

GEORGIA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

NEWS RELEASE



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
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THE RESULTS ARE IN!

PSC TO VOTE ON BALLOT RESULTS FOR EXPANDED TOLL-FREE CALLING; RESULTS POSTED ON INTERNET

ATLANTA -- Over one hundred thousand Georgians voted last month on expanding their local toll-free calling area. Telephone customers approved 615 of the 1390 routes under consideration statewide. The Georgia Public Service Commission (PSC) will vote on the ballot results at the Administrative Session scheduled for 10:00 a.m., Tuesday, May 19, 1998. Toll-free dialing in most areas is expected to begin by June 1, 1998.

The PSC sent out 389,869 ballots last month to telephone customers in hundreds of cities throughout Georgia seeking public opinion on whether to raise basic service rates in exchange for expanded toll-free calling to nearby communities.

"We are very pleased with the results," said PSC Chairman Bobby Baker. "Over 121,000 telephone customers returned ballots and nearly half of the routes balloted were approved."

Legislation passed last year by the General Assembly in House Bill 888 calls for the PSC to implement toll-free calling between communities where the central telephone offices are twenty-two (22) miles or less apart. While the approved routes may be toll-free, an increase in basic service rates is often necessary to compensate telephone companies for the loss in toll revenue.

Pursuant to H.B. 888, the PSC will automatically implement routes where the basic service rate increase is less than \$2.00 or 25% of the basic monthly rate. Where the increases are expected to be greater than \$2.00, the PSC sent out ballots to customers listing the proposed rate increase and the new exchanges that consumers would be able to call if the measure were approved.

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