



NEWS RELEASE
GEORGIA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: June 6, 2002

CONTACT: Deborah Flannagan, Acting Public Information Officer

MEDIA CONTACT ONLY: (404) 656-2316 or DeborahF@psc.state.ga.us

**CONSUMER CONTACT: (404) 656-4501; 1-800-282-5813 outside Metro Atlanta; or
gapsc@psc.state.ga.us**

**PSC Issues Proposed Rules To Implement Several Provisions Of
The Natural Gas Consumers' Relief Act (HB 1568)**

ATLANTA – At its June 6, 2002, Administrative Session, the Georgia Public Service Commission (Commission) approved the issuance of proposed rules to implement provisions in the Natural Gas Consumers' Relief Act.

The proposed rules relate to:

- Universal Service Fund—To provide for disbursements to the regulated provider for bad debt arising from low-income customers, eliminate the marketers' ability to recover bad debt from the USF, modify funding sources, and set limits on the size of the fund.
- Service Quality Standards For Atlanta Gas Light Company And Natural Gas Marketers—To set performance measures for call center operations, billing and collections, payment processing, switching of customers between marketers, complaint handling, customer satisfaction, meter reading accuracy and timeliness, responsiveness to consumers, and compliance with PSC requirements.
- Natural Gas Marketer Billing Practices—To require enhanced standards for the content and accuracy of various components of natural gas bills; establish a reasonable period of time when a bill is due; place limits on when and how much of a late fee can be charged; limit the use of estimates from the electing distribution company regarding meter reads for billing purposes; require the use of the marketer's published price at the inception of a customer's billing cycle for assessing consumption, interstate capacity and customer service charges; and create a self-executing complaint mechanism in which marketers shall be required to participate to resolve complaints.

In other actions today, the Commission voted to extend United Cities Gas Company's performance-based ratemaking mechanism; opened an investigation of the failure of utility facility owners/operators to respond to locate requests filed by excavators with the Utility Protection Center; denied Peachtree Natural Gas Company's request to recover uncollectible accounts through the USF; and approved Georgia Power Company's financing application to issue new securities.

###