

Prepared Testimony of

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Commissioner Nominee
Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission

before the

Pennsylvania Senate
Consumer Protection and Professional Licensure Committee

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Good Morning, Chairman Tomlinson, Chair Boscola, and honorable members of the Senate Consumer Protection and Professional Licensure Committee. I am Ralph Yanora, and I come before you as a nominee for Commissioner of the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission (PUC or Commission). I would like to thank you for the great honor and privilege to appear before you; to answer any questions you may have; and to seek your support for my confirmation as Commissioner. I also wish to thank Governor Wolf for his nomination and Senate Leadership for their support.

Additionally, I appreciate the support of PUC Chairman Brown Dutrieuille and of all the Commissioners.

And lastly, I thank my family for their unwavering support. By way of background, I reside in Pittston Township, Luzerne County, Pennsylvania with my wife Carmela and my daughter Christina.

I have been in the natural gas, water, and wastewater industries for more than 40 years. From 1974 to 1988, I was employed at Pennsylvania Gas & Water Company in its Gas and Water Distribution Operation and Maintenance Division. At the same time, I served as

Vice President of the Utility Workers Union of America Local #406. In 1988, I started a consulting company that provided operation and maintenance service to municipalities, water and wastewater companies, and commercial and industrial facilities. In 2001, I founded Pennsylvania Water Specialties Company (PAWSC). The company provides consulting and management services for cross-connection control programs, water-loss programs, as well as operation and maintenance programs for municipal systems and water and wastewater distribution companies. This year, I retired as Chief Executive Officer of PAWSC. While I no longer work with Pennsylvania Water Specialties Company, I will provide some background on how my experience shaped the company's operations.

By way of background, cross-connection control and backflow prevention is a very important part of the Pennsylvania Safe Water Drinking Act, which ensures that the public always has access to safe and clean drinking water. I worked with Pennsylvania Water Specialties Company, which is an accredited American Society of Sanitary Engineers (ASSE) School and a Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) training sponsor that provides various training classes for the water and wastewater industries. These classes include OSHA Safety Training, water distribution operation and, of course, backflow prevention training for administrators, surveyors, testers and technicians.

I have served the ASSE in multiple roles, including: President of the Northeast Pennsylvania Chapter, member of the Series 5000 Working Group, member of the Cross-Connection Control Technical Committee, and member of the Backflow Advisory Committee. Presently, I serve as Chairperson of the ASSE Certification School and Instructor Committee.

Through my work with the ASSE, I received the 2014 Rand Ackroyd Award. This award is presented to an individual who has thorough knowledge and dedication to the ASSE backflow program and who has demonstrated achievements in protecting our drinking water supply through cross-connection control and education. I am also a past recipient of the 2012 ASSE Fellow Award.

In addition to working with the ASSE, I was the past Region 2 Director of the American Backflow Prevention Association.

Currently, I serve as a member of the Northeast Pennsylvania Leadership Group. In addition, I am a Township Supervisor for Pittston, a position I will resign upon confirmation. I also serve as an Associate Member of Pennsylvania Rural Water Association (PRWA) and manage the organization's Backflow Prevention Training Program. The PRWA is a statewide organization with a mission to support its approximately 1,100 municipal members along with all water and wastewater operators throughout the Commonwealth. Through its members, the PRWA has more than 2 million water and wastewater customers across Pennsylvania.

In addition to this service, I completed water distribution operation and maintenance classes at the Pennsylvania State University, Harrisburg Campus. I am an ASSE certified instructor and proctor, as well as a DEP approved trainer and instructor. Finally, I also am a licensed Master Plumber.

I am proud of my prior and ongoing work efforts to ensure safe, adequate, and continuous drinking water supply throughout our Commonwealth, which is very much a part of the Commission's core mission. I believe my background and experience will benefit the PUC and help me with the decisions I will make as a Commissioner. I served customers throughout my career, and I look forward to continuing to serve and protect the Commonwealth's utility customers while finding the appropriate balance between the needs of these consumers with those of the regulated utilities.

My initial goals as a Commissioner center around three interrelated areas:

- Infrastructure – Pennsylvania has an aging and complex utility infrastructure that impacts our health and safety, as well as the way we deliver critical services to utility customers.
- Education – Consistent with Commission enforcement of PA One Call, there should be more education of homeowners, utilities, municipalities, private contractors and businesses, and all consumers about the importance of “calling before you dig.”
- Water – I will work collectively to address growing statewide and national concerns about drinking water quality, wastewater treatment, and stormwater runoff.

I am interested in working on a holistic approach to how Pennsylvania addresses its water utility resources.

Water is the only utility service that our citizens put into their bodies. As a Commissioner, I will work to ensure that Pennsylvania customers have access to safe, adequate, and continuous water distribution, collection, and management.

I would be honored to pursue these three important goals as a Commissioner at the PUC. I understand that I am being considered as one of five independent commissioners at an independent regulatory commission.

I further understand that the General Assembly sets the policy and passes laws that the Commission is responsible for implementing. Please also know that should I be confirmed as Commissioner, I will always be available to discuss your concerns.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you. I ask for your support of my confirmation and I will answer any questions you may have for me.