

**GEORGIA PUBLIC SERVICE****COMMISSION CONFISCATES \$117,000**

TROUP COUNTY-At approximately 4:10 PM on November 29, 1999 a Georgia Public Service Commission (PSC) enforcement officer observed a two-axle 1986 Mack truck not properly identified or without a visible tag-each a violation of state law. After stopping the truck to perform a commercial vehicle safety inspection and registration check, the officer obtained the driver's consent to search the vehicle. During this search the officer found \$117,000 in cash-money the driver later admitted was to be used for the purchase of illegal drugs in Mexico.

The suspect, Victorino Vaquez, was released on bail from the Troup County Sheriff's Department and received citations from the PSC for failing to have the appropriate tag, duty status records and vehicle identification. The United States Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) is currently investigating the incident and looking into the possibility of charging the suspect with other offenses.

"We are very proud of the Georgia Public Service Commission enforcement division," commented Commissioner David Burgess. "Not only does it actively remove and decommission unsafe commercial vehicles from the streets in Georgia, but it also works hand-in-hand with other law enforcement agencies to ensure that commercial vehicles passing through this state are not being used to run drugs or drug money," Burgess added.

This confiscation comes on the heels of an incident that occurred on November 22, 1999 when another PSC officer pulled over a commercial vehicle on I-20 near Villa Rica and subsequently found \$11,274 in the vehicle. While the PSC cited that driver for not possessing a logbook and not having a Single State Registration, the DEA is currently investigating other possible charges.

The Georgia Public Service Commission presently has 41 certified enforcement officers performing safety inspections and other associated safety functions. According to the most recent statistics available for this year, PSC enforcement officers have conducted 22,654 vehicle inspections with 5,021 vehicles and 2,664 drivers being placed out of service.