



NEWS RELEASE
GEORGIA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

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**COMMISSION REJECTS LIMITS ON SWITCHING NATURAL GAS
MARKETERS; ISSUES GUIDELINES ON GAS DISCONNECTIONS**

ATLANTA –The Public Service Commission today denied a proposal that would have limited natural gas customers ability to switch marketers despite having unpaid bills. The Commission accepted the staff's recommendation to turn down the proposed change in Atlanta Gas Light Company's rules. The Commission adopted an amendment by Commissioner David Burgess to revisit the issue in 30 days. Marketers are to file with the Commission the number of switches that have occurred without the customer making payment arrangements with their marketer. The Commission again advises consumers they are obligated to pay for any gas they use and should make arrangements for payment if they are in danger of being disconnected. **Consumers should protect their credit**

The Commission adopted unanimously a procedure for disconnecting gas service following the end of the April 1, 2001 ban on residential natural gas shutoffs. Atlanta Gas Light will process disconnection requests from marketers based on a marketer's percentage of the market. However, an amendment proposed by Commissioner Lauren "Bubba" McDonald, Jr. would allocate 25% of the AGL cutoffs amongst all marketers except Shell, SCANA and Georgia Natural. The remaining 75 % would be allocated amongst all marketers by market share. The above provisions apply only to customers of competitive natural gas marketers.

In other action, the Commission issued a notice of proposed rulemaking that would halt any natural gas disconnection between November 15 and March 15 if the projected temperature for the next 72 hours were 32 degrees or lower beginning at 8 a.m. on the date of the proposed disconnection. The Commission will receive comments until 4 p.m. April 27, 2001.

The Commission also postponed action on a complaint against Atlanta Gas Light for reportedly violating the Utilities Facilities Protection Act in connection with a July 9, 2000 incident in the 2700 block of Piedmont Road. The complaint will be considered at the Commission's Energy Committee meeting on March 29, 2001, where business owners who were adversely affected by the water main break will be given an opportunity to speak.

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