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Georgia Public Service Commission Votes on Atlanta Gas Light Rate Case

December 19, 2019 – (ATLANTA) The Public Service Commission, on Thursday, completed the Atlanta Gas Light rate case by voting unanimously for a motion filed by Commissioner Chuck Eaton that approves new rates but also requires the company to increase safety measures and customer service.

In June, Atlanta Gas Light requested a rate increase of \$90 million. The Commission on Thursday approved a \$65 million increase. Atlanta Gas Light also asked for their return on equity to be set at 10.75 percent. The Commission set it at 10.25 percent. But added to these approvals were contingencies including the safety and customer service improvements.

“I’m pleased with what was accomplished today,” said Commissioner Eaton. “It balances increased federal regulations, the capital investment required from a growing Georgia economy and ensures the company will make needed service improvements that customers will notice. All this while, keeping bills as low as possible for Georgians given added pressures on the company.”

This was Atlanta Gas Light’s first rate case since 2010.

Atlanta Gas Light officials said the increase amounts to about 4-percent per month added to the typical customer’s bill, or about \$2.54. This amount can vary based on customer usage or the individual meter the customer uses. There are nearly 20 gas marketers in Georgia.

For added safety, Commissioner Eaton’s motion requires Atlanta Gas Light to respond to gas leaks in 25 minutes or less. Currently, the response time is about 30 minutes. The motion also requires the company to increase its ability to successfully respond to customers’ appointments within a four-hour window. Currently, Atlanta Gas Light makes it to appointments within the four-hour window about 40-percent of the time. The motion requires them to increase successfully making it within the four-hour window to 80 percent.

Commission Chairman Lauren “Bubba” McDonald pointed to the economic necessities of this case.

“Considering the economics of the past three years and the pressure on companies to keep qualified employees, this modest adjustment ensures this utility provides service and safety to the benefit of the consumers,” he said, “especially in light of the fact that this company hasn’t had a rate case in nine years.”

Commission Vice Chair Tim Echols echoed the Chairman's sentiments.

"Reliable gas service is critical to economic development in the state of Georgia," Commission Echols said. "Commissioner Eaton's plan strikes the perfect balance – creating better response times for consumers and keeping our rates low."

Commissioner Jason Shaw said the approval also keeps in mind low-income Georgians.

"I'm glad we added money – \$1 million – to help lower income Georgians who have a hard time paying their bills in the coldest parts of winter," Commissioner Shaw said. "Plus, the increased response time to dangerous situations was very much needed."

Commissioner Tricia Pridemore said this motion was about \$15 million more than she wanted, but supported it because of the other requirements.

"I voted for it because of the improvements it includes for the customer experience," she said.

The Georgia Public Service Commission is a five-member constitutional agency that exercises its authority and influence to ensure that consumers receive safe, reliable, and reasonably-priced telecommunications, electric and natural gas service from financially viable and technically competent companies.

For more information on the Commission, see the Commission web site at <https://psc.ga.gov/>

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