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For Immediate release

NEWS RELEASE

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Atlanta Is Safer Under Pipeline Safety Consent Agreement Approved By Public Service Commission

ATLANTA, October 16, 2012—Today, the Georgia Public Service Commission unanimously approved a Consent Agreement with the City of Atlanta. The Agreement resolves 67 alleged violations of the Georgia Utility Facility Protection Act (GUFPA), a law requiring anyone digging with mechanized equipment to call 8-1-1 so underground utilities can be located and properly marked and damage to natural gas and other underground lines can be prevented.

Under this agreement the City will pay a civil penalty of \$100,000. This amount was reduced from \$585,000 after the City agreed to train its employees and change its excavation procedures. All City employees and subcontractors, who are directly or indirectly involved with excavations, will attend Commission-approved damage prevention training and revised policies and procedures will be implemented so the City's excavating process will adhere to provisions of GUFPA.

Jo Ann Macrina, Commissioner of Atlanta's Department of Watershed Management, has worked closely with the PSC to improve policy, procedures and training. Mayor Kasim Reed and Commissioner Macrina are committed to ensuring compliance with all safety regulations and collaborating with other utilities. PSC Commissioner Lauren "Bubba" McDonald, Jr., stated that the City has done an outstanding job with its policy statement and safety procedures.

PSC Commissioner Chuck Eaton thanked Commissioner McDonald for his leadership in improving pipeline safety and agreed that prevention is more important than collecting fines.

The PSC's practice is to give GUFPA violators a choice: either pay the full civil penalty or pay a reduced penalty and send employees to damage prevention training. As a result over 11,000 excavators and their employees have been trained during the last four years and numerous incidents, and the associated injuries and economic loss, have been prevented in Georgia.

For more information, use the Docket Search function on the Commission website, www.psc.state.ga.us, and enter Docket Number 33494.

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