



**Contact: Bill Edge**  
Phone 404-656-2316  
Fax 404-656-3020  
<http://www.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

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### **News Release**

#### **PSC Approves Additional Relief to Low-Income Consumers for Natural Gas Bills**

Atlanta, March 21, 2006 – Low-income natural gas customers will receive more than \$8 million in additional assistance to help pay this winter's high natural gas bills as a result of today's Georgia Public Service Commission (Commission) decision. The Commission today ordered \$5.1 million in relief for low-income senior citizens who are now receiving the Atlanta Gas Light Company (AGLC) senior citizen discount. Each qualified senior citizen will receive a \$150 credit that will show up as a separate line item on the seniors' natural gas bills labeled as the "Georgia PSC ordered credit."

Seniors who would receive the \$150 credit are defined as age 65 or older and have a household income of \$14,355 or less. As of March 1, 2006 there were approximately 34,000 qualifying households receiving the AGLC senior discount.

Commissioner David Burgess who proposed this disbursement said, "This past winter heating season has taken a toll on those most vulnerable. Many low-income senior citizens are continuing to struggle to meet their home heating costs as a result of record high natural gas prices. We continue to hear that many seniors are faced with the possibility of disconnection of service without further assistance. It is the right thing to do to help these citizens."

The Commission also approved a motion by Commissioner Robert Baker to provide an additional \$3 million to assist other low-income natural gas customers who would not receive the senior credit. "Georgia families, especially those with children, must not be forgotten, and additional funding specifically targeted to help them is vital," said Commissioner Baker. These funds will be distributed by the Department of Human Resources to qualified low-income recipients who meet the federal poverty guidelines.

Since October 1, 2005, the Commission has allocated more than \$14 million from the Universal Service Fund this winter heating season to assist low-income natural gas customers cope with the continuing increase in energy costs.

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