

The PSC Pulse

GEORGIA POWER INTEGRATED RESOURCE PLAN TO DOMINATE BUSY SPRING FOR PSC



During the first half of 2022, the Public Service Commission will be busy with the Georgia Power Integrated Resource Plan (IRP), which was filed on January 31 and is scheduled for hearings throughout the spring and early summer. The Commission will render its decision at the July 19 Administrative Session.

Georgia Power is required to keep a 20-year plan for power needs, generation, transmission, and distribution. Every three years, an update to that plan is filed with the Commission.

The most recent IRP, finalized in 2019, included a historic increase in renewable energy for the State of Georgia. In its initial filing, Georgia Power recommended adding 1,000 megawatts of renewable energy to the grid. In a stipulation agreement with Commission staff, that amount was increased to 1,650 megawatts. During the final hearing, then-Chairman **Lauren “Bubba” McDonald** made a motion to increase solar energy procurement to 2,210 megawatts, the largest increase in Georgia’s history. The five-member Commission voted unanimously to pass the motion.

Any member of the public can provide comments on the 2022 IRP in writing via the PSC Website (right side of homepage) or at this link: <https://psc.ga.gov/public-comments/>



2022 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

GEORGIA FAITH & FREEDOM LEGISLATIVE LUNCHEON



Commissioner **Lauren “Bubba” McDonald** and Shelley McDonald attended the Georgia Faith & Freedom Legislative Luncheon.

The sold-out event saw more than 500 attendees. People came to hear from Gov. Brian Kemp, Speaker of the House David Ralston and other notables including Ralph Reed, Herschel Walker, Georgia Agriculture Commissioner Gary Black, State Senator Burt Jones, and Senate President Pro Tem Butch Miller.

“It was motivating to hear about the issues most important to our speakers and the promising direction in which they believe Georgia, and our country as a whole, is headed,” said Faith and Freedom Coalition Executive Director Timothy Head.



A large slate of bill introduced in the General Assembly during this year’s session directly affect the Georgia Public Service Commission.

SB492, SR463, HB1133 & HB1322: In bills proposed by Sen. Jeff Mullis, Sen. Steve Gooch, Rep. Mike Cheokas and Rep. Alan Powell respectfully, the legislature is addressing electric vehicle charging. Included in the discussion is how retail outlets can resell power at electric charging stations. A post-session study committee on the issue is likely.

HB1494: Rep. Joseph Gullett’s bill would protect Georgians who are interested in rooftop solar arrays. It targets the small percentage of bad actors in the solar industry that use unscrupulous tactics to sell solar panels. The bill would require vendors to provide a disclosure that explains exactly what the customer is getting. The PSC would ensure vendors comply with the law.

HB1307: Rep. Penny Houston agreed to carry a bill for the PSC. The bill fulfills a federal pipeline safety guideline and simply states that an excavator who hits a natural gas or hazardous materials line must call 911. The PSC currently trains excavators to call 911 when a pipeline has been breached. This bill would require that call.

HB910 & HB911: Often the most important part of any legislative session, these bills set the budget that helps keep the State of Georgia, its Departments, Divisions, and Commissions running. The head of each state office, including the Public Service Commission, must detail for legislators the work performed in the previous fiscal year and provide details on future plans.



*PSC Chairman **Tricia Pridemore** lays out the Commission’s budget points during a joint session of the House and Senate Appropriations Committees.*

BROADBAND SERVICES CONTINUE TO EXPAND INTO GEORGIA'S RURAL AREAS

In a continuing effort to deliver high-speed broadband Internet services to customers throughout the State of Georgia, members of the Public Service Commission joined **Gov. Brian Kemp** to announce two major broadband projects.

In February, Commissioners **Lauren “Bubba” McDonald**, **Tricia Pridemore**, and **Jason Shaw** were happy to announce a project by Jackson EMC and TruVista that will lay hundreds of miles of fiber optic cable in Jackson, Banks and Madison counties. As many as 8,000 homes and businesses now will have access to high-speed Internet.



*Chair **Tricia Pridemore** speaks about the Jackson EMC/TruVista project in northeast Georgia.*



*Commissioner **Lauren “Bubba” McDonald** helps announce the Flint Energies/Conexon Connect partnership to deliver broadband services to several Middle Georgia counties. Commissioner **Jason Shaw**, back right, enjoys a lighthearted moment with his former House colleagues.*

In March, Chairman **Pridemore**, and Commissioners **McDonald** and **Fitz Johnson** again joined the Governor. This time, they announced a partnership between Flint Energies and Conexon Connect that will provide broadband services to 31,000 customers in Crawford, south Houston, Macon, Marion, Muscogee, Peach, Schley, Talbot, and Taylor counties.

In 2019, Senate Bill 2 paved the way for electric membership cooperatives to provide broadband service. The legislation gave the Public Service Commission compliance authority over EMC's broadband service.

GEORGIA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE INTERVIEWS COMMISSIONER JOHNSON AFTER EGGS & ISSUES BREAKFAST

Each year, as the legislative session opens, the Georgia Chamber of Commerce hosts the Eggs & Issues breakfast.

This year, when the speeches were over, the Chamber's Executive Vice President of Governmental Affairs, David Raynor, held a question and answer session with new PSC Commissioner **Fitz Johnson**.

Johnson discussed his career in the military, the upcoming hearings on the Georgia Power Integrated Resource Plan and the continuing efforts at the PSC and by other Georgians to promote and expand high-speed broadband service in to the state's rural areas.



GEORGIA PSC REPRESENTED AT NARUC WINTER MEETING

As the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners met for its Winter Policy Summit in Washington, D.C., several Georgia PSC Commissioners and staffers attended and some participated in panels.

Commission Chairman **Tricia Pridemore** moderated a panel called Resilience, Reliability, and the Energy Transition: Implications and Opportunities for Natural Gas. The panel discussed how state and federal clean energy targets can address the potential costs, consumer impacts and reliability repercussions over the next decade.

Also moderating a panel was **Jamie Barber**, director of the Energy, Efficiency and Renewable Energy Unit. This panel discussed community solar and the cost impacts to both participants and non-participants. Jamie is chair of the NARUC Rate Design Subcommittee; this was a joint panel with several other subcommittees.



Jamie Barber moderates a panel at the NARUC Winter Policy Summit

ELECTRIC TRUCK PLANT ANNOUNCES \$5 BILLION ASSEMBLY PLANT IN GEORGIA

After months of speculation, Gov. Brian Kemp and executives with electric vehicle maker Rivian Inc. announced a deal that will bring a \$5 billion assembly plant to Georgia, creating as many as 7,500 jobs.



*Gov. Brian Kemp, Rivian Chief People Officer Helen Russell and PSC Vice Chairman **Tim Echols** share a moment after the announcement of the \$5 billion Rivian project.*

As the plant ramps up production, the facility will be able to produce up to 400,000 vehicles a year. The plant represents the single largest economic development project in state history, Governor's officials said.

"We are so proud that Georgia will be home to Rivian's largest manufacturing facility," Kemp told a crowd gathered for the announcement. "This single investment — the largest in state history — represents the future of automotive manufacturing and establishes the leading role the

Peach State will play in this booming industry for generations to come."

PSC Vice Chairman **Tim Echols** has been a fan of electric vehicles for many years. The Atlanta Journal-Constitution wrote that he's loved electric vehicles before Rivian made them cool.

"Having the Republican power structure embrace electric vehicles is not only fulfilling but it's critical for us to move forward," Echols said.



*PSC Vice Chairman **Tim Echols** poses with the logo of a Rivian electric truck.*

COMMISSIONERS SHAW, JOHNSON IN VALDOSTA

On a road trip to South Georgia, Commissioner **Fitz Johnson** met with Commissioner **Jason Shaw** to stop by the Valdosta Chamber of Commerce and take a tour of Valdosta State University.

Commissioner Johnson said the trip was part of his effort to visit every part of the state to discuss the varying energy needs of all Georgians.

Commissioner Shaw, from Lakeland, Ga., knows Valdosta well. His wife, Katy, is a Valdosta native.

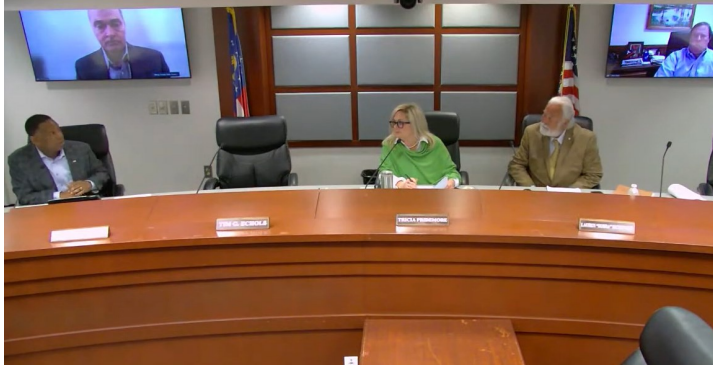


*PSC Commissioners **Fitz Johnson** and **Jason Shaw** meet with Valdosta State University President Dr. Richard Carvajal and a student member of the ROTC.*

COMMISSIONERS EXPRESS THEIR SUPPORT OF UKRAINE THROUGH A RESOLUTION

In mid-March, Commissioner **Fitz Johnson** introduced a resolution in support of Ukraine and the people of Ukraine. Commissioner **Lauren “Bubba” McDonald** said he “proudly” seconded the motion and the Resolution was unanimously adopted. All five Commissioners subsequently signed it.

Through the resolution, the Commissioners condemn the invasion of Ukraine by Russia. It also calls on the U.S. federal government — in an effort to continue U.S. support of Ukraine while minimizing detrimental financial impact on its poorer residents — to partner with individual state public service commissions to “unshackle America’s natural resources.”



PSC NEW HIRES LEARN THE COMPLEXITIES OF UTILITY REGULATION

The Georgia Public Service Commission has the complex task of regulating the many utilities in the state — including electricity, natural gas and telecom companies. Even the highly educated engineers and lawyers hired by the Commission must undergo orientation. In the Natural Gas Unit that includes books to read, presentations to hear and tests to take.

Some newcomers to the Commission have likened the experience to learning a new language. Acronyms are common in government; they overflow at the PSC.

Natural Gas Unit Director **Nancy Tyler** says new employees in her unit must train for two months before she feels comfortable assigning them projects.

The tests they must take include questions on a variety of subjects. For example, new hires must know when regulations permit gas service disconnections for non-payment and must know about the specific state statutes giving the Commission authority to issue regulatory rules. Recruits are also given a handbook that includes the mission of the PSC and a history of Natural Gas in Georgia.



*New hire **Nijah James** learning about natural gas regulation*

COMMISSIONERS VISIT PLANT VOGTLE



PSC Chairman Tricia Pridemore and Commissioner Lauren “Bubba” McDonald visited the construction project at Plant Vogtle. The two were given a tour by Jeremiah Haswell, the Project Oversight Director for Georgia Power Nuclear Development.

After the tour, Commissioner McDonald said he was happy with what he saw. “I’m pleased with the progress being made,” he said. “It appears to be on a good track for completion.”

COMMISSIONER PRIDEMORE NAMED CHAIR OF NARUC SUB-COMMITTEE

NARUC President Judith Williams Jagdmann recently informed PSC Chairman **Tricia Pridemore** that she had been appointed chair of the Association’s Subcommittee on Pipeline Safety.

Jagdmann congratulated Commissioner Pridemore for the appointment and said her work on the subcommittee will help strengthen effective public regulation.

NEW FACES AT THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION



Morgan Mitchell, joined the GUFPA unit in January. An Atlanta native, she has a 4-year-old son, Paris, who she says brings her “so much joy.”

Outside work, she enjoys listening to music, traveling, and attending drag races.

In Morgan’s own words: “I’m super excited to become a part of the Public Service Commission Team.”

Heidi Strain is the new Executive Assistant for Commissioners Lauren 'Bubba' McDonald and Jason Shaw. She has more than 11 years of progressive experience in office management and administration.



Prior to her hiring by the PSC, Heidi managed a dental practice. She spent eight years in the dental industry.

A native Georgian, she has a Bachelor of Arts in advertising from The Art Institute of Atlanta and enjoys spending time with her family. Heidi takes flying lessons during her free time.

Maggie Francis comes to the Consumer Affairs Unit with over 30 years’ experience in customer service.

Her dreams of helping others can be traced to her upbringing, where she was taught to “Put Others First”.

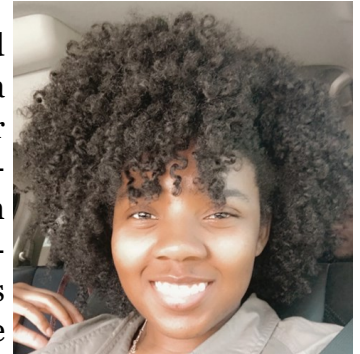
As a leader and model for family and friends, Maggie’s passion for people continues to grow.

Monique Andrews, Maggie’s supervisor, said her personality and experience has already given the Call Center an uplift in the short period of time she has been with the PSC.



Nijah James was born and raised in Douglas, Georgia, a small town in Coffee County.

She graduated from Georgia Tech in December 2021 with a Bachelors of Science in Industrial Engineering and has now joined the Natural Gas Unit.



While pursuing a degree at Georgia Tech, Nijah interned for the Community Foundation of Coffee County. She also became a member of the Black Industrial Engineers at Tech, a club that helps black students majoring in industrial engineering navigate through life at school.

Michaelah Montgomery joins the PSC as Executive Assistant to Commissioner Fitz Johnson.

While majoring in political science at Clark Atlanta University, Michaelah found a niche for team building and community organizing. She started her own consulting business, specializing in Urban Strategies, Diversity & Inclusion, and Grass-roots initiatives.



When a close friend called and said Commissioner Johnson was searching for an Executive Assistant, she jumped at the opportunity to step into a whole new world and learn about a different facet of everyday life that affects everyday people.

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY!

I ♥ my job
my job ♥ me

5 YEARS



Max Stroev

15 YEARS



Jeff Baggett



Yolanda Clay

20 YEARS



Tony Wackerly

MILESTONES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

As an executive assistant, **Lynn Page** has been integral in the daily workings of the PSC, supporting three Commissioners. Just one day before her seventh year work anniversary, she was promoted to Human Resources Director where she will be even more visible by PSC employees.

Her background in management and marketing will help provide the tools necessary to keep communication lines open and informative.

Before the PSC, Lynn was director of strategic markets of the United Way of Dallas and worked as the senior marketing director at the American Heart Association, also in Texas.



Commissioner **Fitz Johnson** was honored during Military Appreciation Night at a College Park Skyhawks NBA G-League game.



Pictured at left is Commissioner Johnson when he served in uniform.

At the game, where several veterans were honored, a list of the Commissioner's accomplishments was read including: 21 Year Army Officer, Airborne, Air Assault, Expert Field Medical Badge, Meritorious Service Medal, Army Commendation Medal, Army Achievement Medal, Army Service Ribbon, Troop Commander, Company Commander, Instructor, Deputy Chief of Staff, Chief Personnel Officer and current member of Georgia's Public Service Commission.

Three times in one month, Georgia utility customers called in to the Public Service Commission to give kudos to Consumer Affairs Representative **Karen Howell**.



Recently hired Representative **Maggie Francis** also has already had a customer call in their kudos for her work.

"The customers spoke highly of both ladies," said manager Monique Andrews. "Expressing how thorough and knowledgeable they were about the billing and services of the utility companies."

It's spring — time for warm weather and baseball. Facilities Protection Director **Michelle Thebert's** son, **Collin**, plays second base and pitches for the South Gwinnett Legends.



COMMISSION CALENDAR

April 2022

4-6 — Georgia Power Integrated Resource Plan application
4 — Administrative Session
14 — Committee Meetings
19 — Administrative Session
28 — Committee Meetings

May 2022

3 — Georgia Power VCM 26 Hearing
3 — Administrative Session
12 — Committee Meetings
17 — Administrative Session
24-27 — Georgia Power Integrated Resource Plan application

June 2022

2 — Committee Meetings
7 — Administrative Session
12-15 — SEARUC
16 — Committee Meetings
21-22 — Georgia Power Integrated Resource Plan application
21 — Administrative Session
30 — Committee Meetings

UPCOMING HOLIDAYS



State Holiday
Observed on Good Friday,
April 15



Monday, May 30



To be observed on Monday,
June 20

Georgia Public Service Commission

244 Washington Street
Atlanta, Georgia 30334
Phone: 404-656-4501
psc.ga.gov



COMMISSIONERS

Tricia Pridemore, Chairman
Tim G. Echols, Vice Chair
Fitz Johnson
Lauren “Bubba” McDonald
Jason Shaw

The Public Information Office publishes The PSC Pulse for the Georgia Public Service Commission. Information for The PSC Pulse should be sent to the attention of **Tom Krause, Public Information Officer** or **Lynn Page, Newsletter Editor**.

Executive Director: Reece McAlister
Utilities Director: Tom Bond
Executive Secretary: Sallie Tanner