

**BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION
OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA**



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Order Instituting Rulemaking for the Purpose of Reviewing and Potentially Amending General Order 156 and to Consider Other Measures to Promote Economic Efficiencies of an Expanded Supplier Base and to Examine the Composition of the utilities' Workforce.

R.09-07-027

**COMMENTS OF
SAN DIEGO GAS & ELECTRIC COMPANY (U 902 M) AND
SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA GAS COMPANY (U 904 G) ON THE
STAFF WORKSHOP REPORT ON UNDERUTILIZED AREAS**

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#244696

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I. INTRODUCTION

On May 26, 2010, Staff for the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC or Commission) submitted the *Utility Supplier Diversity Program Staff Report Workshop on "Underutilized Areas"* (hereafter, the "May 26, 2010 Staff Workshop Report" or "Workshop Report") addressing the workshop discussions held on May 5, 2010.

Pursuant to the *Assigned Commissioner and Administrative Law Judge Scoping Memo and Ruling Determining the Scope, Schedule and Need for Hearing in this Proceeding* ("Revised Scoping Memo") and the May 19, 2010 "Pre-Oral Argument Status Conference" addressing the process and schedule for filing of comments to the May 26, 2010 Staff Workshop Report, San Diego Gas & Electric Company (SDG&E) and Southern California Gas Company (SoCalGas) hereby respectfully submit the following comments for Commission consideration. SDG&E/SoCalGas appreciate the efforts by the Commission and its Staff in this proceeding and believe that the input provided by the active parties to the workshop not only served to highlight the clear and remarkable

success of the Commission's GO-156 initiative, but also illuminated areas where the utilities may potentially increase the efficacy of their individualized DBE programs. At a minimum, SDG&E/SoCalGas believe the workshop process itself has proven valuable in providing an accessible vehicle to raise concerns, consider new ideas and to educate the parties on all sides of the issues. Moreover, the workshop process has helped to foster an important, continuing dialog among the various potentially conflicting interests represented in a minimally contentious forum. SDG&E/SoCalGas applaud the Commission and its Staff for leading the way in these efforts.

II. COMMENTS TO THE MAY 26, 2010 STAFF WORKSHOP REPORT

A. Solutions to Promote Transparency

One of the issues raised in the first workshop addressed in the May 26, 2010 Staff Workshop Report is that of transparency. Specifically, diverse business advocacy groups suggest there is a need for greater transparency in the diverse supplier procurement process. The Workshop Report indicates that the utilities did not voice a specific concern regarding transparency but would like more specific information from such parties as to how to become more transparent. While SDG&E/SoCalGas generally agree that transparency is a worthwhile goal, in many instances, all of the utilities face unique constraints. For instance, various utility-specific business requirements should also be taken into consideration, including but not limited to: legal, regulatory and/or contractual confidentiality constraints. Moreover, each utility's internal processes and legal constraints may be unique to a particular industry, or even to a certain business within an industry. For example, in some cases, utilities may be able to broadly describe upcoming projects for a forecast, but sourcing details relevant to DBE suppliers may not be

available until a few weeks before the release of a bid or request for proposal (RFP). Accordingly, without more specificity from the advocacy groups in defining the problem, it is difficult to forge a one-size-fits-all solution that may be workable across all GO-156 utilities.

Similarly, Staff's recommendation for further workshops to explore "best practices" amongst the utilities is laudable and, in SDG&E/SoCalGas' view, such discussions are worth pursuing in any event. However, the Commission and parties should also remain mindful of the unique nature and requirements of each utility's business and that a best practice for one utility does not necessarily constitute a good or even viable practice when applied to the others.

As discussed more fully below, each utility is in the best position to determine how to not only structure their voluntary GO-156 programs within a unique and complex business and regulatory environment, but also to apply parties' feedback and incorporate workable internal process improvements that are raised during the course of this OIR. Indeed, in many cases, the better solution may very well be to simply work more closely with the particular DBE in question so that both sides can better understand the utility's supplier procurement processes and the DBE's issues or concerns.

The workshops in this proceeding have demonstrated that all of the GO-156 utilities are committed to the Commission's supplier diversity initiative and are not only willing to address such concerns but that they are also willing to provide meaningful feedback on an individualized DBE level. That said, SDG&E/SoCalGas believe it may be possible to address what appears to be the crux of certain parties' transparency

concerns by considering implementation of one or more variants of the following potential solutions on a case-by-case basis:

The GO-156 utilities could consider holding once-a-year “Open Houses” to publicize upcoming projects and procurement. Such events would host DBE stakeholders such as the various representative chambers of commerce (“Chambers”), small business development organizations and DBE business owners.

The GO-156 utilities could consider providing the Chambers and small business organizations high-level six month forecasts of planned procurement activities and upcoming projects.

The GO-156 utilities could consider continuing collaboration with Chambers to find suppliers appropriate for major utility projects.

B. Best Practices and Unbundling Strategies

As indicated above, SDG&E/SoCalGas are willing engage in further workshops to not only discuss their internal supplier diversity practices with all of the other interested parties in the proceeding but to also listen to the other GO-156 utilities’ unique methodologies for promoting DBE opportunities within their organizations. Each utility could then take such information and determine whether or to what extent similar approaches could be implemented within their own organizations. While SDG&E/SoCalGas believe that such workshops could prove highly instructive in that regard and represent a worthwhile effort to continue the meaningful dialog established in this OIR, SDG&E/SoCalGas are concerned that some parties may misconstrue the meaning behind such efforts as necessarily indicating that what works for one utility will work for the others.

Given the complexities inherent in each of the utilities’ business and regulatory environment; the unique supply needs of each utility; and the variation in qualified DBE supplier pools available to service those needs, SDG&E/SoCalGas believe it may be

overly simplistic to force each utility to utilize any particular “best practice” where such practice is either not workable or viable. Nonetheless, if Staff’s recommendation towards a discussion of “best practices” remains voluntary and is simply a vehicle by which the utilities can consider how various approaches or ideas might be applied within their respective companies, then SDG&E/SoCalGas would certainly support the concept and expect to actively engage in the workshop process.

In that regard, SDG&E/SoCalGas herewith submit their own unique “recipe” to achieving DBE growth for others’ consideration as it has formed the basis for SDG&E and SoCalGas’ achievements of over 30% DBE results. Moreover, strategic unbundling efforts have become an integral part of SDG&E/SoCalGas’ procurement planning processes, but go far beyond traditional outreach activities where utility managers merely meet DBEs at mass events. Using these practices, SDG&E/SoCalGas have embraced strategic unbundling as a strategy in efforts to incorporate DBEs into all areas of their businesses. Indeed, the following practices reflect the culmination of a continual cycle of SDG&E/SoCalGas’ utility-specific internal process review and have yielded incremental improvements that have been refined over decades.

1. Create clear DBE goals and accountability for all levels of Management
2. Search many databases and the internet for suppliers (CPUC, NMSDC, WBENC, SBA Pro Net, etc.)

Differentiate suppliers by researching capabilities and seek information on major business lines, projects comparable to utility requirements, customers, annual revenue, number of employees, etc.

Outreach efforts to suppliers

Identify the most robust DBEs for projects

Bring in the strongest and most capable DBEs in major categories to meet decision makers

3. Build long-term relationships through networking and small meetings

Enable DBEs in building relationships with decision makers, department heads, utility executives and large primes. [Such internal, small group networking meetings have proven very successful for low utilization areas such as Finance, Consulting, Advertising, Insurance, etc.]

4. Plan major projects while accommodating DBE capabilities

Consider how DBEs fit in both prime and subcontracting roles

Break apart (unbundle) opportunities when appropriate to DBE capabilities

Ask primes to match utility goals (up to 30% subcontracting) and fully integrate DBEs into the long-term supply chain planning

5. Enhance supplier development efforts of established, robust DBE suppliers and collaborate with ethnic and small business chambers to provide training for recommended smaller DBEs (accomplished via an array of supplier education opportunities as described in the Technical Assistance section below), mentoring and other technical assistance.

C. Progress in Underutilized Areas

SDG&E/SoCalGas have opened up DBE growth in low utilization areas at using a business-wide implementation of the methodologies described in the previous section. More specifically, SDG&E and SoCalGas have made, and expect to continue making, significant gains within each underutilized area addressed below, which have been historically relatively difficult to achieve. In many cases, DBE growth has been hindered by the highly specialized nature of a particular function or need; certain economies of scale that may be lacking with certain DBEs; or high barriers to business entry, in combination with the reality of decades of capital formation, experience and professional growth that are needed to be competitive with Fortune 500 companies in certain professional/technical service segments associated with underutilized areas (e.g., Investment Banking or Enterprise Consulting).

1. Legal

As part of their efforts to expand DBE spending in the legal area, SDG&E/SoCalGas sent a Request for Information (RFI) to more than 70 DBE attorneys to learn more information about the depth and specialties of DBE law firms in California. As a result of a long-term focus on expanding opportunities for DBE legal services suppliers and encouraging a diverse legal pipeline, SDG&E/SoCalGas have secured approximately 17 DBEs in this particular supply area.

In addition, SDG&E/SoCalGas have developed DBEs for many sub-specialties within the broader legal area that include: securities, real estate, general litigation, intellectual property, workers' compensation, venture capital projects, employment and labor law and asset recovery. Some of the recent areas of expansion include securities, venture capital projects and intellectual property.

2. Finance

SDG&E/SoCalGas have expanded DBEs across a broad spectrum of Finance area opportunities including auditing, surety bonding, insurance, benefits/cost management consulting, pension fund advisement and trading, rate case preparation, short-term investments, and other areas. SDG&E/SoCalGas have held internal networking events for Finance firms focusing on insurance, and risk management audit and management consulting and investment banking. These informal small scale events have brought in the most capable DBE firms to begin a long-term relationship with SDG&E/SoCalGas' executives, directors and department heads. These DBEs have indicated that this type of interaction is what distinguishes SDG&E/SoCalGas' DBE efforts from the other utilities and from the majority of other Fortune 500 companies.

SDG&E/SoCalGas have also expanded investments with a number of minority area community banks, and now have placed deposits of \$14 million in four community banks. The utilities are working with these banks to further extend technical assistance to DBE businesses. The community banks focus their marketing on small and diverse businesses, so they are a good way to expand financing opportunities for DBE suppliers.

Both SDG&E and SoCalGas have been working to create a breakthrough opportunity for minority-owned investment banking firms by promoting DBEs into lead roles. In a recent SDG&E deal, a minority firm held one of the lead positions and two other minority firms acted in co-manager roles. The DBEs accounted for more than 30% of the deal's participation. SDG&E/SoCalGas look forward to expanding DBEs into more prominent roles for DBEs in all finance areas.

3. Consulting

DBEs provide consulting services in a number of areas at SDG&E/SoCalGas in both prime and subcontracting roles. These roles include project management, project scheduling, IT development, GIS mapping integration/conversion, quality assurance and other roles. To develop these supplier relationships, SDG&E/SoCalGas have held internal small networking meetings for the highest potential DBEs with company executives, department leaders and majority prime companies. SDG&E/SoCalGas continue to encourage and challenge the prime consulting companies to fully integrate DBEs into their work. SDG&E/SoCalGas then follow through on the primes' subcontracting commitments by monitoring DBE subcontracting results and hold monthly progress meetings with the executives of low performing primes if necessary

and look forward to collaborating with the Commission and the prime consulting companies to broaden opportunities for diverse suppliers in this area.

4. Insurance & Risk Management

SoCalGas and SDG&E issued an insurance broker RFP for our crime insurance program that included six DBEs. The winning minority firm was selected based upon their experience and ability to provide all of the necessary services required, and was awarded the contract. Another DBE firm also achieved significant new surety bonding opportunities in 2009. SDG&E/SoCalGas prefer to work with DBEs who can perform all of the insurance broker services from the resources within their own company.

SDG&E/SoCalGas have provided networking opportunities for DBE insurance brokers who also provide risk management/loss control services. In order to broaden business opportunities for these firms, DBE insurance brokers, non DBE Primes, DBE vendors and SoCalGas and SDG&E project managers were included. SDG&E/SoCalGas hope to offer other insurance and risk management areas for DBE participation in future years.

5. Advertising/Communications

For SoCalGas and SDG&E, advertising/communications have been a successful area with very substantial results. Working closely with many diverse businesses in advertising areas, SDG&E/SoCalGas have achieved over 20% DBE in this area. Our utilities' managers have focused on this area for a number of years, and as contracts continued to expire, DBE opportunities have been developed for interactive web marketing, ethnic marketing, advertising, marketing outreach, convention exhibits, printing, translation services, and copywriting.

SDG&E/SoCalGas have recently held very successful networking events where we over 25 advertising and communications companies were brought in to meet with internal managers and executives. A number of recent breakthroughs in advertising have occurred in the form of SoCalGas' recent RFP for general market advertising which included, for the first time, a DBE as one of the competitors. Both SoCalGas and SDG&E expect to continue making inroads in opening opportunities for DBEs in all traditionally underutilized areas.

D. Technical Assistance and Mentoring Programs

SoCalGas and SDG&E agree with the Chambers and small business development groups that some of the most significant contributors to the success of their (and perhaps other utilities') DBE efforts have been through increased technical assistance and mentoring. Beginning more than 20 years ago, SoCalGas and SDG&E began developing and refining a number of well proven supplier education and training venues that are offered to both utilities' high potential DBE suppliers as well as to constituents of the Chambers and small business associations.

Most of the diverse businesses that participate in these classes, seminars and other efforts have experienced rapid growth as a result of their involvement. These classes include the UCLA (Management Development for Entrepreneurs or MDE) classes, USC (Finance Success for Diverse Businesses), University of San Diego (APEX Academy for Business Success), and others. SDG&E/SoCalGas also provide informal mentoring by utility managers for high-potential DBE suppliers as well as occasional consulting assistance for improving back office operations.

To illustrate how effective these proven programs are in promoting DBE success, the graduates of just one program, the UCLA MDE Program, have accounted for \$1.2 billion in DBE dollars at SoCalGas and SDG&E. Of this amount, DBE products and services providers sold SDG&E/SoCalGas approximately \$285 million and natural gas suppliers accounted for \$913 million. SDG&E/SoCalGas believe that proven classes such as the UCLA MDE program have proven to be of great value.

E. SDG&E/SoCalGas funding of Technical Assistance and Mentoring Provided by the DBE Chambers and Small Business Associations

SDG&E/SoCalGas provide financial support for many DBE Chambers and small business development groups' activities. In the last two years, our utilities have also provided the Chambers funding specific to technical assistance and developing suppliers to meet our core business requirements. While SDG&E/SoCalGas believe that such utility funding is important, the utilities need not be the only, or necessarily even the most prominent source of funding for such purposes. Numerous small business technical assistance programs, education opportunities as well as non-profit foundations exist that could also provide funding and/or opportunities for technical assistance activities by the various DBE Chambers.

Indeed, the National Minority Supplier Development Councils (NMSDC), the US Minority Business Development Agency, and the US Small Business Administration offer a multitude of classes, seminars and assistance programs for developing small businesses. An internet search for foundations that support small business development groups includes the Kauffman Foundation, the Edward Lowe Foundation, the Ford Foundation, the Calvert Foundation, Bank Foundations, and many others.

III. CONCLUSION

SDG&E and SoCalGas both commend the Commission and Staff (and all of the active participants) in conducting workshops that have proven to be informative and well-attended by a diversity of parties representing various perspectives of the DBE community. SDG&E/SoCalGas agree with Staff's recommendation to conduct further workshops to further share perspectives and discuss the successful strategies employed by each of the GO-156 utilities. However, it is important to be mindful along the way that each utility's business and supply needs are, in many respects, inherently unique and that even "successful" strategies may not be appropriate or viable across the board.

Moreover, as the May 26, 2010 Staff Workshop Report properly concludes, the utilities' approaches have yielded "good results" in some areas. SDG&E and SoCalGas are committed to furthering such results by continuing to ensure that fair and equal access is available to all potential suppliers as a continuing good-business practice that provides a pipeline of qualified suppliers to meet utility supply needs at the lowest, most reasonable cost to ratepayers. We look forward to the continued dialog established in the workshops in this proceeding and working with the Commission and interested parties to that end.

Respectfully submitted,

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June 10, 2010

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I hereby certify that a copy of **COMMENTS OF SAN DIEGO GAS & ELECTRIC COMPANY (U 902 M) AND SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA GAS COMPANY (U 904 G) ON THE STAFF WORKSHOP REPORT ON UNDERUTILIZED AREAS** has been electronically mailed to each party of record of the service list in R.09-07-027. Any party on the service list who has not provided an electronic mail address was served by placing copies in properly addressed and sealed envelopes and by depositing such envelopes in the United States Mail with first-class postage prepaid.

Copies were also sent via Federal Express to the assigned Administrative Law Judges and Commissioner.

Executed this 10th day of June, 2010 at San Diego, California.

_____/s/ Jenny Norin

Jenny Norin



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[TOP OF PAGE](#)
[BACK TO INDEX OF SERVICE LISTS](#)