

PRESS RELEASE
GEORGIA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: July 18, 2000

**CONTACT: Helen O'Leary, Acting Public Information Officer/Executive Secretary
(404) 656-4540 or 1-800-282-5813**

GEORGIA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION ACCEPTS ENERGY AMERICA STIPULATION

ATLANTA—Earlier today, the Georgia Public Service Commission ("Commission") considered for acceptance a stipulation entered into by its Staff and Energy America, LLC as a resolution of pending allegations that this natural gas marketer engaged in unfair business practices. After doing so, the Commission voted to approve this stipulation on the condition that one of its provisions be deleted and that several others be added.

As initially proposed by the parties, this stipulation called for Energy America to confirm an individual's new enrollment as a customer with the company via a third-party verification system. It also required the company to handle customer complaints in a timely manner with a three-way call process and to designate an employee to assist the Commission Staff with consumer complaints. Energy America agreed to create a \$75,000 energy fund to assist the company's elderly and low income citizens in paying gas bills during the winter heating season and to pay \$25,000 into the state treasury. The parties also agreed that any customer of Energy America who testified at the hearing before the Commission earlier this summer would not be obligated to pay any balances that may be outstanding on their accounts. The final paragraph of the stipulation contained an agreement by the parties that any violation of the provisions of the stipulation may result in the imposition of a \$2,000 fine per occurrence on the company.

In considering all of the terms of this agreement for acceptance, the Commission voted to delete this final paragraph of the stipulation on the grounds that it was not consistent with state law. The remaining portions of the stipulation were approved subject to several additional terms being added, including a requirement that Energy America agree to comply with the Federal Trade Commission's regulations for door-to-door sales. Further, for a six months period, Energy America must provide the Commission with advance notice of the areas in which it will be conducting its door-to-door marketing. During this same period of time and for the next six months thereafter, the third-party verification company used by Energy America to confirm its new customer enrollments must use a script that has been approved by the Commission for this purpose.