

GEORGIA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

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NATURAL GAS COMPETITION**PSC: DON'T FRET NOVEMBER 1**

ATLANTA -- Atlanta Gas Light Company (AGL) customers are flooding the Georgia Public Service Commission (PSC) with calls worried they must choose a gas supplier by November 1. Not so explains PSC Chairman Bobby Baker: "November 1 is simply the first day consumers can begin service with a new gas supplier, it is not the deadline for choosing a supplier."

Since certifying nineteen (19) gas marketers October 6, several thousand Georgians have chosen their own gas supplier with service beginning November 1. Once the market is fully- deregulated, AGL will no longer sell gas directly to consumers, but will become a distribution company responsible for transporting gas to homes and businesses. Marketing companies will be responsible for selling gas directly to the 1.4 million customers currently served by AGL. The new law passed in 1997 only applies to customers of Atlanta Gas Light Company, not customers served by United Cities Gas Company or municipal authorities.

"Consumers shouldn't feel pressure to choose a gas supplier at this stage in the process," said Baker. "There is more than adequate time to evaluate the marketers and make an informed decision."

Consumers are not forced to make a decision until it has been declared that the service area in which they live has effective competition. The state is divided up into nine service areas (Atlanta, Augusta, Brunswick, Macon, Northeast Georgia, West Georgia, Rome, Savannah, Valdosta). Once 33% of the customers in a given service area have chosen a gas marketer, the remaining customers will be sent a notice that they have 100 days to select a new supplier. If a customer does not choose a gas marketer at the end of 100 days, the PSC will randomly assign the customer to one of the nineteen marketers certified by the PSC.

In cooperation with the PSC, AGL will soon begin a customer education effort complete with television, radio and newspaper advertisements, bill stuffers, etc., to educate consumers about competition and how best to choose a marketer.

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[Note to media: A Q&A on gas competition, a listing of the marketers and information on how to select a gas marketer can be found on the PSC web site under "Consumer Corner" at www.psc.state.ga.us.]