

PRESS RELEASE

The Public Utilities Commission (PUC) mourns the loss of Justice (ret'd) Prem Persaud

The Chairperson, Commissioners and Staff of the PUC are deeply saddened at the passing of Justice (ret'd) Prem Persaud CCH, former Chairman of the Public Utilities Commission (PUC) and we extend our condolences to his wife, children and other family members.

Justice Persaud, the longest serving Chairman of the PUC was appointed as Chair of the Commission on June 27th, 2000 and completed his tenure at the Commission on June 20th, 2017. Prior to his appointment, Justice Persaud served as Puisne Judge of the High Court of Guyana, acted as Chief Justice and he retired as a Justice of Appeal.

Justice (ret'd) Prem Persaud was appointed under the 1999 version of the PUC Act which empowered the Commission to exercise its independence by delivering its own decisions and the creation of its own internal structure. He was instrumental in the Commission's transition from its telecommunications regulatory mandate to the existing multi- sector regulatory environment which now includes the water and electricity sectors.

During his time at the Commission, Justice Persaud presided over seminal matters as it relates to the expansion of the sectors, the first rate setting for the Guyana Water Inc. and numerous hearings and negotiations into the quality of services of the Guyana Power and Light Inc. together with the entry of competition within the mobile sector. This included the critical interconnection of parties in the telecommunications sector to facilitate seamless communication/connectivity between subscribers of the two networks. Landmark PUC decisions included the introduction of "calling party pays", ordering "per second billing" and setting a floor and ceiling rates for the mobile sector.

Mr. Persaud's judicial acumen and affable manner were always on display as he mediated the cause of both Operators, be it in the telecommunications, water or electricity sectors and that of the Guyanese consumer. He was instrumental in expanding the reach of the Commission to the ancient county of Berbice in the year 2012.

Justice Persaud was one of the persons who strongly advocated the establishment of the Organisation of Caribbean Utility Regulators(OOCUR), and was one of the signatories of the agreement at *Laughing Waters*, Ocho Rios, Jamaica in 2002 which resulted in the formation of OOCUR, a non-profit organization to enhance utility regulation by promoting training, information sharing, transparent regulation through independent regulators, and understanding regulatory issues amongst its member countries in the Caribbean. Justice Prem Persaud served as its chair on a number of intervals. In paying tribute to Justice Persaud, a member of the Executive Council of OOCUR noted that "He was a steadfast supporter of building regulatory capacity in the region and generously gave his time and energy into ensuring the success of OOCUR".

His *esprit de corps* within the Commission remains today as part of his rich legacy as we continue to strive for excellence on behalf of the Utilities and Consumers of Guyana.

May he rest in peace.

This press release is issued by the Public Utilities Commission.

29th November 2023.