

PRESS RELEASE**GEORGIA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION**

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COMMISSION MOVES TO SLAM NATURAL GAS MARKETER

ATLANTA- In response to alleged consumer complaints of unauthorized natural gas marketer switching-- a practice known as "slamming"-- by United Gas Management, the Georgia Public Service Commission today voted 5-0 to schedule a hearing to fully examine these allegations. If found guilty of the allegations the Commission may fine the company up to \$15,000 per violation and revoke the company's authority to conduct business in the state's natural gas market.

The hearing, which has been scheduled for October, will allow the Commission staff to call witnesses who claim to have been "slammed" by United Gas. The company will then have the opportunity to rebut witnesses' testimony and present its case before the Commissioners.

"Let this be warning to all certified natural gas marketers in the state of Georgia to conduct their business in an upright and honorable manner," commented Commission Chairman Stan Wise. "The Commission will take swift and decisive action against any marketer found engaged in the slamming or misrepresentation to consumers," added Wise.

Since deregulation began in November of 1998 the Commission has received approximately 200 complaints about United Gas Management. Although the overwhelming majority of these complaints have been from slamming they also include the company misrepresenting themselves before consumers.

Under the deregulation law and subsequent Commission action, consumers have until August 11, 1999 to choose a marketer before the process begins of randomly assigning one to them.

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