

PRESS RELEASE
GEORGIA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

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**PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION DECLINES TO AUTHORIZE
THE ISSUANCE OF ANOTHER NEW AREA CODE IN GEORGIA**

ATLANTA—In an unprecedented move earlier today, the Georgia Public Service Commission ("Commission" or "PSC") voted unanimously to disapprove the issuance of a new area code for the 678 service area.

Earlier this year, the North American Numbering Plan Administration for the Federal Communications Commission ("FCC") filed a petition with the PSC recommending that it approve a relief plan in which a new area code would be overlayed on the areas currently being served by 678. Unless some type of area code relief was provided, the PSC was informed that the availability of numbers in this area would be exhausted by the beginning of next year.

In denying the petition for a new area code, the Commission expressed an unwillingness to authorize the issuance of a new area code when it appeared that tens of thousands of telephone numbers in the 678 area were not being used. "What we have here is a very inefficient way of assigning telephone numbers," commented Commissioner David Burgess. "I think that it's time that this Commission sent a message to the FCC and let it know that we simply cannot sit back and continue to inconvenience the subscribers in the state and unnecessarily waste telephone numbers here because they are a precious commodity," he added. In voicing support for the denial of the request for a new area code, Commissioner Robert Baker remarked, "We've got over seven million access line combinations in 678 that are available and are not going to be utilized." He stated further, "It is time to get serious with this issue."

In 1997, the Commission first implemented an all-services overlay by introducing the 678 area code to relieve both the 404 and 770 area codes. Since doing so, the PSC has directed that rate center consolidation be studied as a potential number conservation measure. The Commission also recently petitioned the FCC for authority to implement measures to prolong the life of the area codes assigned to this state. Despite these efforts, however, a shortage of number resources in Georgia has continued to be a problem.

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