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News Release

PSC Approves Schedule for Proceeding to Study BellSouth's DSL Policy

Atlanta, September 7, 2004 — The Georgia Public Service Commission (Commission) today approved a schedule for hearings and filing testimony in its proceeding to examine Digital Subscriber Line (DSL) policies in Docket Number 19393. The Commission set hearings for December 14-17, 2004 on this issue. Parties must pre-file direct testimony by November 12, 2004 and pre-file rebuttal testimony by November 22, 2004.

Residential telephone customers have complained that BellSouth disconnected their DSL service, or refused to sell them DSL service, once they chose to buy voice telephone service from one of BellSouth's competitors.

In November 2003, the Commission ruled in Docket No. 11901-U, MCI WorldCom Communications vs. BellSouth Telecommunications, Inc., that BellSouth's policy of requiring customers to receive its voice service in order to receive DSL service violated state law as well as the parties' interconnection agreements. More recently, in Docket No. 16583-U, ITC^DeltaCom vs. BellSouth Telecommunications, Inc., the Commission again found that BellSouth's policy violated state law. Following these rulings, BellSouth changed its policy for customers of these two companies, but not for those of other competitive local exchange carriers (CLEC).

In addition to examining BellSouth's DSL policies, the Commission will look at the bundling practices of all telecommunications providers that involve the provisioning of DSL and other types of voice service, such as Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP). As VoIP becomes more popular, demand for unbundled DSL is expected to increase. If permitted to continue unfettered, unfair bundling practices could slow the introduction of this new service.

At today's session, Commission Vice-chair Angela Speir became the first woman in Commission history to preside over a Commission Administrative Session as she chaired the session in the absence of Chairman Doug Everett. Commissioner Speir was elected to the Commission in November 2002.

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