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## **ICC Holds First Annual Railroad Supplier Diversity Policy Session**

CHICAGO...On Friday, the Illinois Commerce Commission (ICC) held its first annual railroad supplier diversity policy session to hear from the Illinois Railroad Association and representatives of Class I Railroads about their supplier diversity programs.

The session was the result of a new law, [Public Act 100-0423](#), which states that Class I Railroads may submit to the Commission an annual report on supplier diversity. Additionally, the law requires the Commission to hold an annual workshop to hear from the railroads and/or advocates about solutions to improve supplier diversity.

“Embracing and encouraging diversity in the supply chain is an effort the Commission is dedicated to and is proud to lead,” said Brien J. Sheahan, Chairman of the ICC.

State Senator Martin Sandoval, sponsor of the legislation, attended and spoke at the policy session; he also had the opportunity to ask questions of the railroads.

Pursuant to the act, the Illinois Railroad Association voluntarily submitted an annual Railroad Supplier Diversity Report to the ICC on April 17, 2018, on behalf of the seven Class I Railroads operating in Illinois. Joseph Ciaccio, President of the Illinois Railroad Association, gave a broad overview of the railroad industry in Illinois and said the railroads are “committed to having a diverse workforce and want to be a part of the process. We will continue to file reports voluntarily and are committed to improving diverse spending numbers.”

Lynn Baker, Manager – Sourcing for BNSF Railway, and Wes Hutcherson, General Director of Strategic Sourcing – Supply Chain for Union Pacific Railroad, discussed their companies’ supplier diversity programs in more detail.

ICC Commissioner John Rosales told the railroad representatives that he is frequently asked by diverse suppliers about where they can go to directly contact the railroads to ask questions and learn more about contracting opportunities. Baker and Hutcherson suggested diverse businesses should visit the Class I railroad's supplier diversity webpages and apply on line to be a supplier.

On September 5, the Commission held its annual supplier diversity policy session for Illinois regulated utilities which focused on barriers facing minority/women and veteran-owned suppliers, and how to increase diverse spending for professional services. Commissioners Sadzi Oliva and Ethan Kimbrel, and Acting Commissioner Anastasia Palivos, raised these topics with the railroads as well.

Class I American-owned railroads include Union Pacific, BNSF, CSX, Kansas City Southern, and Norfolk Southern. The total annual diverse spend among American Class I railroads is more than \$1.5 billion.

Visit the ICC website [here](#) to view the supplier diversity report from the Illinois Railroad Association, as well as the reports submitted by Illinois utilities and electric suppliers. Visit [here](#) on the Illinois Railroad Association website to learn more about each railroads supplier diversity program.

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#### ***About the Illinois Commerce Commission***

The Illinois Commerce Commission (ICC) is a quasi-judicial body made up of five Commissioners. Through its Public Utility Program, the Commission oversees the provision of adequate, reliable, efficient and safe utility services at the least possible cost to Illinois citizens served by electric, natural gas, telecommunications, water and sewer public utility companies. Through its Transportation Regulatory Program, the Commission oversees public safety and consumer protection programs with regard to intrastate commercial motor carriers of general freight, household goods movers, relocation towers, safety towers, personal property warehouses and repossession agencies. The Commission's Rail Safety Program also inspects and regulates the general safety of railroad tracks, facilities and equipment in the state.

To learn more about the Commission, its offices and bureaus, click [here](#). If you are a consumer who needs help resolving a utility dispute call 800-524-0795 or file an online complaint [here](#). For a complaint related to transportation, call 217-782-6448.

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