

COMMISSION ADOPTS NATURAL GAS SLAMMING RULES

ATLANTA—In its continued efforts to protect Georgia's consumers, the Georgia Public Service Commission (Commission) today adopted by a vote of 5-0 strong rules to prevent the changing of a customers' natural gas provider without proper authorization, a practice known as "slamming".

"These rules, which carefully outline how a customer transitions from one natural gas marketer to another, will help ensure that the most important aspect of deregulation—customer choice—is maintained," commented Commission Chairman Bob Durden. "We will continue to monitor marketers actions in this fully deregulated market and will act quickly and justly if any one of them is

found to have slammed consumers in Georgia," Chairman Durden, who oversaw his first Commission procedure as Chairman for the year 2000, added.

Under the 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 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 mandate 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.

If a marketer is found to have slammed a consumer, the Commission, under the law, may fine them up to \$15,000 for each initial offense and \$10,000 each day on which the violation continues.