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NEWS RELEASE

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Commission Presents Budget to State Senate Committee *Chairman Wise Stresses Need for Critical Staff Hires*



ATLANTA, March 17, 2011 – Commission Chairman Stan Wise today told members of the Georgia State Senate Economic Development Appropriations Subcommittee that the Commission is facing a critical point due to the past three years of budget cuts and staff reductions. Chairman Wise presented the Commission’s Fiscal Year 2012 Budget to the Subcommittee as the Senate begins its review of the FY 2012 Budget approved by the House last week.

“We have been able to take the cuts through attrition and retirements but at some point we need to be able to replace critical positions,” said Wise. “We are facing the loss due to retirement of several experienced personnel in our Utilities Regulation Unit in the next two to three years. We need the resources to properly evaluate utility rate cases against utilities who have unlimited resources.” Wise noted that the Utilities Regulation Unit now has a vacancy rate of 25%.

Commissioner Wise also pointed out the need to retain funding for membership dues in the National Regulatory Research Institute (NRRI) and the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners (NARUC). “NRRI especially provides an invaluable resource for staff training through webinars that reduces travel expenses,” added Wise. He noted these organizations enable the Commission to stay abreast of national issues that affect all Georgians.

The Governor’s recommended FY 2012 Budget for the Commission is a 7.8% cut to the Commission’s FY 2011 budget. Since 2008, the Commission has seen a 22% overall reduction in state funds.

Commissioner Wise is serving as the Commission Chairman in 2011. He has served on the Commission since 1995 and this is his fourth term as Chairman.

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