



**Contact: Angela Speir**  
Phone 404-656-4512  
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

**For Immediate Release**

**10-07**

### **From the Office of Commissioner Angela Speir NEWS RELEASE**

#### **Commissioner Speir Proposes Rules on Open Hearing Process**

Atlanta, February 23, 2007 – Commissioner Angela Elizabeth Speir is renewing her proposal that the Commission adopt a policy requiring that the Commission hearing process be transparent and prohibiting *ex parte* communications. Commissioner Speir is asking that the Commission issue a formal Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NOPR) so that the Commission may receive comments on this proposal. An *ex parte* communication is a communication by one party with a Commissioner about a case without the other parties to the case having the opportunity to respond and without members of the public being able to know what was said.

“Commission decisions should be made based on the evidence in the record,” Speir said, “not based on back-room deals or ‘off the record’ conversation.”

In her motion Commissioner Speir said, “Last year, I made a motion that the Commission adopt an *ex parte* rule. The motion deadlocked 2 to 2, with 1 abstention. Given the important cases coming up this year, it is time to try again.

Over the course of this coming year, the Public Service Commission will be deciding cases that will be critical to meeting the future energy needs of the people of Georgia, including a rate case and an Integrated Resource Plan for Georgia Power and a capacity supply plan for Atlanta Gas Light Company. These decisions will be worth literally billions of dollars to Georgia ratepayers.

If conversations take place outside of the hearing process which excludes any of the parties, then the public hearing process is undermined and the public’s confidence in the fairness of the Commission’s decisions is also undermined.

The proposed rule would assure the public and the parties that the Commission’s process will be open and transparent, that all parties are treated fairly, and that the decisions will be based solely on the evidence in the record rather than on private conversations.”

Commissioner Speir’s motion will be discussed at the Thursday, March 1, 2007 Telecom and Energy Committees. The meetings will be held in the first floor hearing room of the Judicial building at 244 Washington Street, Atlanta beginning at 9:00. The meeting is open to the public and public comment. The proposed rule is scheduled to be voted on at the Commission’s March 6, 2007 Administrative Session.

Commissioner Speir is serving her first six-year term on the Commission. In 2002, she became the first woman elected to the Commission and in 2005 was the first woman to serve as Commission Chairman.

###