

## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **GEORGIA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION**

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#### **GEORGIA CONSUMERS TO SAVE OVER \$15 MILLION ON PHONE BILLS**

(ATLANTA)—In response to a Public Service Commission (Commission) decision in late December of 1999, long distance providers have recently filed documentation that indicates that Georgia consumers will save over \$15 million on their phone bills this year. These savings will come from a reduction in switched access fees charged by BellSouth.

Switched access fees are charges the incumbent service provider—in this case BellSouth—is allowed to pass along to long distance companies, such as AT&T and MCIWorldCom, for access to their networks. This past December the Commission set the access fee at roughly one-and-a-half cents per minute, down from two-and-a-half cents per minute and stipulated that the cost savings must be directly passed back to customers.

"Now that the filings from the companies regarding this decision are in, it is clear that the ultimate winners from telecommunications deregulation will be the consumers in Georgia," commented Commissioner Stan Wise. "I commend the telecommunication companies for coming to the table and working with us on this issue and ensuring that Georgians will continue to receive low rates and high quality service, the ultimate intention of the telecommunications act," Wise added.

As a consequence of this and similar decisions in previous years, Georgia has the lowest access fees in the nine states served by BellSouth and the eighth lowest access fees nationwide.