernization Act (EIMA) or "Smart Grid Bill" enacted in 2011, and the Natural Gas Consumer, Safety & Reliability Act enacted in 2013. As a result, Illinois utilities are undertaking a massive upgrade to the state's aging energy delivery infrastructure, installing new technologies and equipment to reduce outages, improve reliability, and provide customers with programs to manage and save energy.

"Illinois utilities are making investments to modernize and improve their infrastructure, which is creating opportunities to expand our diverse supplier base. The formation of this Council will support the utilities' efforts in driving collaboration, development and utilization of diverse businesses," said Beth Reese, chief financial officer, AGL Resources, and former president of Nicor Gas, an AGL Resources subsidiary.

"ComEd has a long history of diverse supplier engagement, and through the investments we're making we have a great opportunity to increase our spend with partners who are helping us to innovate and create solutions that enhance our ability to add value to customers," said Anne Pramaggiore, president and CEO, ComEd.

Illinois Commerce Commissioner Sherina E. Maye participated in the event and is encouraged by the potential of the Council. "The Illinois Commerce Commission is pleased the utilities, through this

Council, now have a forum that will help them collaboratively increase procurement with diverse suppliers,” said Commissioner Maye. “It is my hope that the Council will not only support best practice sharing, but also serve as a resource to the Commission and other stakeholders by keeping us apprised of common trends, developments, challenges and solutions that will support the continued growth of supplier diversity.”

“At Illinois American Water, we invest over \$70 million a year to upgrade our critical water and wastewater infrastructure,” said Bruce Hauk, president. “We’re excited about the opportunities the Council will offer to partner with diverse businesses, help them grow and contribute to local and regional economies.”

“Each of the participating companies has demonstrated that being inclusive at every level leads to improved services for our customers,” said Richard J. Mark, president of Ameren Illinois. “By actively bringing diverse businesses into our supply chains, we’re opening up new avenues for job creation and building stronger communities throughout Illinois.”

Creating a uniform reporting system for expenditures with diverse certified business across all services sought by utility companies will be one of the first priorities for the new Council. “Establishing a common framework through which we can more effectively collaborate and measure the success of our efforts will help all members in their efforts to engage certified diverse suppliers,” said John Kleczynski, president, Peoples Gas and North Shore Gas.

James H. Lowry, a nationally recognized workforce and supplier diversity expert, has been working with the utilities to establish the Council and will serve in an advisory capacity along with James R. Monk, president of the Illinois Energy Association.

Once a year, the Council will submit a written report to inform the Illinois Commerce Commission on activities and progress toward meeting goals and objectives. The Council will also coordinate an annual meeting for diverse businesses, legislators and the ICC, to discuss the evolving state of diverse business growth spend in the Illinois utilities industry. The Council will also place an emphasis on helping the utilities with their respective procurement goals for minority-owned, women-owned, veteran-owned and small business enterprises.

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*The Illinois Utilities Business Diversity Council (IUBDC) members include Ameren Illinois, ComEd, Illinois American Water, Nicor Gas, North Shore Gas and Peoples Gas. The mission of the IUBDC is to serve the Illinois utilities as a forum for best practice sharing and information exchange with the focus on advancing the growth and utilization of utility-based diverse businesses in the state of Illinois.*