

Legislation Text

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Authorizing the Committee on Appropriations to conduct hearings regarding the Philadelphia Water Department's equitable approach to workforce development, including employment and procurement strategies that support safe, diverse, and inclusive family-sustaining careers.

WHEREAS, The Philadelphia Water Department (PWD) has operated since 1801 as a municipal agency that supplies water, wastewater and stormwater services to Philadelphians; and

WHEREAS, Today, PWD leverages an operating and capital budget in excess of \$1 billion to support Philadelphians' fundamental human right to access clean, safe water through equitable approaches to ratemaking, infrastructure, and workforce development; and

WHEREAS, PWD's equitable approach to ratemaking includes the recent passage of the Tiered Assistance Program (TAP), the nation's first income-based water bill program, which now provides affordable bills and debt forgiveness for more than 15,000 low-income households; and

WHEREAS, PWD's equitable approach to sustainable infrastructure includes Green City, Clean Waters which directs investments in green stormwater infrastructure such as rain gardens and planters to reduce runoff, improve our natural resources, and beautify our neighborhoods; and

WHEREAS, PWD's equitable approach to workforce development includes employment and procurement procedures, policies, and practices that drive Philadelphians' access to safe, inclusive, and family-sustaining career opportunities, as well as programs that provide pathways for Philadelphia students, including Career and Technical Education (CTE) graduates; and

WHEREAS, City Council seeks to explore and recommend strategies for PWD to grow safe, diverse, and inclusive family-sustaining career opportunities by identifying new policies and procedures related to the Department's hiring, personnel, and employment functions, as well as workplace safety procedures particularly during the coronavirus pandemic; and

WHEREAS, City Council seeks to explore and recommend strategies for PWD to reform its procurement function, to identify new safe, diverse, and inclusive employment opportunities, to improve the transparency, accessibility, efficiency and inclusiveness of the procurement process, and to efficiently manage projects, from their initial design through their ultimate evaluation; and

WHEREAS, City Council's review of the PWD's procurement function should build upon city-wide procurement reforms highlighted during the Committee on Commerce and Economic Development's 2016 hearing on Resolution No. 160310, including but not limited to unbundling large projects into multiple smaller projects, expediting subcontractor crediting, enforcing local preference policies with an emphasis on Minority, Women, and Disabled Owned Business Enterprises (M/W/DSBEs), actively recruiting minorities and women in building trades, forging new pathways to union membership, developing apprenticeship opportunities, and selectively reducing bonding and insurance requirements that bar diverse workforce participation; now,

therefore, be it

RESOLVED, THAT THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, Hereby authorizes the Committee on Appropriations to conduct hearings regarding the Philadelphia Water Department's equitable approach to workforce development, including employment and procurement strategies that support safe, diverse, and inclusive family-sustaining careers.