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NEWS RELEASE FROM THE OFFICE OF COMMISSIONER TIM ECHOLS

COMMISSIONER TIM ECHOLS SWORN IN FOR SECOND TERM ON THE GEORGIA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

December 16, 2016 – (ATLANTA) – Governor Nathan Deal Thursday administered the oath of office to Commissioner Tim Echols as Echols will officially begin his second six-year term on the Georgia Public Service Commission on January 1, 2017. Echols took the oath as his wife Windy held the Bible in the Governor’s Office at the State Capitol. (See photo below) Echols won re-election last month and received the highest vote total of any candidate on the ballot with more than 2.3 million votes.

“I want to continue to keep rates low. That is my top priority,” said Echols. “That includes easier ways to pay, and special programs that allow people to reduce their monthly bill. Our rates are among the lowest in the nation.”

Commission Chairman Chuck Eaton said, “Tim is a hard working Commissioner who serves the people of Georgia well.”

Before Echols even took office, he added solar thermal to his Winterville home, near Athens. Renewables will remain an important priority to him. “I want to continue to add renewable energy to our grid,” said Echols. “Our Commission just added 1.6 Gigawatts to be procured 2017-2020.”

Echols has worked closely with Commissioner Lauren “Bubba” McDonald to add that renewable energy. “It’s a pleasure to serve with Commissioner Echols,” said McDonald. “Congratulations to him for another six years on the Commission.”

Echols said that one of the most important aspects of being a PSC Commissioner is thinking long-term about energy and related issues. “It is important to me to see that there is a plan for recycling the millions of solar panels in our state at the end of their life,” said Echols. “We don’t need them to end up in our landfills.”

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Stan Wise, who will be the Commission Chair in 2017, said the Commission is on the right track and voters see that. “An overwhelming number of Georgians have re-elected Commissioner Echols to his second term and I congratulate Tim on his victory,” Wise said. “In addition to validating his work on the Commission, it confirms the Commission’s effort on behalf of all Georgians.”

Echols has emphasized the need to have a diverse fuel mix for energy in case of market volatility or unwanted regulation. “I want to keep our energy portfolio diverse so that if gas lines become constrained, or fracking is somehow further regulated, Georgia has the energy we need,” said Echols. “That is why we are building carbon-free nuclear reactors that work hand-in-hand with renewables.” Echols serves as the Telecom chair for the PSC both in Atlanta and in the national organization, NARUC (National Association of Regulated Utility Commissioners). He continues to advocate for rural broadband across the state. “I want to help rural Georgia get connected to the internet,” said Echols. “Folks in some parts of rural Georgia find themselves once again waiting in line, just like they did for electricity, basic telephone service and even mail delivery.”

After building a national non-profit organization, TeenPact, Echols ran for and was elected to his first term on the Commission in November 2010. When Echols took office, Georgia was 34th in solar power. Now, six years later the state is 4th in the nation in approved solar. Echols' commitment to promoting clean energy has resulted in not only millions of solar panels being installed in Georgia, but has resulted in more electric vehicles as well. Our state is second in the nation in electric vehicles--only behind California.

Echols created the Clean Energy Roadshow that has traveled the state every summer for the last six years. This educational event travels to cities around the state helping commuters, businesses and municipal governments evaluate alternative fuel for their transportation and residential use.

Additionally, Echols created the UnHoly Tour, a rolling seminar for policy makers to help them better understand human trafficking and its impact on our state.

Echols and his wife, Windy, have been married 33 years and they have seven children. He lives in Jefferson, Georgia. His complete biography and photo are found on the Commission web site at <http://www.psc.state.ga.us/content.aspx?c=/commissioners/tim-echols/?tab=2>

