

**CONSUMER ADVISORY****GEORGIA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: January 27, 1998**CONTACT:** Harriet Van Norte, Consumer Affairs Director
(404) 656-6558 or 1-800-282-5813

BEWARE OF CALLERS OFFERING DISCOUNTS**POSING AS REPRESENTATIVES OF LOCAL TELEPHONE COMPANIES**

ATLANTA -- The Georgia Public Service Commission (PSC) is warning telephone consumers to be on alert for telemarketers who may identify themselves as representatives of BellSouth or one of the State's independent telephone companies. Recently, customers of BellSouth, Ringgold Telephone Company and Standard Telephone Company have complained to the PSC that they believe the person calling them misrepresented who they worked for, why they were calling, and purported to offer a 20% discount on future long distance calls if the customer remained with their current local telephone service provider. Consumers are provided with an 800 number (800-325-1000) to call if they have questions. All calls placed to that number by PSC staff resulted in a busy signal.

Customers, who called the PSC, believed that the conversation was designed to get them to answer a series of questions that may be used as the authorization to change their long distance carrier. During the conversation with the telemarketer, customers were assured that nothing was changing with regard to their local service and that they were being set up on "a least cost routing plan" for long distance service that would allow them to receive a 20% discount.

If you receive a telemarketing call and suspect that an attempt is being made to change your local or long distance service and you are not interested in changing, tell the caller you don't make buying decisions on the telephone. Ask for the caller's name, the name and telephone number of the company he or she is representing and the company's certificate number granted by the PSC. Then call the PSC to verify the company's certification and complaint track record.

Read your bill carefully each month. If you identify any unfamiliar names or charges, call your local telephone company and ask about the items. For additional information or to file a complaint, contact the Georgia Public Service Commission at (800) 282-5813.

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