

February 27, 2006

TO: President Fox  
Board of Public Utilities

FR: Melanie Willoughby and Sara Bluhm  
New Jersey Business & Industry Association

RE: Ways for BPU to be more accessible to business

The New Jersey Business & Industry Association (NJBIA) on behalf of its 23,000 members appreciates the opportunity to work with Governor Corzine and the Board of Public Utilities (BPU) to make the Board more accessible and transparent to the business community. The following are NJBIA suggestions of ways to improve the current relationship. We look forward to discussing our ideas with you and the other commissioners.

**BPU Web page**

Current: BPU home page is not easy to navigate or to find information compared to other public utility commissions.

Suggestion: Redesign website to be more user friendly. Have dedicated sections for residential, commercial and industrial, as well as general Board information.

Current: The BPU home page has no information for business. Under the Consumer resources section, the information is aimed at residential consumers not all customers.

Suggestion: Develop a section for the Business Ombudsperson, highlight the how to shop information for CIEP customers, provide information on working groups and list serves that businesses can join, link to the Rutgers energy audit assistance program, and provide information for energy savings for businesses too.

Current: There is no master BPU calendar of events including board meetings, clean energy council meetings, working group meetings, seminars/workshops, etc.

Suggestion: Create a Board calendar that lists all events, meetings, conference calls, etc. which are open to the public.

Current: While Board agendas are posted online, neither the meetings nor the minutes are available online.

- Suggestion: The NJ Legislature currently broadcasts meetings online and this technology could be utilized by the Board. Additionally the meetings could be archived and posted with the minutes online.
- Current: There is no uniform operating procedure available for a business to know how to become involved, or how the Board operates.
- Suggestion: Post a uniform business operating and procedures guide for the Board online. Or create some type of brochure to explain how the Board operates.
- Current: Commissioners and senior staff are listed on line, but there is not a complete staff directory covering all divisions.
- Suggestion: List a staff directory online with at least emails of staff if not phone numbers. This would allow a customer to see multiple points of entry into a division as well as the broader picture of the make up of the Board.

### **Board Procedures**

- Current: Unlike other agencies that impact business through rulemaking, there is no structure for regular meetings with the business community to discuss issues, upcoming regulations, areas of cooperation, etc.
- Suggestion: While commissioners have to be careful not to engage in ex parte communications, it would be possible to have a clearly defined agenda meeting in which broader issues are discussed. Or discussions with staff are possible to address issues and seek solutions before problems are created.
- Current: Board procedures are very structured legally and hard for the common ratepayer to be involved in without a lawyer.
- Suggestion: Deregulation changed many aspects of the rate making process. The Board may be interested in examining new ways to open up the ratemaking process to customer involvement. For example Maryland has a fact finding hearing in which anyone can provide testimony.
- Current: There is no listing of BPU list serves, working groups, or other stakeholder involvement groups. A company may be interested in being part of the EDI conference calls or the CIEP workshops, but not know anything about them or how to become involved. Within

BPU's A-Z listing there is no mention of the distribution list, working groups, or list serves.

**Suggestion:** Create a section online that lists all of the different ways to become involved with the BPU. Define what the different work groups are, when they meet, how they meet (in Newark or conference call), and if you have to be appointed. Establish a staff contact that a person could reach out to prior to a meeting/conference call. List these calls/meetings on the public BPU calendar.

**Current:** BPU in conjunction with the utility companies hosts CIEP customer education workshops in the spring. Currently there is only one basic worksheet available online to assist customers in preparing for third party shopping.

**Suggestion:** Develop an energy purchasing for dummies type of handbook that is more comprehensive and includes additional worksheets. Host an online seminar using WebEx like what PJM does for training seminars in addition to just hosting at a hotel site. This would allow potentially for more companies to participate without having to leave the company site. Additionally the information would be available for those smaller companies without energy managers to download or review with management before shopping.

**Current:** Collect CIEP Retail Adder funds and designate usage through Board order. Gather information through Board Order on suggestions for how to spend this money.

**Suggestion:** For matters that relate to CIEP customers or business customers in general, host a roundtable to discuss ways that business would like to see the money spent. Expand the time frame for discussion, consider posting in the registrar or widen the distribution list when seeking comments. Many companies do not access the Board Orders and may not know there is the opportunity to comment in a short time frame on a topic that has the potential to impact them greatly. Furthermore, when the Board decides how to spend this money they should publicize that too. The most recent Board Order on the Retail Adder was just posted online and was sent through a list serve email. Perhaps, there could be a what's new section or feature in the BPU newsletter to highlight when something is changed.

**Current:** Staff comments are not always made public or on the record.

**Suggestion:** Senior staff and staff often conduct research, are involved with working groups, and develop staff positions on issues that can

impact a regulation or order. It would be beneficial for business to know where staff is on an issue and this could be done through the admission of staff recommendations into the record.

**Current:** There is no clear indication of what will be reviewed by the Board through order or what will be vetted through regulation in the Register.

**Suggestion:** Again uniform business procedures and practices would help to address this issue by clearly laying out what issues are under board order and what needs to be examined in the register, or when it up to the discretion of the President as to which path an issue will be vetted.

**Current:** Businesses have to actively monitor what the Board does and search out ways to be involved.

**Suggestion:** Create a form or online signup for customers to sign up to receive news/alerts/orders etc from the Board.