



## **MERRIBEL AYRES**

Summary Statement

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### CONTACT

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### PROFESSIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

- ✓ Extensive experience in advising international companies and organizations (US, French, Italian and British) at the CEO and Senior Executive levels.
- ✓ Board of Director service in companies and organizations engaged in the energy sector (both conventional and renewable energy sources).
- ✓ Well recognized for expertise in sustainability, particularly with regard to carbon dioxide emissions and its effects on climate change. Public speaker in business forums.
- ✓ Knowledgeable about ESG (Environmental, Social and Governance) programs relevant to stakeholders and investors.
- ✓ Skilled in creating effective messaging strategies and narratives.
- ✓ Impressive network of professional relationships in both the United States and Europe.
- ✓ Strong entrepreneurial approach that fosters innovative solutions with impact on goals.
- ✓ Philanthropic engagement with Arts organizations in both the US and Italy

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### HISTORY

- 26 Years as President of Lighthouse Consulting Group: advising CEOs and Senior Executives on business strategy, national policy, communications and governance.
- 21 Years of service on Boards of Directors and Advisory Groups: including CMS Energy Corporation, Alliance Resources LP, the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL), & the United States Energy Association (USEA).
- 17 Years in management and leadership roles prior to establishing an energy & environment consulting firm (Lighthouse).

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### LANGUAGES

Native English speaker with a competency in French and a good understanding of spoken & written Italian.

*CV materials also available in Italian and French.*



### **Merribel Ayres: Director Profile**

Merribel Ayres, an American businesswoman co-located in Milan (Italy) and Washington (DC), has 35 years-experience in the energy and environmental sectors with both US and European firms. As a corporate Director, she has played a leadership role on environmental, social and governance issues (ESG), where she has been recognized for successful impacts on profitability and risk management.

Ms. Ayres has been a central player in the international energy transition. Her in-depth background with leading energy businesses (their investors and stakeholders) enables her to provide a critical perspective for Boards, with an ESG focus. She is recognized for her expertise in Climate, Carbon mitigation and related energy system strategies.

Her Board experience includes a Director role with CMS Energy (NYSE: CMS), a Michigan-based electric and gas utility. At the conclusion for her 9-years of service, she was recognized by her fellow directors for significant contributions to the company's forward strategy, with an emphasis on clean energy, environmental and sustainability matters, as well as corporate governance. Her committee assignments during her tenure at CMS included: Governance and Corporate Responsibility, Finance, Audit and Compensation.

She is currently a Board Member of the United States Energy Association (USEA). She also served as a member of the Advisory Council of the National Renewable Energy Laboratory and as a Director at Alliance Resources, LP.

In Milan, she serves on the Steering Committee of Chapter Zero Italy, the Climate Governance Initiative (CGI) of the World Economic Forum, which is focused on Board of Director engagement on climate impacts and strategies for reduction of greenhouse gases.

A strong communicator, Ms. Ayres is experienced in public speaking. Prior to the COVID lockdown, she chaired the North American Session at the World Energy Congress (Triennial event) in Abu Dhabi. She recently chaired a webinar on ESG topics (<https://www.ourenergypolicy.org/esg-and-energy/>). She also gave an on-line tutorial for Forum 2100 (<http://www.forum2100.org>) on the political realities of developing Climate Policies in the US Congress.

As founder and principal of Lighthouse Consulting Group, an advisory firm established in 1996 serving both US and European clients, Ms. Ayres has provided management services to CEOs and senior executive teams. Under her direction, Lighthouse was chosen to lead the prestigious US Climate Action Partnership (a coalition of 25 major companies and five national environmental organizations).

As an Advisor and Director, she has helped major companies to:

- Identify strategic partners, anticipate the future of their sector and set (reset) business objectives accordingly.
- Navigate and facilitate relationships with key internal and external stakeholders (Business, Gov. & NGO).
- Assess and address corporate strategy impacts of investor demands and related policy initiatives.
- Design and deploy messages, narratives and communications campaigns.
- Manage succession planning in the C-suite, including Board composition and related dynamics.

Client Companies have included BP, EDF (Electricité de France), Enel North America, ESB International (Ireland), Hydro Quebec, Duke Energy, Exelon, Pepco Holdings, and The World Energy Council on Sustainability in Geneva. (Full list available on request).

While Ms. Ayres' business career has had an energy focus, she is often asked to advise on entrepreneurship in other sectors. Most recently, she has been appointed Chair of International Initiatives for Milan's Pinacoteca di Brera where she will share new approaches for donor engagement and outreach, as practiced in US philanthropic organizations.

She is a *cum laude* graduate of Bryn Mawr College, holds a post-graduate degree from Trinity College in Dublin, Ireland, and received advanced leadership training at the Harvard Kennedy School. She has participated in several high-level Director programs (e.g. Harvard & Wharton School of Business). She has competency in French and a good understanding of spoken and written Italian.