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From the Office of Commissioner Angela Speir
News Release

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Commissioner Speir Disagrees with Commission's Settlement – Says Ratepayers Deserved More

Atlanta, June 6, 2006 – Commissioner Angela Elizabeth Speir says she is disappointed with today's decision by a majority of the Georgia Public Service Commission (Commission) to approve an agreement between Atlanta Gas Light Company, Commission staff and the Consumers' Utility Counsel to resolve issues stemming from a Commission staff audit of the Company's Manufactured Gas Plant Environmental Response Cost Recovery (ERC) Rider.

Commissioner Speir proposed three motions to reimburse consumers for Company expenses, remove restrictive language governing the Commission's ability to reimburse consumers for other expenses and allow the Commission to retain its authority to reimburse consumers for charges it finds imprudent. A majority of the Commission rejected all three motions. Her first motion called for adopting the Commission staff original audit recommendation that called for disallowing over \$664,000 in expenses charged to the ERC Rider as well as disallowing an additional \$82,297.62 for travel, meals and entertainment.

"I moved to adopt the original recommendation, rather than the Stipulation, primarily because I do not want the Commission to be foreclosed from further investigating some of the issues that came up in the audit. Additionally, I do not want the Commission to be foreclosed from further investigating any other issue of possible imprudent or wasteful spending that might subsequently come to light," Speir said. "I don't understand why the Commission would want to tie its hands behind its back when it comes to protecting ratepayer's money."

Commissioner Speir added, "The \$1.2 million in Community Affairs expenses that Staff audited is only half of the \$2.3 million in Community Affairs expenses for the audit period. From what we have seen of the other \$1.1 million, it appears that it may be subject to similar problems. If so, one could reasonably infer that another \$400,000 reimbursement to the rider would be appropriate. I don't understand why the Commission would want to cut off its ability to review those remaining expenses. I believe the agreement unduly restricts the Commission's ability to protect ratepayers from inappropriate charges."

Commissioner Speir has served on the Commission since January 1, 2003. In 2002, she became the first woman elected to a full six-year term on the Commission and in 2005 was the first woman to serve as Chairman.

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