



Contact: Michael Nantz
Phone 404-657-2210
Fax 404-656-3020
E-mail:
cjohnson@psc.state.ga.us

Georgia Public Service Commission

244 Washington St., S.W.
Atlanta, Georgia 30334
Phone: 404-656-4501
Toll free: 800-282-5813

News Release

Commission Approves \$6 Million Grant for Low-Income Natural Gas Assistance

ATLANTA, December 2, 2003 – The Georgia Public Service Commission (Commission) today unanimously approved the disbursement of \$6 million to the Department of Human Resources (DHR) to provide grants to assist low-income senior citizens and other low-income citizens in the payment of natural gas heating bills during this winter heating season. Commissioner David Burgess, who sponsored the proposal, said, “There is a continuing need for this assistance as the cold weather approaches in order to help pay natural gas bills. Since the beginning of November 19,000 households have contacted DHR requesting assistance”. Commissioner Angela Speir stated that she was concerned to learn during recent meetings with other support agencies that the population of eligible participants continues to grow due to the economic conditions in our area. Chairman Robert Baker added that the Commission has provided a total of \$9 million dollars this year to federal LIHEAP funding to further assist Georgia residents. Commissioners Stan Wise and Doug Everett also voted in favor of the proposal.

Three million dollars of the disbursement would be targeted for low-income seniors (65 years and older) while the remainder would be used for other low-income consumers. Applicants must be qualified through the federal Low Income Heat Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), administered by DHR, in order to receive the funds. The monies will be disbursed from the Universal Service Fund (USF), a trust fund administered by the Commission to be used primarily to provide assistance to low-income citizens in paying their natural gas heating bills.

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