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### NEWS RELEASE

#### **PSC Approves Credits for Customers of Regulated Provider for Natural Gas; Approves Resolution of Pending Issues With Natural Gas Marketer ACN Energy**

ATLANTA, June 3, 2003 – The Georgia Public Service Commission (Commission) today unanimously approved a one time credit of \$50 for the June billing cycle for Group 1 customers of the Regulated Provider, SCANA Energy Regulated Division. Commissioner David L. Burgess, who sponsored the motion, said “Escalating natural gas prices have created a hardship for these customers. This refund will provide some relief and allow these customers to meet the basic needs of cooking and heating.” The credit will require a disbursement of \$750,000 from the Universal Service Fund to the regulated provider. Eligible Group 1 customers are those consumers whose incomes fall below or meet federal poverty guidelines.

The Commission also approved the largest payment ever by a Georgia natural gas marketer to resolve alleged violations of Commission rules and Georgia law. The stipulation put forth by natural gas marketer ACN Energy, Inc. (ACN) requires ACN to make a total payment of \$326,158, of which \$309,050 would be credits and refunds to customers. ACN would pay the remaining \$17,108 to the Low Income Heating Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). Commission Chairman Robert Baker, Jr. said, “I hope all marketers have studied the rules so these incidents don’t happen in the future, especially disconnection of customers who have paid their bills.” Affected ACN customers should receive their refunds within 30 days from the filing of the Commission’s order in this case.

Specifically, the allegations include: that ACN sent to customers disconnection notices threatening disconnection in seven days, instead of the 15 days notice required by Commission rule; that ACN’s disconnection notices implied that to avoid disconnection the consumer must pay to ACN all amounts owed, rather than just the past due amounts; and that ACN’s disconnection notices failed to offer reasonable payment arrangements, failed to provide notice of payment centers, and failed to provide notice that qualified low-income residents could transfer to the Regulated Provider without termination of service. In addition, ACN charged consumers rates that were higher than those on file with the Commission.

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