

Questions for the Public Utilities Regulatory Authority Chairperson Nominee

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Public Utilities Regulatory Authority (PURA) Chairperson

PURA's commissioners are appointed by the governor with the legislature's advice and consent. The governor selects PURA's chairperson from its commissioners.

PURA regulates the rates and services of investor-owned utility companies, like Eversource, United Illuminating, Southern Connecticut Gas Company, and CT Water. Among other things, it also licenses the state's retail electric suppliers and conducts various studies and investigations into utility-related issues. PURA is administratively within the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) but is funded through a charge paid by the companies it regulates.

Questions

1. Since being appointed to PURA, you have abstained from dockets you worked on as Office of Consumer Counsel (OCC) staff. How many of these cases are there? Describe how they are being handled. When do you anticipate them concluding? Are there any viewpoints or approaches you took in your previous work at OCC that you think you will have to be particularly aware of when acting as an impartial PURA commissioner?
2. Describe your approach to managing PURA staff. How are you seeking to ensure all PURA commissioners have access to staff? In your time as acting chairperson, has there been much staff turnover? Are current staff levels adequate for PURA's workload?
3. PURA experienced an abrupt change in leadership. How did you assess the work in progress when you took the position? Under previous leadership, PURA worked on several complex

initiatives, including the Equitable Modern Grid proceeding and performance-based regulation. To what extent do you anticipate continuing this work? How do you decide which initiatives to prioritize?

4. Compliance with Freedom of Information Act requirements has been a topic of concern. How will PURA handle those inquiries going forward?
5. For the first time since 2011, PURA will have five utility commissioners, rather than three. How do you think this will affect PURA's deliberative process and decisions?
6. With utility rate affordability becoming a significant public issue over the past year, how heavily will you consider rate affordability as a factor when deciding PURA rate cases? What other factors might you have to consider and are there any that could outweigh affordability as a factor?
7. Over the past several years, PURA increased its efforts to explain its work to the public through newsletters, videos, and "PURA 101" presentations, among other initiatives. How important is it for the public to understand PURA's work and should the authority be doing more or less to engage the public? What role does public participation play in PURA proceedings and can an average person participate meaningfully in a proceeding? To what extent should PURA consider public opinion when making its decisions?
8. Gas and electric utilities have alleged that an unstable regulatory environment and rate case decisions that were unfavorable to them have led to credit downgrades that will make utility work more expensive in the future and ultimately negatively impact ratepayers. Are they wrong?
9. The state's renewable energy policies include (1) clean energy tariffs, which allow customers to benefit from on-site renewable energy; (2) energy procurements conducted by DEEP to provide stable funding for renewable projects; and (3) the renewable portfolio standard, which obliges utilities and suppliers to get a certain amount of their power from renewable sources. PURA's role in these policies varies, but how does the authority balance support for these programs in line with the state's energy strategies and carbon emissions goals with the ratepayer impact of providing this support?

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