



**NEWS RELEASE**  
**GEORGIA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION**

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**Commission Approves Request for Waiver of Billing Rules, Denies Reconsideration of Emergency Rules**

ATLANTA – The Public Service Commission today unanimously approved a brief delay in implementing portions of the Gas Marketers Billing Practices Rules sought by three natural gas marketers, Georgia Natural Gas Service, Energy America, and SCANA Energy. These marketers will have until March 1, 2001 to ensure that their bills comply with the Commission’s rules. In documents recently filed with the Commission, these three marketers indicated they needed additional time to make programming changes so that their bills would be in compliance with the rules that were enacted. All other marketers should be in full compliance with the rules.

The billing rules as approved on December 21, 2000, require gas marketers to mail bills to consumers within 45 days after the distribution company reads the customer’s meters. If the marketer fails to provide a bill in a timely manner, they must allow consumers “a reasonable time” to pay the charges that were not timely billed. This rule means consumers will have as long to pay the bill as the period of time it took to send the bill. Marketers may not charge interest on any of the late bill amounts nor disconnect the consumer’s gas service during this period. None of the granted waivers affect these provisions of the rule.

The rules also require items that must be printed on each gas bill clearly stating the time of the billing period; the cost per unit for the specific quantity of natural gas used; interstate capacity charge; exact amount of the base charge; any customer service charge; and any credits or balance owed. The bills must also have a toll-free telephone number for customer service “in a clear and conspicuous place.”

In other action, the Commission rejected SCANA Energy’s request to reconsider the Emergency Rules approved on January 17, 2001. Those rules allow residential customers to switch gas marketers once a month regardless of any outstanding balance owed to their current marketer.

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