

**MEDIA ADVISORY****GEORGIA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION**

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**PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION VOTES ON PROPOSED GAS SLAMMING RULES**

**ATLANTA – This morning the Georgia Public Service Commission ("PSC" or "Commission") proposed new rules to prevent the unauthorized switching of consumers' natural gas suppliers—a practice known as "slamming"—and protect consumers from being charged for any unauthorized services on their bills—a practice known as "cramming." Under existing PSC rules, the Commission has the authority to revoke or suspend the certificates of authority of marketers found to have "slammed" or "crammed" customers. It also can fine offenders up to \$15,000 for each initial violation and \$10,000 each day on which the violation continues thereafter. If adopted, the new rules seek to enhance the Commission's existing authority by requiring that marketers follow a prescribed verification process in each instance in which it is represented that a consumer has chosen to switch natural gas service providers.**

**"The proposed rules issued by the Commission today will encourage a smoother transition to market based competition in the Atlanta Gas Light Company service area by providing consumers additional protections from unlawful business activities," stated PSC Chairman Stan Wise. He added, "Let this serve as notice to all natural gas marketers that the Commission will not hesitate to take stringent action against any unscrupulous marketer attempting to increase its profit margin by engaging in fraudulent practices in the state of Georgia."**

**Under the proposed rules, a marketer must keep documentation for at least one year detailing the manner in which it was verified that a particular consumer requested to switch natural gas providers. In its proposed rules, the PSC has directed that this be done by obtaining either:**

- 1. Written authorization from a consumer;**
- 2. Verbal authorization from a consumer; or**
- 3. Verification by an independent third-party**

**The rules also contemplate that within seven business days following the receipt of a consumer's request for a change of marketer, the newly selected marketer shall send to each new customer via first class mail an information package that includes confirmation of: the new marketer's name; the type(s) of services requested by the consumer; a description of the terms, conditions and charges that will apply as a result of the switch; and the name, address and phone number of a representative at the PSC to whom consumer complaints may be forwarded.**

**The Commission hopes to adopt the proposed rules in July—shortly before the process will**

**begin in August to randomly assign to gas marketers those customers who have not yet selected one.**

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