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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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From the Office of Commissioner Angela Speir NEWS RELEASE

Commissioner Speir Says Commission Drops Ball on Protecting Customers on Hottest Days of the Year

Atlanta, October 21, 2008 — In a 3 to 2 decision, the Georgia Public Service Commission (Commission) voted today to remove a provision from a proposed rule that would have extended a ban on disconnections during extreme heat to two days following the date a National Weather Service Heat Advisory or Excessive Heat Warning was in effect. “Unfortunately,” Commissioner Angela Elizabeth Speir said, “the proposed rule as amended today fails to protect those who most need protection: the elderly, sick and the very young.” Specifically, Commissioner Speir notes that studies by the Centers for Disease Control and the Environmental Protection Agency show that people can die even with a heat index of only 105 degrees and that most deaths and serious illness caused by extreme heat typically lag a few days behind the spike in temperatures.

“In August of 2007, I proposed that the Commission initiate a proceeding to increase the protections for Georgia consumers. The amended rule, however, does not increase the protections. If anything, it is a step backwards. More people in this country die each year from excess heat than from tornadoes, floods, hurricanes and lightning combined. And the real tragedy is that most heat related deaths are avoidable. I believe some of my colleagues have turned a blind eye to a very real and life threatening issue.”

The Commission first approved an order on September 4, 2007 requiring Georgia Power Company to file an inclusion in its tariff providing for a ban on disconnections if at 8 a.m. on the scheduled disconnection day, the forecasted high temperature for the day is 98 degrees or higher or the heat index for the day is forecasted to be 110 degrees or higher.

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.

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