

# **GEORGIA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION**

**146<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL REPORT**

**2024**



**Chairman Jason Shaw  
Vice Chairman Tim Echols  
Commissioner Fitz Johnson  
Commissioner Lauren “Bubba” McDonald  
Commissioner Tricia Pridemore**

## 2024 GEORGIA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION



**Public Service Commission 2024 (left to right) Commissioners Fitz Johnson, Tim Echols, Jason Shaw, Lauren "Bubba" McDonald and Tricia Pridemore**

Georgia Public Service Commission  
244 Washington Street, S.W.  
Atlanta, Georgia 30334  
404-656-4501 (Telephone)  
866-787-9710 (Telecommunications Device for the Deaf)  
404-656-2341 (Facsimile)  
800-282-5813 (Toll-free within Georgia)  
[psc.ga.gov](http://psc.ga.gov)

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# LETTER TO THE GOVERNOR

May 12, 2025

The Honorable Brian Kemp  
Governor  
203 State Capitol  
Atlanta, Georgia 30334

Governor Kemp:

To highlight the Georgia Public Service Commission's achievements in energy regulation over the past year, the PSC presents to you this 2024 Annual Report, pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 46-2-31. In addition to the responsibilities traditionally handled by the Commission – regulating power and natural gas, regulating telecommunications, and protecting infrastructure – recent years have seen additional duties that help promote broadband Internet service in rural Georgia and expand electric vehicle charging stations throughout the state. The Commission is proud to assist in the advancement of these initiatives and it supports their progress as key goals in your administration.

Last year, the PSC reported the completion of the Vogtle Unit 3 nuclear reactor. In 2024, we are proud to report that construction was completed on Vogtle Unit 4. The two new plants combined are currently producing clean energy for 1 million Georgia homes and businesses. These reactors are expected to run nearly non-stop for the next 60-80 years. The wait has been long, but Georgia can be proud that we have completed construction on the only new nuclear reactors in North America.

Beyond Vogtle, Georgia has continued to prove that clean air can be achieved via the free market. The state has retained its spot as 7<sup>th</sup> in the nation for installed solar energy. Unlike some states, Georgia accomplished this feat without state subsidies and without causing increased rates.

In 2024, the PSC once again proved itself a valuable asset to the state. For the fiscal year, the Commission returned \$1.53 million to the state treasury in regulatory fees and assessed fines. These included fines from the PSC's pipeline safety and "Call Before You Dig" programs. Although the goal of our Facilities Protection Division is safety, not money generation, the collected fines are a solid indicator of the hard work the PSC performs to ensure compliance of safe utility practices.

As the PSC submits this report on its 2024 accomplishments, it also continues its hard work for the people of Georgia. This year, the PSC is updating Georgia Power's Integrated Resource Plan – the long-term outlook for energy production in Georgia. This update is performed every three years and is one of the most important tasks undertaken by PSC Commissioners and staff.

In sum, the Commission continues to ensure Georgia consumers receive the best possible value in utility and telecommunication services, while enforcing natural gas pipeline safety and protecting utility infrastructure from damage.

Respectfully submitted,

Jason Shaw, Chairman  
Tim G. Echols, Vice Chairman  
Fitz Johnson, Commissioner  
Lauren "Bubba" McDonald, Commissioner  
Tricia Pridemore, Commissioner

# PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION PROFILES



## **Jason Shaw**

**Commissioner Since: January 3, 2019**

**Elected: November 2020**

**Republican, Lanier County, Georgia**

**2024 Chairman, Georgia Public Service Commission**

James S. “Jason” Shaw Jr., a native of Lanier County, was appointed to the Public Service Commission by Governor Nathan Deal and sworn in on January 3, 2019. He won election to the Commission in November 2020. He was unanimously elected Chairman by his fellow Commissioners in July 2023.

Commissioner Shaw lives on a farm near Lakeland with his wife Katy Miller Shaw, from Valdosta, and their children, Anne Harvey and Slaton Shaw. He is the owner of Shaw Insurance Services Inc. and a founder of Georgia Olive Farms Inc., both of Lakeland. He and his family are members of Unity United Methodist Church where he serves as Finance Chairman.

Commissioner Shaw earned a bachelor’s degree in political science from the University of Georgia and is a graduate of the Leadership Georgia class of 2004, the Leadership Lanier class of 2003, and the J.W. Fanning Institute for Leadership class of 2000. In 2011, he was recognized by Georgia Trend magazine’s “40 under 40” list of young Georgia leaders in business and government and has been named one of “The 100 Most Influential Georgians” by the magazine. Commissioner Shaw maintains a dedication to community service. He served as the Lanier County Lions Club President in 2001 and as the Lakeland/Lanier County Chamber of Commerce President in 2006. In 2018, the Lanier County Lions Club named him “Flatlander of the Year” and the Lakeland/Lanier County Chamber of Commerce named him a member of its Board of Directors for life. He is also a past director of the Greater Valdosta Area United Way and a past trustee of the Valdosta Technical College Foundation.

Commissioner Shaw previously represented Georgia House District 176 (Atkinson, Lanier, Lowndes and Ware counties) for four terms. In his tenure with the Georgia General Assembly he chaired several committees including the Georgia Legislative Rural Caucus, a bipartisan group that takes a leading role in issues and legislation that impact the state’s rural communities.

In addition to his public service, professional, and civic responsibilities, Commissioner Shaw enjoys spending time with his wife and children. He also enjoys outdoor activities, including hunting, fishing, and golfing.



## **Tim Echols**

**Commissioner Since: January 1, 2011**

**Elected: 2010, Re-elected: 2016**

**Republican, Hoschton, Georgia**

### **2024 Vice Chairman, Georgia Public Service Commission**

A younger Tim Echols was selected by the Atlanta Airport Rotary Club as "Student of the Year" from his high school in 1978. While at the luncheon, he met Truett Cathy, a member of the Atlanta Airport Rotary Club. After the meeting, Mr. Cathy invited Echols to come to his office. There he received a set of motivational tapes. Echols said the tapes changed his life and as a result of listening to Zig Ziglar and his teaching, he set a goal to be a statewide elected official.

Shortly after graduating from UGA, Echols and his wife Windy founded TeenPact, a training experience for conservative high school students. The program began at the Georgia Capitol and now operates in all 50 states, having trained 60,000 students. After building TeenPact, Echols ran for and was elected to statewide office in 2010 serving as Public Service Commissioner. He was re-elected in 2016.

The PSC's primary job is energy regulation. When Echols took office, Georgia was 34th nationally in solar power. Now, the state is 7th in the nation for installed solar. In 2020, Conservatives for Clean Energy dubbed Echols the "Solar Architect of Georgia."

Echols also created the Clean Energy Roadshow that travels the state every summer. This educational event helps commuters, businesses and municipal governments evaluate alternative fuel for their transportation and residential use.

Echols authored the December 2017 motion to keep Plant Vogtle moving toward completion. He believes carbon-free nuclear energy plus solar is the way forward for Georgia. He has represented the United States at the World Nuclear Exhibition for the past six years.

Outside of his work with the Commission, Echols has been at the forefront in fighting human sex trafficking. He created the "Unholy Tour" that helps policy makers see first-hand the harms of human trafficking. As a part of his efforts to educate the public about the harms of trafficking, Echols created the Wilberforce Fellowship that meets annually at Georgia's oldest state park, Indian Springs. Echols and Judge Tim Batten head this effort.

Tim has a weekly radio show, Energy Matters, airing on Cox Media Group.

Tim and his wife, Windy, have been married 41 years. They have seven children. He has three degrees from the University of Georgia and lives in Hoschton, Georgia.



## **Fitz Johnson**

**Commissioner Since: August 26, 2021**

**Republican, Atlanta, Georgia**

### **2024 Commissioner, Georgia Public Service Commission (Sworn-in August 26, 2021)**

Fitz Johnson is Chairman of the PSC's Energy Committee. He's a businessman, a 21-year veteran of the U.S. Army, and a long-time Georgia resident. He has vast experience in building and leading companies as well as non-profits, driving growth and producing positive results.

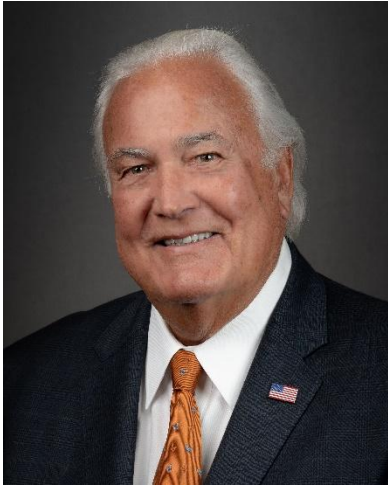
In 2023, the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners named Johnson to chair a new national committee, the Task Force on Natural Gas Resource Planning.

An active member in his community, Commissioner Johnson serves on several boards, including the Life University Board of Trustees and the Cumberland Counseling Center. He is the Chair of the CAPTIV Board of the Wellstar Health System and an active member of his local Chamber of Commerce.

A passionate sports fan, and former owner of the Atlanta Beat (WPS), Johnson has served for over a decade as a community football, soccer, and wrestling coach helping to mentor, develop, and teach today's youth through sports.

Johnson is a graduate of The Citadel and holds a master's in education from Troy University and a J.D. from the University of Kentucky College of Law. He is a member of Cumberland Community Church. He and his wife, Suzann Wilcox, have four wonderful children and five beautiful grandchildren.





## **Lauren “Bubba” McDonald**

**Commissioner Since: January 1, 2009**

**Elected: 1998, 2008; Re-elected: 2014, 2020**

**Republican, Clarkesville, Georgia**

### **2024 Commissioner, Georgia Public Service Commission**

McDonald, who served 20 years as a State Representative, was appointed to the Commission in June 1998 by Governor Zell Miller to fill a vacated post and then re-elected in a special mid-term election in November 1998. He held the seat until 2002. In 2008, 2014 and 2020, Georgians again elected McDonald to serve on the Commission.

McDonald has a deep knowledge of the energy industry. He puts that knowledge to work as a member of the Electric Committee of the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners and as an executive member of the Nuclear Waste Strategy Coalition.

During his time on the Commission, McDonald has presided over the advent of solar power in Georgia resulting in the state becoming one of the top five fastest growing in the nation for solar energy. He has accomplished this through a conservative and thoughtful free-market approach without putting upward pressure on rates and without state-sponsored financial incentives. In 2013, Georgia had virtually no solar power on the grid. McDonald was able to garner support to add 525 megawatts of solar energy to the portfolio of the state’s investor-owned utility. Currently, utility companies are erecting solar power facilities that will provide a total of 3,600 megawatts of solar energy by the end of 2024. McDonald has also supported the construction of solar facilities at six of Georgia’s military bases, contributing to national security and helping to protect the bases from future base closure proposals.

McDonald is a graduate of the University of Georgia with a BBA in Business. He also served six years in the Georgia Air National Guard. He owns businesses in the private sector and is married to Shelley McDonald. He was married to the late Sunny Nivens McDonald for 45 years. He has a son, Lauren, three grandchildren, and four step-grandchildren.





## **Tricia Pridemore**

**Commissioner Since: February 21, 2018**

**Elected: November 2018**

**Republican, Marietta, Georgia**

### **2024 Commissioner, Georgia Public Service Commission**

Tricia Pridemore was elected to the Georgia Public Service Commission in 2018.

Pridemore serves on many boards in the energy industry, and works on constructive solutions to our nation's electric transmission, pipeline safety and diversified energy generation including natural gas, nuclear, solar and American coal:

- President, National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners (NARUC). 2024-2025
- Past Chair, Board of the Financial Research Institute (FRI) at the University of Missouri
- Member, National Petroleum Council
- Member, Electric Power Research Institute (EPRI) Advisory Board
- Member, Gas Technology Institute (GTI) Public Interest Advisory Council
- Member, New Mexico State University Center for Public Utilities Advisory Council
- Member, Critical Consumer Issues Forum (CCIF) Executive Committee

Pridemore is recognized by Georgia Trend Magazine as one of the 100 Most Influential Georgians. She served on both the 2019 Transition Team of Gov. Brian Kemp and the 2011 Transition Team of Governor Nathan Deal. She co-chaired both of Governor Nathan Deal's Inaugurals.

Pridemore is a member of the Rotary Club of Marietta. She earned a bachelor's degree from Kennesaw State University.

Tricia and her husband Michael reside in Marietta, Georgia and are members of Mount Paran Church in Atlanta.

## **PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION LEADERSHIP TEAM**

**DECEMBER 31, 2024**

### **Commissioners**

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

### **Administration Division**

Reece McAlister, Executive Director  
Sallie Tanner, Executive Secretary  
Terry Pritchett, Chief Financial Officer (through March 30)  
Jane Stroeve, Chief Financial Officer (from April 1)  
Lynn Page, Office of Human Resources Director  
Max Stroeve, Office of Operations Support Director  
Tom Krause, Public Information Officer and Legislative Liaison  
Monique Andrews, Office of Consumer Affairs Manager

### **Utilities Division**

Tom Bond, Director, Utilities Division  
Robert Trokey, Director, Electric Unit  
Nancy Tyer, Director, Natural Gas Unit  
Leon Bowles, Director, Telecommunications Unit  
Jamie Barber, Director, Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy Unit  
Michelle Thebert, Director, Facilities Protection Unit

# **MISSION AND HISTORY OF THE COMMISSION**

## **MISSION**

The Georgia Public Service Commission is a quasi-legislative, quasi-judicial agency comprised of five Commissioners elected statewide. The Commission's mission is to exercise its authority and influence to ensure consumers receive safe, reliable and reasonably priced telecommunications, electric and natural gas service from financially viable and technically competent companies. The Commission's regulatory activities are primarily focused on investor-owned natural gas and electric power utilities. The Commission has the authority to set rates, require long-range energy plans, provide for the safety of natural gas pipelines and protect underground utility systems from damage.

Over the past three decades, growth, competition and technological advances have significantly changed the Commission's role. With some retail market segments of the telecommunications and natural gas industries open to competition, the Commission facilitates market development, educates consumers, arbitrates complaints among competitors and monitors the effectiveness of the competitive markets.

## **HISTORY**

On October 14, 1879, Georgia became one of the first states to establish a regulatory body to resolve complications resulting from railroad expansion and competition. Created as the Railroad Commission of Georgia, the Governor originally appointed the three members of this body for the purpose of regulating railway freight and passenger rates.

As electricity, natural gas and telecommunications evolved from novelties into major necessities for modern society, the roles and responsibilities of the Commission evolved as well. Major expansions of the Commission's jurisdiction took place between 1890 and 1935.

In 1891, legislation added telegraph and express companies to the Commission's jurisdiction.

The years 1906 and 1907 saw two major changes to the Commission's make-up. In 1906 the legislature allowed the voters to elect the Commissioners for six-year terms and in 1907 lawmakers expanded the Commission to five members. Also in 1906, the legislature gave the Commission authority over telephone, natural gas and electric companies. Cognizant of the changing role of this regulatory body, the General Assembly in 1922 changed the name of the Railroad Commission of Georgia to the Georgia Public Service Commission.

In 1943, the Commission became a constitutional body (Article 4, Section 1, 1983 Georgia Constitution). Its powers and duties are established by legislation and described in Title 46 of the Official Code of Georgia.

In 1970, the Commission began its gas pipeline safety program.

Legislation in 1991 required integrated resource planning by electric utilities.

The Natural Gas Competition and Deregulation Act of 1997 became effective on July 1, 1997.

The legislature in 1998 required the five Commissioners to reside in separate districts though they remain elected by the voters statewide. This change was effective for the 2000 elections.

In 2002, Earleen Sizemore became the first woman to serve on the Commission following her appointment. Later that year in the general election, Angela Speir became the first woman elected to the Commission.

In 2009, the Commission approved the construction of the nation's first new nuclear-powered generation facilities since the 1970's – Units 3 and 4 at Plant Vogtle.

Legislation in 2012 changed the method of selecting the Commission Chairman, allowing the Commission to elect its own chairman for a two-year term with the possibility of one additional two-year term.

In August 2015, Southern Company, the parent company of Georgia Power Company, announced plans to acquire AGLC Resources, the parent company of Atlanta Gas Light Company. The Commission approved the acquisition in April 2016.

The Commission on December 21, 2017 approved the continued construction of Georgia Power's Plant Vogtle Nuclear Power Plant Construction Project. The Commission accepted the Company's revised schedule and forecasted costs.

In 2019, the Georgia General Assembly passed Senate Bill 2 that gave the Commission compliance authority over EMCs that expand into broadband Internet service.

In 2023, Vogtle Unit 3 came into operation and began producing power for 500,000 Georgia homes and businesses.

In 2024, Vogtle Unit 4 came into operation, producing power for another 500,000 Georgia homes and businesses. Both new reactors are expected to continue generating zero-emission energy for the next 60-80 years.

The Commission operates four committees, Energy, Telecommunications, Facilities Protection and Administrative Affairs. As of December 2024, Commissioner Fitz Johnson chaired the Energy Committee, Commissioner Lauren "Bubba" McDonald Jr. chaired the Telecommunications Committee and the Facilities Protection Committee, and Vice Chairman Tim Echols chaired the Administrative Affairs Committee. In 2024, Commissioner Tricia Pridemore began a one-year term as president of the National Association of National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners (NARUC), providing invaluable information, resources and influence for the Georgia PSC and for all Georgians.

## **HIGHLIGHTS OF 2024**

The highlights of the Commission's major activities and achievements during 2024 regarding its Utility Regulation, Facilities Protection and Administration Programs are set forth below. A more detailed report from each Commission organizational unit follows this summary.

### **ELECTRIC**

Electricity is vital to the economy of the state and to the quality of life of Georgia's citizens. Of the three regulated utility industries in Georgia, the electric industry is the most universally utilized and most essential. The sole investor-owned electric utility, Georgia Power Company, is regulated by the Commission and serves approximately 2.8 million retail customers. The Commission has limited regulatory authority over the 41 Electric Membership Corporations (EMCs) and 49 municipal-owned electric systems in the state.

The Electric Unit analyzed and filed testimony in February 2024 in Docket Number 55378, Georgia Power Company's 2023 Integrated Resource Plan (IRP) Update. Georgia Power initiated this docket due to the unprecedented change in its electric load growth due to rapid economic development in the state, particularly as a result of energy-intensive data centers. Commission staff also provided expert review and testimony under the same docket number in June related to certification, cost, and construction monitoring of new natural gas units at Plant Yates, and in October for Company-Owned Battery Electric Storage Systems. Georgia Power Company is currently conducting multiple requests for proposals for new resources and power purchase agreements, for which Electric Unit staff conducts rigorous oversight. Additionally, the Electric Unit is now monitoring ongoing large-scale construction projects, including at Plant Yates and other sites around the state.

The Electric Unit staff also continues to study and oversee filings related to Georgia Power Company rates and earnings. Staff has reviewed the Company's Income Qualified Discount, which expanded eligibility beyond Senior Citizens in 2024. Also in 2024, staff began to analyze and develop recommendations for changes to Georgia Power's Rules and Regulations related to large customers with over 100 Megawatts (MW) of capacity. These changes primarily affect data centers, to help protect residential and other incumbent customers from incurring costs related to recovery of capital expenditures for these new facilities. The Commission approved these amendments in early 2025.

By the end of 2024, the Electric Unit was working toward the necessary preparations for Georgia Power Company's next statutorily required Integrated Resource Plan (IRP), which was filed January 31, 2025.

### **NATURAL GAS**

Georgia's natural gas supply is vitally important to the state's economic prosperity. Consumers in Georgia benefit from natural gas delivered by the State's two investor-owned natural gas systems, Atlanta Gas Light Company (AGL) and Liberty Utilities Georgia Corporation (Liberty), as well as 78 municipal gas systems. By the end of 2024, there were 14 natural gas Marketers with a Commission-approved Certificate of Authority, 14 of whom were actively serving customers on the AGL distribution system.

During 2024, there were over 2,043,241 natural gas customers in Georgia. Atlanta Gas Light Company served over 1.7 million customers, Liberty served approximately 57,049 customers, and more than 269,036 customers were served by municipal gas systems.

As part of Gas Staff's (Staff) due diligence, approximately 4,114 data request items, including subparts, were submitted to AGL, Liberty, and the Marketers, collectively, and approximately 55 Commission orders were approved in 2024.

The Natural Gas Unit is the custodian of the Universal Service Fund (USF). The State of Georgia considers the USF a Custodial Fund for reporting in the State's Annual Comprehensive Financial Report. On August 5, 2024, an annual report was sent to the State Accounting Office, which included Form 470 Trial Balance Shell and Form 21 Investments.

AGL filed its 2025-2034 Integrated Capacity and Delivery Plan (i-CDP) under Docket No. 43820. AGL and Staff negotiated a workable compromise that would meet the Commission Staff's and the Company's goals while protecting the public interest. The stipulated agreement approved a fixed capital budget over the next three years, 2025 – 2027, with recovery taking place with the Company's Georgia Ratemaking Mechanism (GRAM) rate filing. The i-CDP also carved out the Department of Transportation (DOT) capital expenses for the relocation of pipe facilities. The i-CDP established a new surcharge recovery mechanism of DOT expenses similar to the System Reliability Rider.

Liberty filed their 2025 GRAM in October 2024, which was resolved through a joint stipulation and approved in February 2025. The Commission approved the budget for three major system enhancement projects for the Gainesville area.

AGL filed their 2025 GRAM in July 2024, which after negotiations, resulted in agreed-on levelized increases year over year for 2025 – 2027. On December 12, 2024, the Commission approved the stipulation between Staff and AGL.

The Commission approved a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking that addressed the gas Marketer's Service Quality Measures (SQMs). The goal of this rulemaking was to provide clarity to the rules and processes around the SQMs, thus enhancing the standards for the service offered to the natural gas customers in the AGL territory.

## **TELECOMMUNICATIONS**

The Commission Telecommunication Unit is in charge of several programs that directly benefit Georgians on a daily basis.

The Commission facilitates the telecommunications market in Georgia by certifying new providers, arbitrating interconnection agreements, and resolving complaints among competitors. Additionally, the Commission provides specialized telecommunications equipment to Georgians who, because of physical impairments (particularly hearing and speech), cannot otherwise communicate over the telephone.

In 2024, the total number of active certificates at the Public Service Commission was 898, distributed among industry segments, as follows: 209 resellers of long-distance service, 31 alternative operator service providers, 264 competitive local exchange service providers, 101 interexchange service providers, 240 payphone-service providers, 18 institutional



telecommunications service providers, and more than 35 incumbent local exchange service providers.

The Public Service Commission oversees a Universal Access Fund. In December 2023, 20 Tier II Incumbent Local Exchange Carriers (ILECs) filed applications for disbursements. On September 25, 2024, the Commission approved disbursements for the 29<sup>th</sup> UAF year totaling \$40,427,163.

The Commission also runs the Hearing Aid Distribution Program. In 2024, there were 690 Adults and 25 children that were served by this program.

## **ENERGY EFFICIENCY AND RENEWABLE ENERGY**

In 2024, the Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy (EERE) Unit addressed specific issues that came before the Commission and provided staff analysis on issues brought forward in the 2022 Integrated Resource Plan (IRP) Order and in Georgia Power Company's 2023 IRP update. Docket No. 55378.

In the Commission's 2022 IRP Final Order, Commission Staff and Georgia Power were instructed to develop guidelines for establishing a Distributed Generation (DG) Working Group to improve previous procurement practices and fulfill the DG procurements approved in the 2022 IRP Final Order.

The working group met several times in advance of the Company's 2023 Distributed Generation Request for Proposals (DG RFP) and again in advance of the 2024 DG RFP. The 2023 RFP sought to procure approximately 193 megawatts (MW) of energy from solar photovoltaic (fixed-tilt or tracking) DG resources. The 2023 DG RFP concluded in 2024 with certification of 12 Power Purchase Agreements for a total of approximately 41 MW. The 2024 DG RFP seeks to procure approximately 250 MW of energy.

EERE Staff also worked with Georgia Power and the Independent Evaluator, to accept and evaluate bids in Georgia Power's 2023 Clean and Renewable Energy Subscription Utility Scale Renewable RFP. Georgia Power rolled forward 1,250 MW that was unfilled from previous utility scale procurements for a total 2023 RFP procurement target of 2,875 MW. The 2025 RFP will procure 475 MW plus any rollover from the Clean and Renewable Energy Subscription 2023 RFP. As ordered by the Commission in its 2022 IRP Final Order, Georgia Power will procure up to 2,100 MW of utility scale renewable resources, including energy from up to 650 MW of Carbon- Free Energy Around-the-Clock resources that leverage renewable resources with battery storage systems.

The 2023 IRP Order approved 500 MW in Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS), which includes BESS projects at Robins and Moody Air Force Bases. A subsequent Commission order in December 2024 approved Georgia Power's request to certify and proceed with five BESS projects, reporting requirements and certified amount.

In 2024, EERE Staff also oversaw Georgia Power's Demand-Side Management (DSM) and Energy Efficiency programs that were approved during the 2022 IRP and DSM Certification. The Residential DSM portfolio reached 103.6% of its projected 2024 savings goal with the Behavioral, Specialty Lighting, Refrigerator Recycling Plus and Energy and Assistance for Savings and Efficiency programs exceeding their goals.



## **FACILITIES PROTECTION**

The Facilities Protection Unit of the Georgia Public Service Commission is composed of two distinct areas: Pipeline Safety and enforcement of the Georgia Underground Facility Protection Act (GUFPA) also known as “Call Before You Dig.”

Facilities Protection is one of the few areas where Commission jurisdiction extends beyond the electric, telephone, and natural gas industries. The Commission is responsible for enforcing the Call Before You Dig law for all utility facilities, including water and cable TV. In 2024, system owners and operators reported 4,392 incidents where facilities were damaged. Over 78 percent of the damages were to natural gas lines.

In 2024, the PSC returned \$360,000 in fines to the state Treasury. But the goal of the PSC Facilities Protection Unit is safety, not punishment. To promote safety and education between excavators and facility owners, the Commission gives violators of the Georgia dig law the option of attending safety training instead of paying the full civil penalty assessed. The Commission-approved safety training classes explain the severity of possible damage when safety regulations are ignored. The classes also discuss the legal aspects of the damage prevention law. In 2024, 616 locators, excavators, and facility owners, and operators attended one of the 141 Commission-approved dig law training presentations.

## **ADMINISTRATION DIVISION**

In 2024 the Administration Division continued to efficiently maximize its task to support the Commission’s mission. The Executive Director heads the Division and oversees the Executive Secretary, the Fiscal and Budget Office, the Human Resources Office, the Operations Support Office, the Public Information/Legislative Liaison and the Consumer Affairs Office.

In FY 2024, the Fiscal and Budget Office accurately monitored and effectively managed a budget with revenues and expenses of \$13.2 million, a 3-percent increase over 2023.

The Commission held 73 public hearings, opened 499 new case dockets, processed 4,047 filed documents, and filed 777 orders prepared for the Chairman’s and Executive Secretary’s signature.

In 2024, the Commission’s Operations Support staff received critical funding from the General Assembly and Governor. This funding helped the department expand its workforce by:

- Recruiting skilled professionals;
- Successfully modernizing its antiquated phone system into a modern communication platform;
- Continuing the development of its primary production software system; and
- Prioritizing cybersecurity and data protection, which allowed the team to advance operational efficiency and productivity through continued strategic integration of cloud-based technologies.

The Public Information Officer/Legislative Liaison fielded numerous calls and emails from local, state and national media regarding Georgia Power rate increases, a railroad eminent domain

case as well the completion of the Vogtle 3 and Vogtle 4 expansion project. Legislative actions in 2024 monitored by the Commission included a bill that would have required PSC certification of companies that sell rooftop solar arrays (this did not pass), a bill that outlined the process for removal and disposal of old solar panels (passed and signed into law), and a bill that enhances punishments for assaults on utility workers (passed and signed into law).

The Consumer Affairs Unit fielded 10,579 calls in 2024 (this includes calls routed to Spanish speaking staffers and routed through the Asian American Resource Center). Consumer Affairs also handled 4,026 email contacts, 3,346 contacts through the Commission's online portal, 333 letters and faxes, and six walk-in consumers. In total, Consumer Affairs processed 5,616 inquiries, complaints, and opinions in 2024.

In 2024, Human Resources documented the loss of 10 Commission staff members: 7 left for other opportunities, 2 retired and 1 is now deceased. Eight new staff members were hired. At the end of 2024, the Commission employed 82 staffers. The PSC turnover rate of 12 percent is lower than the 17 percent average turnover rate for state of Georgia agency employees. Recruitment of qualified candidates, however, continues to present a challenge.

## UTILITIES DIVISION

Since the early 20<sup>th</sup> century the Georgia Public Service Commission has been responsible for setting rates charged by telecommunications, natural gas, and electric companies, ensuring the reliability and availability of utility services, and establishing and enforcing quality of service standards. The telecommunications, natural gas, and electric industries are natural monopolies, but some segments of these markets have been opened to retail competition that allow customers to choose among multiple providers for certain services with pay rates set by the provider. Other services, such as distribution of natural gas and electricity by investor-owned companies, remain regulated by the Commission, which sets the rates charged for these services.

The pace of the implementation of competition and deregulation varied among the regulated industries. In the telecommunications industry, long distance service has been competitive since the mid-1980s. In 1995 and 1996, authorities opened local telephone service to competition by federal and state legislation, respectively. Local telephone competition was redefined due to technological advances of broadband, Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) and wireless telephone. State legislators and federal agencies recognized that local telephone companies face intermodal competition from cable TV companies and wireless providers, not just intermodal competition from other telephone companies.

In 1998, Georgia opened the natural gas commodity market to retail competition. Only one of the two investor-owned natural gas companies elected to open its territory to competition and now 14 Commission-certified marketers sell gas commodity service to customers in the Atlanta Gas Light Company (AGL) territory. Marketers set their own prices, but the Commission sets the rates charged by AGL to distribute the natural gas for the marketers.

In 2019, the Georgia General Assembly passed Senate Bill 2 that allowed Electric Membership Corporations (EMCs) to provide high-speed broadband Internet service to their customers. The Commission was tasked with the approval of the EMCs' cost allocation manuals.

In 2023 and 2024, the Public Service Commission saw a unique development when Georgia Power filed an Integrated Resource Plan update. Typically, Georgia Power files an IRP every three years. The IRP helps set the amount of energy to be produced and the sources from which that energy will be produced. In 2023, Georgia Power determined it needed to increase its energy sources to keep up with demand and the company felt the need for more energy could not wait until the scheduled 2025 IRP. The update required several hearings during 2024. The Commission's final order on the 2023 IRP update was filed in April 2024. The resulting needs for certification of Power Purchase Agreements continued through the end of 2024.

In spite of the ongoing evolution of the regulatory environment, the Commission's mission remains the same: To ensure consumers receive safe, reliable and reasonably priced telecommunications, electric and natural gas service from financially viable and technically competent companies and to protect utility infrastructure from damage. In the sections that follow are an overview of the role that the Commission has played and the key decisions in each of these utility industries in 2024.

## ELECTRIC UNIT

Electricity is vital to the economy of the state and to the quality of life of Georgia's citizens. Of the three regulated utility industries, the electric industry is the most universally utilized and the most essential. The sole investor-owned electric utility, Georgia Power Company, is fully regulated by the Commission and serves approximately 2.8 million retail customers. The Commission has limited regulatory authority over the 41 Electric Membership Corporations (EMCs) and 49 municipal-owned electric systems in the state.

### SIGNIFICANT MATTERS IN ELECTRIC UTILITY INDUSTRY REGULATION IN 2024

#### Coal Combustion Residuals Asset Retirement Obligations

In accordance with the Commission's Final Order in the 2019 Integrated Resource Plan (IRP), Georgia Power Company provides semi-annual reports regarding its Asset Retirement Obligations (ARO) for its Coal Combustion Residuals (CCR) compliance strategy activities. Georgia Power is required to comply with federal and state CCR rules at its ash ponds and CCR landfills. The Company has 29 ash ponds and 12 current CCR landfills at 12 sites across the state. Georgia Power's Environmental Compliance Strategy (ECS) to comply with these rules was reviewed and approved by the Commission in the Company's 2019 IRP. An update to the ECS was filed with the Commission with the 2022 IRP and updated in October 2024.

Tables 4 and 5 below are from October 2024 Semi-Annual CCR ARO Report and summarize the estimated closure construction timeframes for ash ponds and landfills.

**Table 4. Ash Pond Estimated Closure Construction Timeframes**

	Closure by Removal	Closure in Place	Total	Estimated Closure Construction Completion <sup>1,2</sup>
<b>Bowen</b>		1	1	<b>2034</b>
<b>Branch</b>	5		5	<b>2036</b>
<b>Hammond</b>	3	1	4	<b>2032</b>
<b>Kraft</b>	1		1	<b>2016<sup>A</sup></b>
<b>McDonough</b>	1	3	4	<b>2025</b>
<b>McIntosh</b>	1		1	<b>2022<sup>A</sup></b>
<b>McManus</b>	1		1	<b>2020<sup>A</sup></b>
<b>Mitchell</b>	3		3	<b>2030</b>
<b>Scherer</b>		1	1	<b>2032</b>
<b>Wansley</b>	1		1	<b>2034</b>
<b>Yates</b>	4	3	7	<b>2024</b>
<b>Total</b>	20	9	29	

<sup>1</sup> For those sites with multiple ash ponds, the date above reflects the last pond's estimated closure construction completion date for the site in total. The "Estimated Closure Construction Completion" date reflects the estimated end of closure construction and estimated completion of major restoration activities that may go beyond the submittal of the Closure Certification Report or the Certification of Removal Report.

<sup>2</sup> Based on a comprehensive review performed during 3Q24, the current schedule forecast for several sites was determined to be substantially consistent with the prior update reflected in the March 2024 Semi-Annual Report and is therefore reflected as consistent with that report. All significant schedule changes since the March 2023 Semi-Annual Report are reflected above. The Company will continue to monitor all project assumptions and provide updates in the future.

<sup>A</sup> Denotes actual closure construction completion date.

**Table 5. Landfill Estimated Closure Construction Timeframes**

	Existing CCR Landfills	Future, New Permitted Landfills	Total	Estimated Closure Construction Completion <sup>1,2</sup>
Arkwright	3	1	4	2032
Bowen	1		1	2039
Branch		1	1	2041
Hammond	1		1	2032
Kraft	1		1	2020 <sup>A</sup>
McIntosh	2		2	2022 <sup>3</sup>
Scherer	1		1	2046
Wansley	1		1	2034
Yates	2		2	2024
Total	12	2	14	

<sup>1</sup> For those sites with multiple landfills or landfill cells, the date above reflects the last cell's estimated closure construction completion date for the site. The "Estimated Closure Construction Completion" date reflects the estimated end of closure construction and estimated completion of major restoration activities, which may go beyond the submittal of the Closure Certification Report or the Certification of Removal Report.

<sup>2</sup> Based on a comprehensive review performed during 3Q24, the current schedule forecast for several sites was determined to be substantially consistent with the prior update reflected in the March 2024 Semi-Annual Report and is therefore reflected as consistent with that report. All significant schedule changes since the March 2024 Semi-Annual Report are reflected above. The Company will continue to monitor all project assumptions and provide updates in the future.

<sup>3</sup> In 2023, a request was submitted to the EPD to allow for the episodic disposal of CCR at Plant McIntosh.

<sup>A</sup> Denotes actual closure construction completion date.

Georgia Power's current forecast for CCR ARO activities applicable to retail customers over the next approximately 60 years will cost \$7.4 billion, which includes the approximately \$1.6 billion in actual costs previously incurred. This current forecast is approximately \$180 million lower than the previous forecast included in the October 2024 Semi-Annual Report.

### 2023 IRP Update

On October 27, 2023, Georgia Power submitted its 2023 Integrated Resource Plan (IRP) Update pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 46-3A-1. On April 26, 2024, the Commission issued an order adopting a stipulated agreement between the Georgia Power Company, Commission Staff, and several intervenors in the docket. The Order noted, "Since the 2023 IRP Update filing in October of 2023, the economic development pipeline has grown from 17,000 MW to 21,000 MW, and Georgia Power has been selected to serve an additional 2,602 MW. The large-load customers included in the Company's forecast are moving forward and making progress without material delay. The Stipulation will allow Georgia Power to reliably serve both its existing customers and the new ones." In addition, the Company agreed that in its next rate case filing, expected in July 2025, "the incremental revenue from new large load customers [will have] downward pressure of at least \$2.89 per month [on bills] to the typical residential customer using an average of 1,000 [kilowatt-hours] per month for the years 2026, 2027, and 2028."

Although there remains discussion and analysis of the load forecasts to consider the long-term realization of these new customers, the stipulation allowed Georgia Power Company to procure power purchase agreements, proceed to seek approval to certify new battery electric storage systems, and proceed to certify new combustion turbine units at Plant Yates to meet the growing demand in the state in 2024. Georgia Power has also expanded its thermostat demand response program as a result of the IRP update, and there are various other options and technologies about which Electric Unit staff, Georgia Power, and other stakeholders have had required ongoing engagement in preparation for the 2025 IRP. Hearings on the 2025 IRP began in March, with a Final Order expected in June.

### **Ongoing investigations**

The Commission Staff continue to investigate and monitor the following:

1. Performance and reliability of electricity generating units, transmission and distribution infrastructure
2. Reported earnings and excess revenues available for sharing, as defined in approved accounting orders
3. Transactions by and between affiliates of Georgia Power
4. Electric transportation initiatives
5. Effectiveness of hedging programs used to mitigate high natural gas fuel costs

## **PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION CONCLUDES MONITORING PROCESS OF NUCLEAR PLANT CONSTRUCTION**

### **Docket No. 29849: Commission Reviews Expenditures for Georgia Power Company's 31<sup>st</sup> and final Plant Vogtle Construction Monitoring Report (VCM)**

On February 15, 2024, Georgia Power Company filed its 30<sup>th</sup> Semi-annual Construction Monitoring Report for Vogtle Units 3 and 4 (VCM) and on August 30, 2024, Georgia Power Company filed its 31<sup>st</sup> Semi-annual Construction monitoring Report for Vogtle Units 3 and 4. The Company incurred capital construction costs of \$171 million during the 30<sup>th</sup> VCM period of July 1, 2023 through December 31, 2023 and \$76 million during the 31<sup>st</sup> VCM period of January 1, 2024 through June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2024. Consistent with the VCM 24 order these costs were presented by the Company for Commission review only and no action was required on these costs by the Commission since the Company has exceeded the approved revised capital cost of \$7.3 billion. Consequently, no issues were identified for this proceeding. Additionally, on August 30, 2023, the Company filed its Application to Include Reasonable and Prudent Plant Vogtle Units 3 and 4 Costs. While the proceeding was pending, Staff, the Company, and four intervenors agreed to a stipulation that resolved all remaining issues related to the Vogtle Project Units 3 and 4. Per the Stipulation, among terms, the parties agreed that the capital and construction costs allowed into base rates should be set at \$7.562 billion – significantly less than the \$10.75 billion Georgia Power expects to have spent to bring the project to fruition. On December 19, 2023, by unanimous vote, the Commission approved the stipulation.



**Georgia Power Company Brings Plant Vogtle Unit 4 into Commercial Operation on April 29, 2024**

Upon completion of power ascension and required contemporaneous testing Southern Nuclear Company (SNC) declared Unit 4 as commercial on April 29, 2024. Below summarizes the performance of each Unit from the commercial operations date through 2024:

Plant Vogtle Unit 3 and 4 Performance Data				
(Period COD* through 12/31/2024)				
Unit 3			Unit 4	
COD	7/31/2023		4/29/2024	
MWe's	Gross	Net	Gross	Net
Hours	11,653,111	10,852,750	6,441,132	5,990,633

Unit 3 entered its Planned Maintenance Outage (PMO), or first scheduled re-fueling outage, on October 13, 2024, and successfully returned to full power on November 26, 2025. Unit 4’s PMO, or first re-fueling outage, is scheduled to begin September 27, 2025, and complete on October 11, 2025.

**PSC Oversight of EMCs and Municipal Electricity Providers**

The Commission oversees territorial matters for all electricity suppliers including Electric Membership Corporations, municipal electricity providers and one investor-owned utility (Georgia Power Co.) pursuant to the Georgia Territorial Electric Service Act, O.C.G.A. § 46-3-1 et seq. The Commission and its Staff review and authorize requests for transfers of retail electric service, resolves disputes over service territories and maintains the electric supplier territorial maps for each of the 159 counties in Georgia. The Commission also approves requests for financing authority for Georgia Power Company and EMCs. The Commission requires rate tariffs for all electricity providers to be on file at the Commission and publishes bi-annual (winter and summer) comparisons of residential electricity rates for all providers in the state.

**The Commission Continues Its Involvement in State and Federal Activities That Impact the Electric Utility Industry**

The Georgia Public Service Commission continues its involvement in the Southeastern Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners (SEARUC), as well as the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners (NARUC) to learn from other state regulators for the benefit of Georgia utility consumers and to share its knowledge. Commissioners and staff serve on the committees of several national and local groups including NARUC, SEARUC, Southeast Electric Reliability Council (SERC), North American Electric Reliability Corporation (NERC), Eastern Interconnection States’ Planning Council and the National Council on Electricity Policy.



## **PSC Continues to Protect Ratepayer Interests by eliminating the collection of the Nuclear Waste Fee**

Georgia Ratepayers have invested over \$1.7 billion dollars into the Nuclear Waste Fund (NWF) as of September 30, 2016, (this amount includes interest). This places Georgia among the top 10 states in NWF contributions. The collection of funds from Ratepayers to dispose of waste was halted in May 2014 by the Department of Energy as mandated by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit. There have been several attempts by Congress to move forward with the Nuclear Waste Policy Act of 1982, but every effort has failed. The PSC is a member of the Nuclear Waste Strategy Coalition and, as such, it collaborates with other states and partner organizations on these issues.

Georgia Power Company has six nuclear reactors. Currently, the Company and all nuclear power companies in the U.S. store nuclear waste on site (this includes shut down reactors) pending resolution or direction from Congress. From 2015 through 2019, the cost of interim nuclear waste storage totaled just under \$140 million.

# NATURAL GAS

Natural gas is vitally important to the economic prosperity of Georgia. Consumers in Georgia benefit from natural gas delivered by the State's two investor-owned natural gas systems, Atlanta Gas Light Company (AGL) and Liberty Utilities Georgia Corporation (Liberty), as well as 78 municipal gas systems. At the end of 2024, there were 14 natural gas Marketers with a Commission-approved Certificate of Authority, 14 of which were actively serving customers on the AGL distribution system.

## **Docket No. 4167: Audit of Atlanta Gas Light Company's Manufactured Gas Plant**

AGL ratepayers pay a surcharge for the recovery of costs associated with the cleanup of Manufactured Gas Plant (MGP) sites. Annually, Staff audits the expenditures for accuracy and financial prudence. The staff files an audit report for the costs for each fiscal year. The 2024 rider amount set to be recovered was \$2.18 per Dekatherm (Dth) per DDDC (Dedicated Design Day Capacity) per year. Staff has conducted an audit on the associated costs to determine if they are reasonable.

## **Docket No. 8044: Active natural gas marketer update and Staff's ongoing analysis of marketer financial & technical capability**

Through each quarter in 2024, Staff sent Data Requests (DRs) and received responses from each active marketer regarding its financial and technical capability.

Staff engaged in a comprehensive analysis of every marketer's financial performance, covering various aspects in detail. The marketers' responses were assessed in order to identify any financial concerns. The analysis process included comparisons of several financial statement items to ensure the accuracy and integrity of the financial reporting.

Staff evaluated each marketer's Georgia operations income statement and assessed changes in key quarterly financial items—such as revenues, cost of sales, gross profit, operating expenses, and net income—compared to the previous year. A similar analysis was conducted on the income statements of the marketers' parent companies. Through this analysis, Staff was able to assess each marketer's revenue growth, cost fluctuations, and overall operational performance.

Staff also reviewed and evaluated the balance sheets of each marketer and their respective parent companies to assess their total assets and total liabilities. Through the Balance Sheet analysis, Staff was able to evaluate each marketer's financial stability, operational efficiency, and liquidity.

In addition to the analysis of marketers' financial statements, Staff also tracked each marketer's customer count trends and therms used trends. This analysis required Staff to seek more information from particular marketers in cases of substantially decreasing numbers.

The complete in-depth analysis allowed Staff to gain an overall understanding of the marketers' current financial capabilities to serve customers in the Georgia natural gas market.

## **Docket No. 12897: Universal Service Fund Low-Income Assistance**

The administration of the Universal Service Fund (USF) low-income program in 2024 required review and analyses to ensure effective distribution of funds and program compliance for

HopeWorks, The Salvation Army, and the Heating Energy Assistance Team (HEAT). Staff collaborated with HopeWorks to prepare and file its petition for \$3.5 million in funding for 2025–2029. This request included annual disbursements of \$700,000, an increase in the per-home cap from \$6,000 to \$7,000 to address inflationary pressures, and approval for the expansion of the scope of the HopeWorks. After preparation and detailed review, the petition was filed in June. It was presented to Commissioners in August and approved for disbursement by October. Despite initial banking delays, Staff worked closely with HopeWorks to resolve these issues, successfully transferring the first \$700,000 and ensuring uninterrupted program operations.

The Salvation Army's program maintained consistent compliance throughout the year. Staff facilitated the disbursement of \$660,000 for its 2025 funding and completed reconciliations. Staff actively monitored HEAT's progress to ensure compliance with Commission directives and program stability.

Throughout the year, Staff continued to work on monthly reporting and address data issues as they arose. In the fourth quarter of 2024, Staff undertook a comprehensive overhaul of the reporting processes, standardizing templates and resolving long-standing inconsistencies. In collaboration with HopeWorks, a new reporting template was created to make corrections, improve transparency, and enhance data accuracy. By November, the revised format was agreed upon and implemented, thus streamlining reporting and enabling more accurate tracking for future submissions.

#### **Docket No. 14675: Southeastern Pricing Analysis**

In compliance with Commission Rule 515-7-12, Staff conducted an analysis comparing residential retail prices of the marketers on AGL's distribution system to other providers (municipals and local distribution companies) in surrounding Southeastern States. Marketer prices were obtained from Data Request responses. With this data, Staff evaluated the state of the market based on the following criteria:

- The average of the Marketers' prices cannot be > 20% higher than the market 12 months ago.
- The average of the Marketers' prices cannot be > 30% higher than the market in the previous quarter.
- The average of the Marketers' prices cannot be > 50% higher than the market from month to month.

In 2024, Staff completed analysis for the year 2023. Staff determined that marketers met all the criteria. Therefore, based on the standard established by the Commission's rules, the market was not constrained.

#### **Docket No. 15296: Service Quality Measures Notice of Proposed Rulemaking**

Staff closely reviewed the current rules and Commission Order governing the Service Quality Measures (SQMs) and discovered a lack of clarity in the Commission Order for SQMs under Docket No. 15296. There were rules regarding SQMs, but those rules preceded the 15296 Order and did not address SQM benchmarks. Staff sought approval to issue an amended Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NOPR) that would address the benchmarks, remediation period, penalties, and other items. Staff established a working group that included some of the marketers. The purpose of the working group was to work together to amend the rules.

The First Revised NOPR was issued on July 19, 2024. The marketers' comments focused primarily on the remediation period and penalties. After further discussion with the marketers, Staff reissued the NOPR taking into consideration the marketer's feedback from the first revised version.

The Second Revised NOPR was issued on October 16, 2024, with a timeline that included December 17, 2024, as the approval date. This second revised version of the NOPR incorporated changes that would reach Staff's goal and satisfy the majority of the marketer community. Staff did not receive comments or requests for oral arguments on this version. The Commission voted to approve the rule changes at its Administrative Session on December 17, 2024. The Executive Secretary sent the rules to the Secretary of State with an effective date of February 5, 2025.

#### **Docket No. 15326: Consideration of Modifying the Existing PSC Rules Concerning Universal Service Fund Mandated by HB 1568**

On August 5, 2024, the Universal Service Fund (USF) State Accounting Office (SAO) annual reporting, including the Form 470 Trial Balance and Form 21 Investments, was sent to the SAO. The Cash and Deposits form for fiscal year 2024 was completed and submitted to the Commission's Fiscal Office for the period ending August 13, 2024. For FY2024, the beginning balance was \$62.2 million. During FY2024, the USF had \$22 million in deposits and \$10.2 million in withdrawals. The net funding was \$11.7 million, for an ending balance of \$73.9 million.

For 2024, the USF had a beginning balance of \$65.4 million. The USF had \$16.1 million in deposits and \$10.7 million in withdrawals with a net funding of \$5.3 million. The ending balance for 2024 was \$70.8 million.

During 2024, the USF provided two disbursements to Atlanta Gas Light Company for the completion of line extension projects in the amount of \$8.6 million. Additionally, the USF provided thirteen (13) disbursements to SCANA Energy as the Regulated Provider in support of Group-1 bad debt in the amount of \$631,446. Likewise, the USF provided low-income customer emergency assistance funding in the amount of \$700,000 to HopeWorks and \$660,000 to the Salvation Army.

#### **Docket No. 18638: Atlanta Gas Light Company 2024 Recalculation of Dedicated Design Day Capacity Factors**

The Commission Order in Docket No. 8390 (Atlanta Gas Light filing of Election Application for New Rates and Tariff Revisions) requires AGL to recalculate the Dedicated Design Day Capacity (DDDC) factor. The components used to calculate and influence the DDDC factor include:

- Square footage of premises
- Location (North Georgia vs. South Georgia)
- Gas Appliances on Premises
- BTU load for Gas Appliances
- Customer Behavior: Usage during the two warmest points and two coldest months over the past calendar year

A total of 1,682,131 active customer accounts as of April 1, 2024, were used in the recalculation process, which is revenue neutral for AGL. DDDC factors were also recalculated for all premises in the AGL territory, which would be relevant if customers were to establish gas service at

inactive premises. To generate the true-up factor for each pool group, the recalculated DDDC was divided by the total recalculated DDDCs in that pool group. The true-up factor maintained revenue neutrality for existing active customers across the system. Staff verified that AGL followed the Commission-approved Tariff provisions 13.3.1 A through L. This included a review of components of the Georgia Customer Management Application System (GCMA), exception criteria, and the true-up process approved by the Commission on May 15, 2007.

During the analysis, Staff also:

- Examined the customers' usage information in the Georgia Customer Management Application;
- Acquired information as to factors that may have contributed to changes in some customers' DDDC factors;
- Manually verified the results of the DDDC calculations using a sampling of actual customer data; and
- Reviewed the process for the determination of exceptions, and a sampling of actual customer exceptions.

The manual verification process occurred for the accounts of active customers in which there was a substantial change from the previous year's DDDC to the recalculated DDDC. AGL performed manual verification for 19,363 residential customers and 17,004 commercial customers. AGL submitted the recalculated DDDC information to Staff on July 19, 2024. Staff conducted their own analysis of the information and recommended that the Commission approve the recalculated DDDC factors. The Commission voted to approve the 2024 Recalculated DDDC factor at the Administrative Session on August 6, 2024. The new factor went into effect on September 1, 2024.

#### **Docket No. 41559: Atlanta Gas Light's Petition to Approve ECON-1 Tariff**

In 2024, Staff reviewed four ECON-1 project filings by AGL. The Staff reviewed the Port Wentworth Project for the City of Port Wentworth. The Commission voted to approve this project at the Administrative Session on May 7, 2024, with an estimated cost of \$1.2 million. The Staff reviewed the Jackson County Project for Redstone Market. The Commission voted to approve this project at the Administrative Session on September 17, 2024 with an estimated cost of \$570,000. The Staff reviewed the Jackson County Project for Sugarloaf International. The Commission voted to approve this project at the Administrative Session on December 3, 2024, with an estimated cost of \$210,000. In addition, the Staff reviewed the Effingham County Project with a estimated cost of \$3.8 million, but this was held until 2025.

On October 1, 2024, AGL filed a petition for the approval of the 2025 ECON-1 surcharge rate. The petition stated that AGL would charge \$0.08 to Residential customers, \$0.24 to Commercial customers, and \$2.00 to Industrial customers each month. The surcharge would begin January 1, 2025, for the recovery of projects approved late in 2023 and in 2024. Staff reviewed the petition and found no issues. Staff presented this item for approval, and the Commission voted to approve at the Administrative Session on December 3, 2024.

## **Docket No. 42959: Liberty Utilities Corporation 2025 Annual Georgia Rate Adjustment Mechanism**

### **A. Quarterly Reports**

Liberty filed quarterly reports that provided financial statements, customer counts and volumes, capital budget data, direct charges data, operations and maintenance data, allocated cost, and their return on equity (ROE) calculation. Staff performed its due diligence analysis by tracking Liberty's activity throughout the year. For 2024, Staff found no material concerns related to Liberty's reporting of the data as it pertained to financial trends, customer and volume trends, and other relevant analyses. As a routine matter, Staff issued Data Requests to gather additional information.

### **B. 2023 Revenue True Up Filing**

On April 30, 2024, Liberty submitted its 2023 Revenue True-Up (RTU) to reconcile the actual revenue collected during the 2023 Rate Effective Period, which ran from February 1, 2023, to January 31, 2024, with the estimated tracking revenues associated with the 2023 Gas Rate Adjustment Mechanism (GRAM). The Commission approved estimated tracking revenues of \$45,731,314 as reported in the 2023 GRAM Filing. However, the 2023 RTU Filing reported actual revenues totaling \$46,235,215. This resulted in an over-collection amount of \$503,901. On June 27, 2024, Staff filed a statement confirming the credit for the 2023 RTU.

### **C. 2025 GRAM**

On October 1, 2024, Liberty submitted its filing for the 2025 Annual Georgia Rate Adjustment Mechanism (GRAM). The review process commenced with the Staff's examination of Schedule-2 Rate Base, which prompted the issuance of the 21st set of Data Requests (DRs). Liberty provided responses to these inquiries on November 20, 2024.

The second phase of Staff's review focused on Operating Income, which resulted in the issuance of the 22nd and 23rd sets of DRs. These Data Requests addressed follow-up questions from the previous set of responses, as well as issues pertaining to Revenues and Operating Maintenance (O&M). Liberty submitted responses to the 22nd and 23rd sets on December 19 and December 23, 2024, respectively.

Furthermore, Staff issued the 24th set of DRs, which pertained to the GRP (Gainesville Transmission Line Replacement Project) budget and the logistics of the project. Liberty filed its responses to the 24th set on January 9, 2025, and provided a supplemental response to the 23rd set on the same date.

Throughout the review process, Staff and Liberty engaged in several meetings to ensure thorough communication and understanding of every aspect of the GRAM filing. Staff conducted a comprehensive review of the system enhancement projects included in Liberty's capital budget. As of December 2024, ongoing negotiations between Staff and Liberty continued. A stipulation eventually was reached and the Commission voted to approve that stipulation at the Administrative Session on February 27, 2025.



## **Docket No. 42315: Atlanta Gas Light Company Georgia Rate Adjustment Mechanism**

### **A. Quarterly Reports**

In Docket No. 42315, AGL filed quarterly reports that provided financial statements, customer numbers, DDDC numbers, full-time employee numbers, affiliate transaction cost data, capital budget data, and its return on equity (ROE) calculation. Staff performed a due diligence analysis to track AGL's activity throughout the year. Staff found no material concerns related to AGL's reporting.

### **B. 2023 Revenue True-Up Filing**

On March 1, 2024, AGL filed its 2023 Revenue True-Up (RTU) to reconcile the actual revenue collected during the 2023 Rate Effective Period to the estimated tracking revenues associated with the 2023 GRAM. As part of the 2023 GRAM Filing, the Commission approved estimated tracking revenues in the amount of \$887,090,370. The 2023 RTU Filing reported actual revenues totaling \$891,169,035. The total 2023 RTU credit applied against the projected 2025 GRAM revenue adjustment was \$4,078,665. On June 4, 2024, Staff filed a statement confirming the 2023 RTU credit. This appeared in AGL's 2024 GRAM filing under Schedule-11a on July 31, 2024, and again in the revised filing on November 18 and 19, 2024 as a revenue requirement reduction.

### **C. 2024 Georgia Rate Adjustment Mechanism Filing**

On July 31, 2024, AGL filed its 2025 Georgia Rate Adjustment Mechanism (GRAM). The Commission approved AGL's 2025-2034 Integrated Capacity and Delivery Plan (2025 i-CDP) in Docket No. 43820 on July 2, 2024. The annual GRAM filing was scheduled to be filed on July 1, 2024, but because the outcome of the 2025 i-CDP was connected to the 2025 GRAM filing, Staff and AGL agreed to postpone the filing of the 2025 GRAM until July 31, 2024. As part of the 2025 i-CDP stipulation, AGL was required to file a GRAM with projected levelized rate increases for 2025-2027. The July 31<sup>st</sup> filing contained 12 schedules, 45 work papers, and 17 supporting attachments. Additionally, AGL filed three models that provided different recovery scenarios. Staff reviewed the GRAM model and Peaking model as part of Staff's standard review.

Staff's analysis focused on the rate base calculation by reviewing the details in Plant in Service, Accumulated Depreciation, Construction Work in Progress, Accumulated Deferred Income Tax, and Service Company Rate Base, Cash Working Capital, and Interest on Customer Deposits. Each of these items had its own regulatory adjustments and depth of information to be reviewed. The projections were made through the Forward-Looking Test Year (FTY) ending February 28, 2026. The total of these items comprised the rate base calculation before equity. Since 56% of AGL's capital structure was equity, the rate base was multiplied by the equity percentage to obtain the equity portion of rate base. Staff then examined projected Operating Income comprised of projected revenues and Operations and Maintenance (O&M) expenses through the FTY. Revenues were forecasted using the rates approved at the time. O&M was forecasted using historic actual data updated using escalators for general inflation and labor. AGL provided this information based on its two scenarios that included an A1 scenario that would increase 2025 rates by \$120.1 million, 2026 rates by \$38.1 million, and 2027 rates by \$46.2 million. The A2 scenario would increase 2025 rates by \$68.3 million, increase 2026 rates by \$85.8 million, and increase 2027 rates by \$86.1 million.

Staff and AGL entered negotiations that resulted in a third scenario, Proposed Resolution. Staff and AGL reached a stipulated agreement on the 2025 GRAM that included the A3 scenario with a 2025 rate increase of \$71.9 million, a 2026 rate increase of \$73 million, and a 2027 rate



increase of \$73.8 million. The increases were based on an agreed on levelized increases year over year for 2025-2027. Compared to the A2 scenario, the A3 scenario would reduce AGL rates by \$33 million between 2025 and 2027. As part of the stipulated agreement, AGL agreed to use certain federal tax credits to cover the cost of storm damage related to Hurricane Helene instead of seeking additional cost recovery. On December 4, 2024, the Commission approved the Staff and AGL 2025 GRAM stipulation with adjustments and modifications to its 2025 GRAM filing.

Additionally, Staff reviewed the three-year levelized increase scenarios. As part of Staff's review, Staff issued two sets of Data Requests to AGL to gather additional information. Staff and AGL resolved all issues related to the model review. Staff and AGL had numerous meetings to discuss the levelized rate increases for 2025-2027. Staff and AGL resolved these issues and entered into a stipulated agreement filed on November 18, 2024.

The Commission voted to approve the stipulation at the Administrative Session on December 12, 2024.

#### **Docket No. 55356: 2024-2026 Regulated Provider**

The 2021-2024 Regulated Provider ended on August 31, 2024, with SCANA receiving a total of 36 disbursements from the Universal Service Fund that aided with low-income customers' (or Group-1) bad debt recovery.

On August 6, 2024, the Commission issued a Consent Order delineating the Terms and Conditions under which SCANA would serve as Regulated Provider from September 1, 2024, to August 31, 2026. Under the Consent Order, SCANA would receive a monthly disbursement of \$4.75 for each Group 1 customer served. Also, pursuant to the August 6 Consent Order, SCANA would make filings with the Commission on a monthly and quarterly basis.

On September 30, 2024, the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Staff and the Department of Human Services (DHS) expired. In June 2024, Staff initiated discussions with DHS regarding the expiration of the MOU, and it was determined that it would not be extended. Therefore, DHS filed its September report in December and provided Staff with the final amount to be returned to the USF. This amount is expected to be refunded to the USF in 2025.

#### **Docket No. 43510: Atlanta Gas Light Company's Year 2024 Universal Service Fund Facilities Expansion Plan**

On February 16, 2024, AGL filed a Notice of Completion Report (NOC) to receive a Universal Service Fund (USF) disbursement for the Wheeler County Project, also called Alamo Phase-II that had been approved in the USF 2022 Plan. The Staff performed an audit on 314 invoices comparing the costs to the ledger and ensuring that all costs were only related to the project. The Staff issued its 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> Set of Data Requests to gather additional information and resolve items related to certain invoices. On October 2, 2024, AGL filed its final NOC. On October 15, 2024, the Staff provided the signed disbursement letter to the bank, and the funds totaling \$8.5 million were wired to AGL.

On August 9<sup>th</sup>, AGL filed an Amended 2024 USF Plan, which included three projects: the White County Project for the Gathering Community Church, totaling \$139,074; the Cherokee County Project for a new Cherokee County High School, totaling \$579,475; and the Bryan County Project for a new Richmond Hill High School, totaling \$388,558. Staff reviewed the projects and

found no issues. Staff recommended the projects for approval. The Commission voted to approve at the Administrative Session on September 4, 2024.

On September 1, 2024, AGL filed a 2025 USF Facilities Expansion Plan notice that stated that it had no projects to bring forward at that time.

On October 24, 2024, AGL filed a NOC for the Jackson County Project for the Jackson County Board of Education. The Staff reviewed the invoices and found no issues. On October 15, 2024, the Staff provided the signed USF disbursement letter to the bank totaling \$92,224 that was wired to AGL.

### **Docket No. 43820: Atlanta Gas Light's Integrated Capacity and Delivery Plan**

Staff reviewed quarterly reports to track AGL's actual capital budget and Operation & Maintenance budget spending.

#### **A. System Reliability Rider**

Related to the 2022 – 2024 Integrated Capacity and Delivery Plan (i-CDP) in Docket No. 43820, AGL filed quarterly reporting on the System Reliability Rider (SRR) capital budget and the approved SRR projects. Staff compared the approved 2024 capital budget to the actual capital budget activity in the quarterly reporting. Staff found no material issues. Additionally, Staff reviewed the project costing ledger and invoices related to the capital expenditures and found no material issues. Finally, Staff reviewed the SRR surcharge model and found no material issues.

#### **B. Cherokee Liquefied Natural Gas Expansion**

Atlanta Gas Light filed quarterly reports for the Cherokee Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) Expansion Project in compliance with Appendix A of the Stipulation approved by the Order, filed November 18, 2021, that approved AGL's amended 2022-2031 Integrated and Capacity Delivery Plan (i-CDP). The Stipulation approved by the i-CDP Order required that AGL submit quarterly reports to Staff that document the execution of the progress of the Project. Quarterly reports were filed on March 1, May 28, September 4, and November 22, 2024. As part of Commission oversight, Staff visited the site periodically and issued Data Requests regarding the status of the LNG construction process and costs.

On February 1, 2024, AGL filed its 2025-2034 Integrated Capacity and Delivery Plan (2025 i-CDP), along with pre-filed supporting direct testimony, a Petition for Approval of the Plan, and the other minimum filing requirements established in the Stipulation Governance Document. With this filing, AGL also requested an amendment to year 2024 of the i-CDP to allow for more operational flexibility with the Georgia Rate Adjustment Mechanism (GRAM). In approving AGL's amendment, the Commission determined that AGL could shift dollar amounts between budget categories called "GRAM Safety and Compliance" and "GRAM-Other." This will allow for more operational flexibility and will continue for 2025-2034.

On February 8, 2024, the Commission issued its Procedural and Scheduling Order, setting the dates for filing testimony and briefs/proposed orders as well as the dates for hearings. This proceeding was deemed complex litigation pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 9-11-33(a). On May 9, 2024, AGL filed an amendment to the i-CDP to change the narrative document of the i-CDP to correct tables under "Figure 5.10: Bill Impacts" and to update the filing date and file name as "amended."

Staff thoroughly reviewed the 2025 i-CDP filing which covered AGL's safety and compliance, large pipeline programs called the System Reliability Rider (SRR), capital budgets, and other operational objectives, etc. Staff issued 12 sets of Data Requests to gather additional information. Likewise, Staff had numerous meetings with AGL to clarify information in the filing and in the Data Request responses.

On May 14, 2024, Staff filed direct testimony and exhibits of Tony Wackerly and Janey Chauvet in response to the Company's direct case in this docket, along with the Direct Testimony, Exhibits, and 2024 Affiliate Audit by Staff consultants. On May 29, 2024, the Commission issued an order revising the filing date for rebuttal testimony. On June 3, 2024, the Commission issued an order extending the filing date for rebuttal testimony.

AGL and Staff negotiated a workable compromise that would meet the Commission Staff's and the Company's goals while protecting the public interest. On June 10, 2024, AGL, Staff, and the Intervening Marketers filed a Stipulation and the Joint Testimony of Tony Wackerly of Staff, Steven Murphy, and Michael J. Morley of AGL in support of the Stipulation. AGL also filed amended Minimum Filing Requirements on June 11, 2024. The Commission held a hearing on June 12, 2024. AGL, Staff, and the Named Marketers waived cross-examination of the pre-filed direct testimony and stipulated to enter into the record the pre-filed direct testimony in support of the Company's direct case and the pre-filed direct testimony of Staff. The stipulated agreement approved a fixed capital budget over the next three years, 2025 – 2027. The majority of the capital budget would have recovery through AGL's annual GRAM rate filing. The remainder of the capital budget recovery would occur through surcharges that included the SRR recovery rider, the Department of Transportation (DOT) rider for the recovery of capital expenses for the relocation of pipe facilities next to roadways, which would include any State or municipal requirements for the relocation of gas facilities. Lastly, the ECON-1 rider would recover capital budget spending for projects approved under AGL's ECON-1 tariff.

The Commission approved the stipulated agreement during the July 2, 2024, Administrative Session.

As part of the 2025 i-CDP, the Commission approved the DOT rider as a new recovery mechanism. The DOT rider, Section 28 of AGL's tariff, was designed to provide recovery related to the relocation of AGL facilities due to state, county, or municipal roadway projects. AGL filed the Annual DOT rider on September 4, 2024. The filing contained a map of the known AGL DOT projects, a list of the known DOT projects, the capital budget, and the DOT Rider model. Staff reviewed the filing and had several meetings with the company. Additionally, on September 22, 2024, Staff issued its 22<sup>nd</sup> Set of Data Requests to gather additional information. AGL provided responses on October 17, 2024. During the November 19, 2024, Administrative Session, the Commission approved AGL's proposed 2025 DOT rider and reporting requirements that will be consistent with the SRR and ECON-1 quarterly reporting format. The rate became effective on January 1, 2025, with quarterly reports due forty-five days after the end of each quarter.

#### **Docket No. 44093: Bryan County Mega Site**

The Municipal Gas Authority of Georgia has kept Commissioners and Staff apprised of any new developments that have taken place thus far. Such developments included, but were not limited to executed agreements, estimated load, changes in load, costs, and pipeline construction and installation. Per Staff's latest updates from the Authority, natural gas began flowing into the mega site on May 10, 2024.

**Docket No. 44319: Atlanta Gas Light's 2022 – 2025 Capacity Supply Plan**

In 2024, Staff had several meetings with AGL and the natural gas marketers regarding issues with Southern Natural Gas' (SNG) North Main.

The end-of-winter meeting addressed various seasonal and operational topics. Customer Service Performance trends were presented alongside updates on pool usage, maintenance schedules, and regression analysis accuracy improvements. The introduction of a new Enterprise Gas Management System (EGMS), scheduled for Q2 2025 under Southern Company Gas, was announced, promising a cost-effective centralized system for AGL. Insights from the 2024 heating season revealed it was slightly colder than the previous year (coldest day: January 30, 2024, with 43 Heating Degree Days but warmer overall compared to the 10- and 30-year averages.

Billing unit growth was driven primarily by the Atlanta pool, while supply requirements for the Ex-ATL Transco pool were overpredicted due to unmet load expectations. Regional pools in Augusta, Brunswick, and Valdosta showed increased usage, with a customer in Valdosta shifting from interruptible to firm service. Additionally, a new firm customer, GF Casting Solutions, an aluminum casting/smelting company, was confirmed in the Augusta region.

**Docket No. 55650: 2024-2025 Liberty Utilities Gas Supply Plan**

Liberty filed its Design Day Forecast on June 3, 2024. On June 26, 2024, Staff issued its first set of Data Requests (DRs), and the company responded on July 11. On July 1, the company filed its 2024-2025 Gas Supply Plan. The Plan identified the interstate storage and peaking assets needed to meet the Company's forecasted peak demand for its approximately 56,115 customers in the Gainesville and Columbus service areas. Staff reviewed the Plan and ensured that it met the Commission's Minimum Filing Requirements. Immediately after receiving the Gas Supply Plan, Staff began its analysis and, in doing so, issued its second set of DRs, on July 25. The Company responded to the Data Requests on August 9, 2024, and Staff met with representatives of Liberty to clarify any further outstanding items. On September 6, 2024, Staff and the Company filed a stipulation, along with supporting testimony, to resolve all issues in the Gas Supply Plan. The Commission voted to approve Liberty's 2024-2025 Gas Supply Plan at the Administrative Session on September 26, 2024.

**Certificates of Public Convenience and Necessity**

By the close of 2024, the Commission had amended 10 certificates. The Commission had also approved a total of 107 certificates affected by County Wide Safety Plans (CWSPs). In 2024, Staff reviewed the following CWSPs and Certificate amendments that were later approved by the Commission:

- Docket No. 29338: Walton County-Wide Safety Plan
- Docket No. 30688: City of Buford's Application of MGAG for Amended Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity for Walton County
- Docket No. 30689: City of Covington's Application of MGAG for Amended Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity for Walton County
- Docket No. 30690: City of Lawrenceville's application of MGAG for Amended Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity for Walton County
- Docket No. 24964: City of Madison's Application for a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity for a Natural Gas Distribution System

- Docket No. 24713: City of Winder's Application of MGAG for Amended Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity for Walton County
- Docket No. 30775: Application of Atlanta Gas Light Company for Amended Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity for Walton County
- Docket No. 29323: Bibb Countywide Safety Plan
- Docket No. 30701: Atlanta Gas Light Company's Application for Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity in Bibb County
- Docket No. 30333: Mid-State Energy's Application for Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity in Bibb County for Waiver of Commission Rule 515-7-1-.15(6) and Hearing Requirement in Bibb County
- Docket No. 29334: Jackson Countywide Safety Plan
- Docket No. 30684: City of Buford's Application of MGAG for Amended Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity for Jackson County
- Docket No. 30709: Atlanta Gas Light Company's Application for Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity in Jackson County
- Docket No. 31852: Liberty Utilities Application for Amended Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity.

### **Atlanta Gas Light Company and Liberty Utilities: Curtailment Issues**

Due to extreme weather conditions, in December of 2024, Atlanta Gas Light Company issued a multi-day curtailment order to interruptible customers. One interruptible customer re-evaluated its natural gas needs and executed a contract to convert from an interruptible service to firm service with AGL. Additionally, Atlanta Gas Light adjusted its notification procedures and thresholds for interruptible customers based on results of the annual curtailment plan model.

Subsequently, Liberty reviewed its curtailment practices. Liberty revised its tariff to better address the curtailment of interruptible customers.

### **Marketer Touch-Base Meetings**

In 2024, Staff participated in two AGL and Marketer Touch-Base meetings held virtually in January and May. These meetings brought AGL representatives and participating marketers together to discuss key updates, initiatives, and trends impacting operations and customer engagement.

The January 16, 2024, meeting covered a range of topics, including safety updates, software enhancements, and tankless water heater initiatives (including sweepstakes and giveaways). Significant focus was placed on the HOPE program, which was reported to have tripled its weatherization efforts in 2023. Additional programs like HopeWorks and the Senior Citizen Program were promoted and discussed at this meeting. Income-eligible families have the opportunity to benefit from bill payment assistance initiatives.



# TELECOMMUNICATIONS UNIT

The telecommunications industry is indispensable to the state economy. For nearly 30 years, Georgia's Telecommunications and Competition Development Act of 1995 and the Federal Telecommunications Act of 1996 have had a great impact on the Commission's role in this vital industry. The goal of these statutes was to replace traditional regulated monopoly service with a competitive market. For competitive segments of the industry, the Commission does not set rates but instead facilitates market development by certifying new providers, arbitrating interconnection agreements, and resolving complaints among competitors.

The PSC had 898 active certificates in 2024, distributed among industry segments, as follows: 209 resellers of long-distance service, 31 alternative operator service providers, 264 competitive local exchange service providers, 101 interexchange service providers, 240 payphone-service providers, 18 institutional telecommunications service providers, and more than 35 incumbent local exchange service providers.

## Universal Access Fund

In December 2023, 20 Tier II Incumbent Local Exchange Carriers (ILECs) filed applications for disbursements totaling \$41,431,433 for the 29<sup>th</sup> Universal Access Fund year covering the period July 1, 2022, through June 30, 2023. All 20 applications were audited by Hurlbert CPA, LLC.

On September 25, 2024, the Commission approved disbursements for the 29<sup>th</sup> UAF year totaling \$40,427,163. The approved disbursements are listed below.

<b>29th UAF Year (7/1/2022-6/30/2023)</b>		
<b>Company</b>	<b>As-Filed Request</b>	<b>Staff Recommendation</b>
Alma Telephone Company	\$2,807,521.00	\$2,793,243.00
Blue Ridge Telephone Company	\$4,230,717.00	\$4,230,717.00
Brantley Telephone Company, Inc.	\$547,806.00	\$547,423.00
Bulloch County Rural Telephone Cooperative, Inc.	\$722,153.00	\$722,153.00
Camden Telephone & Telegraph Co., Inc.	\$1,431,685.00	\$1,431,685.00
Chickamauga Telephone Corporation	\$1,053,784.00	\$1,053,784.00
ComSouth Telecommunications, LLC d/b/a Hargray	\$2,197,504.00	\$2,197,504.00
Darien Telephone Co., Inc.	\$2,379,620.00	\$2,379,620.00
Glenwood Telephone Company	\$363,493.00	\$363,493.00
Hart Telephone Company	\$1,075,070.00	\$1,075,070.00
Nelson-Ball Ground Telephone Company	\$1,594,750.00	\$1,594,750.00
Pembroke Telephone Company, Inc.	\$675,152.00	\$675,152.00
Pineland Telephone Cooperative, Inc.	\$1,130,476.00	\$1,127,151.00
Plant Telephone Company d/b/a TruVista	\$4,020,523 <sup>[1]</sup>	\$3,047,683.00
Planters Rural Telephone Cooperative, Inc.	\$1,773,946.00	\$1,765,288.00
Progressive Rural Telephone Co-op., Inc.	\$3,598,775.00	\$3,598,657.00
Public Service Telephone Company	\$4,183,214.00	\$4,183,214.00
Ringgold Telephone Company	\$2,874,795.00	\$2,874,795.00
Trenton Telephone Company	\$4,208,790.00	\$4,206,279.00
Waverly Hall Telephone, LLC	\$561,659.00	\$559,502.00
	<b>\$41,431,433.00</b>	<b>\$40,427,163.00</b>

[1] Plant Telephone Company d/b/a TruVista was permitted to refile its application. The revised application requested a reduced disbursement of \$3,047,683. See the May 31, 2024 *Order Amending Procedural and Scheduling Order for Ruling Upon Applications for Reimbursement from the Universal Access Fund for the 29<sup>th</sup> UAF Year* in Docket No. 32235.

House Bill 168, which took effect June 4, 2010, phased out intrastate access charges and allowed the lost revenue to be offset by higher basic local exchange service rates. Pursuant to the statute, the Commission first determined a statewide benchmark local service rate by calculating 110 percent of the July 1, 2009, residential statewide average rate for basic local exchange service. Next, the Commission set a schedule by which local rates would be increased to the benchmark rate. The approved schedule required basic local exchange service rates to increase by an amount not to exceed \$1.61 per month per year for a period of nine years with a true-up in the tenth year. For 2024, the statewide benchmark local service rate increased to \$25.63, after adjusting for inflation.

### **Telecommunications Relay Service (TRS)**

Hamilton Telecommunications has been the Georgia TRS provider since April 2006. Headquartered in Nebraska, Hamilton currently provides relay service in 33 states. Hamilton, known here as Georgia Relay, operates a call center in Albany, Georgia, seven days a week, 24 hours a day, employing over 180 communications assistants. In 2024, the Relay Center in Albany processed an average of almost 15,000 relay calls per month or 82,000 session minutes. The total cost paid from the TRS fund was \$476,525 for 2024. The TRS portion was \$288,875 and Outreach was \$187,650.

With Commission approval, Hamilton implemented Captioned Telephone Service (CapTel®) in Georgia in January 2008. An enhanced form of relay service, CapTel® allows individuals with hearing loss to view word-for-word captions of their telephone conversations. Over 1,300 subscribers now use the system, averaging over 14,000 calls per month or 32,000 session minutes. The cost of this service for 2024 was \$72,506.

### **Telecommunications Equipment Distribution Program (TEDP)**

The Commission established the Georgia TEDP in March 2003 pursuant to the provisions of House Bill 1003. This program provides specialized telecommunications equipment to Georgians who, because of physical impairments (particularly hearing and speech), cannot otherwise communicate over the telephone. Receipt of free equipment under this program is subject to medical and financial eligibility requirements. In 2024, approximately 684 equipment items, which include approximately 34 CapTel® phones, have been distributed to hearing or speech-impaired applicants. The Commission contracts with Georgia Center of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (GCDHH) to be the distribution agency for the Georgia TEDP. The cost of this service for 2024 was \$892,668.

### **Audible Universal Information Access Service (AUIAS)**

In 2006 the Legislature created a statewide AUIAS to provide blind and print-disabled citizens of Georgia with telephonic access to print media publications. The law gave the Commission oversight of the service. Following a competitive bidding process, the Commission selected the National Federation of the Blind to administer the service. Since June 2006, the AUIAS has provided continuous audible universal access to all Georgia telephone exchanges, 24 hours a day, seven days a week and 52 weeks a year. The system is accessible by dialing a toll-free or local number anywhere in the state and has the capacity to serve an unlimited number of subscribers. Currently, there are over 3,500 subscribers to this service. The total number of Georgia citizens that could potentially benefit from this service exceeds 25,000, as demonstrated by the number of current subscribers to the Georgia Library for Accessible Services. The cost of this service in 2024 was \$238,410.



**Hearing Aid Distribution Program**

In August 2007, the Commission approved the Hearing Aid Distribution Program according to the provisions of House Bill 655, which authorized use of TRS funds for the distribution of hearing aids. In May 2022, the Georgia Public Service Commission awarded the Georgia Charitable Care Network (“GCCN”) as the new Hearing Aid Distribution Program Provider to provide hearing aids to low-income Georgians. Under the current contract, GCCN received \$469,891 which includes \$4,500 for each child under the age of 20 and \$1,287 for each adult who qualifies for this program. There were 690 Adults and 25 children that were served by this program in 2024. GCCN partners with seven hearing aid manufacturers and maintains a network of over 47 audiologists throughout the state. The program distributed 660 hearing aids and 244 molds to 715 applicants in 2024.

## ENERGY EFFICIENCY AND RENEWABLE ENERGY UNIT

In 2024, the Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy (EERE) Unit addressed energy efficiency and renewable issues that came before the Commission during its regular sessions, issues required by the 2022 Integrated Resource Plan (IRP) Order and issues that arose during Georgia Power Company's 2023 IRP Update filing, Docket No. 55378.

### **Distributed Generation Working Group**

In the Commission's 2022 IRP Final Order, Commission Staff and Georgia Power were instructed to develop guidelines for establishing a Distributed Generation Working Group (DGWG) to improve procurement practices that were used following the 2022 IRP Final Order. The DGWG consisted of five Commission Staff members, five Solar Association representatives, five Georgia Power representatives, and five members of the general public (appointed by the Commission Chairman and subject to approval by the full Commission). The DGWG met several times in advance of the Company's 2023 Distributed Generation Request for Proposals (RFP) and again in advance of the 2024 DG RFP.

### **Distributed Generation Request for Proposals**

The 2023 DG RFP sought to procure approximately 193 megawatts of energy from solar photovoltaic (fixed-tilt or tracking) DG resources with facilities sized greater than 250 kilowatts up to 6 MW. The 2023 DG RFP concluded in 2024 with certification of 12 Power Purchase Agreements (PPA) for a total of approximately 41 MW.

The 2024 DG RFP seeks to procure approximately 250 MW of energy from DG solar photovoltaic resources, which includes the unfilled procurement target from the 2023 DG RFP (approximately 150 MW). In order to participate, a facility must interconnect to the Company's distribution system. If the facility is located outside Georgia Power's service territory, a three-party agreement with the service territory's electric service provider (e.g., an Electric Membership Cooperative or municipality) will be required. All Environmental Attributes produced by or related to the facility must be bundled with the energy procured under the DG RFP. On July 23, 2024, draft RFP, Power Purchase Agreement (PPA), and Build Transfer Agreements (BTA) documents were posted to the Independent Evaluator (IE) Website. This allows potential bidders the opportunity to submit comments and offer revisions to the documents. The BTA was introduced by the Company for the DG RFP as an additional project option for bidders. On August 8, 2024, Georgia Power conducted an online Bidder's Conference for potential bidders and interested parties to discuss the 2024 DG RFP process and the draft RFP Documents with Georgia Power, Staff, and the IE. On September 12, 2024, the Final Draft of the RFP, PPA, and BTA documents were posted to the IE website and filed with the Commission for consideration and approval. The Final DG documents were approved, and the bid window opened on October 21, 2024. Contracting for these projects is expected to begin in September 2025.

### **Biomass RFP**

The EERE Unit worked with Georgia Power and the IE to develop Georgia Power's 2023 Biomass RFP to procure up to 140 MW of new biomass capacity and energy for Georgia Power customers. As approved by the Commission in its 2022 IRP Final Order, the Company sought to procure biomass resources up to 80 MW with expected commercial operation dates of June 2025 through 2029. EERE Unit Staff worked with Georgia Power throughout the 2023 Biomass RFP process.

Bidders were requested to provide a description of the number and nature of new jobs, if any, that its project would provide, the amount of new capital investment that would be put into such a project, and other information relevant to economic development that would support rural job and economic development growth in Georgia. After bids were received, Georgia Power selected a portfolio that totaled 77.9 MW, which consisted of three proposals that provide both energy and capacity benefits, along with Environmental Attributes and Electrical Products. EERE Staff pre-filed testimony and testified at the August 29, 2024, hearing in support of the three Power Purchase Agreements. The Commission approved the Company's Application for a Certificate for Public Convenience and Necessity for all three of the 2023 Biomass RFP Power Purchase Agreements on September 20, 2024.

### **Clean and Renewable Energy Subscription Utility Scale Renewable RFP**

EERE Staff worked with Georgia Power and the IE, to accept and evaluate bids in Georgia Power's 2023 Clean and Renewable Energy Subscription Utility Scale Renewable RFP (CARES RFP). Georgia Power rolled forward 1,250 MW that was unfilled from previous utility scale procurements for a CARES RFP procurement target of 2,875 MW. A total of 3,350 MW will be procured through two RFPs. As ordered by the Commission in its 2022 IRP Final Order, Georgia Power will procure up to 2,100 MW of utility scale renewable resources, including energy from up to 650MW of Carbon-Free Energy Around-the-Clock (CFE-ATC) resources that leverage renewable resources with battery storage systems. The 2023 CARES RFP will seek to procure 2,875 MW of Utility Scale renewable resources with anticipated in-service dates of 2026, 2027, or 2028. Georgia Power will accept bids for facilities where the generating capacity of the renewable resource is greater than 6 MW. A second CARES RFP is expected to be issued in 2025 to procure any unfulfilled utility scale resources. In addition to the renewable energy procured by the 2023 and 2025 RFP, Georgia Power may procure additional Utility Scale Renewable Resources, that are not CFE-ATC Resources, for the CARES Economic Development Program.

Bids were accepted for both existing and new facilities. Awarded contracts for an existing facility would be in the form of a Pro Forma Asset Purchase Agreement (APA) or Pro Forma Energy Only Power Purchase Agreement, depending on whether Georgia Power or the bidder is the ultimate owner of the existing facility. Awarded contracts for a facility that has not yet been constructed, but meets the requirements of a Build Transfer Facility, would be in the form of a Pro Forma Build Transfer Agreement or if the facility will be owned by the bidder would be a Pro Forma Energy Only PPA, Pro Forma Energy with Storage PPA, or a Pro Forma CFE-ATC PPA, depending on whether the facility includes a storage device and whether the facility being proposed would be a CFE-ATC Resource.

As required by the Commission in its 2022 IRP Final Order, Georgia Power will use a Best Cost analysis to evaluate bids and Company-Owned Proposals to one or more Solar Weighted Projected Avoided Costs (SWAC) Reference Benchmarks. The SWAC Reference Benchmark is a solar weighted projected avoided cost for a single Georgia Power generic single axis tracking solar profile modelled in one or more Georgia Power planning scenarios (e.g., MG0, HG0, MG20). A Best Cost Threshold will then be selected through the Best Cost Analysis to determine which projects are economically competitive. As part of the Best Cost Analysis, the evaluation of bids will focus on (i) the Contract Energy Price; (ii) the Purchase Price; (iii) the Projected Avoided Costs pursuant to the RCB Framework (iv) any transmission and distribution costs; and (v) a portfolio analysis to consider the impact of those costs. Once the Best Cost Threshold is determined in coordination with Staff and IE, bid ranking will be finalized.

Bids were due on February 12, 2024, and the Competitive Tier was identified by Georgia Power, EERE Staff and the IE and finalized on April 10, 2024. On May 23, 2024, Georgia Power filed a request for Commission approval on an expedited basis for a bid refresh process and Commission rule waiver, revised battery requirements, and modifications to the CARES 2023 US RFP. The Company sought these requests to address concerns of unknown industry changes from announced tariffs on bifacial solar modules and lithium-ion non-electrical vehicle (“EV”) batteries as well as heightened reliability risks associated with foreign-made battery components. This bid refresh process would allow bidders to both increase or decrease their bid price and/or extend their Commercial Operation Date of a proposed Facility to November 30, 2029. EERE Staff met with the Company several times to understand the potential impacts of the solar tariffs and foreign battery component requirements on the current CARES RFP bids and the likelihood that the Company will be able to procure the megawatts sought through the CARES RFP. The Commission approved the request on June 6, 2024.

On June 21, 2024, the Southern Environmental Law Center (SELC) filed a motion for Commission reconsideration of the Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) requirements approved in the Commission’s June 6, 2024, CARES 2023 Utility Scale RFP Order in Docket No. 45084. SELC had opposed the inclusion of the Netherlands on a list of restricted countries, barred from bidding on Battery Energy Storage Systems.

On August 21, 2024, the Commission issued an Order Granting SELC’s Motion for Reconsideration, which approved the removal of the Netherlands from the list of restricted countries. In addition, the Order reflected the approval of an amendment that required – in the event of any terrorist action, cyber security, or mechanical failure as a result of sourcing equipment from the Netherlands – that the supplier of the material or part would be responsible for any and all cost to Georgia Power and its customers.

On August 23, 2024, Georgia Power made a compliance filing for approval of its proposed plan to implement the Commission’s August 21, 2024 Order Granting SELC’s Motion for Reconsideration. In this filing, Georgia Power stated that it interpreted the amendment to the motion to require that if any cost is caused by a terrorist act, cyber security incident, or mechanical failure that resulted from any programmable electronic component of a Battery Management System, BESS Controller, or Site Controller sourced from the Netherlands, the counterparty with whom Georgia Power is contracting would be responsible for all damages allowed under Georgia law to Georgia Power or its customers. In order to implement this requirement, Georgia Power proposed to amend each impacted pro forma BESS contract in the CARES 2023 Utility Scale RFP, All-Source RFP, and Winter BESS RFP. The Commission approved the compliance filing on September 24, 2024.

### **2023 Integrated Resource Plan Update**

Georgia Power typically files an Integrated Resource Plan every three years. After the 2022 IRP, the Company was not expected to file its next IRP until 2025. However, due to unexpected levels of customer load growth, the Company filed an IRP Update on October 27, 2023.

EERE Staff pre-filed testimony and testified at the February 29, 2024, hearing in support of the Company’s request for new customer-sited programs, a customer demand response program, the Company’s request to amend its Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity for the Thermostat Demand Response Demand Side Management (DSM) Program, and the reasonable capacity equivalence of a current renewable plus battery storage.

The Commission issued its Order Adopting a Stipulated Agreement on April 26, 2024. The order included:

- Two Power Purchase Agreements
- A modification to the Company's request to develop, own, and operate 1,000 MW of BESS by reducing the amount to 500 MW which includes BESS projects at Robins and Moody Air Force Bases
- Approval of a 500 MW BESS RFP to serve customers starting during the winter of 2027/2028 (Winter BESS RFP)
- Approval of the construction of Plant Yates combustion turbines 8-10
- Approval of several distributed energy resource (DER) programs
- An order for Georgia Power to evaluate and develop a residential and small commercial solar and battery pilot programs
- Approved of the transmission projects necessary to accommodate the loads and resource portfolio approved in the 2023 IRP Update

On August 16, 2024, Georgia Power filed for expedited certification of Robins, Moody, Hammond, and McGrau Ford Phase I BESS projects and to proceed with the McGrau Ford Phase II BESS Project.

EERE Staff pre-filed testimony and testified at the October 31, 2024, hearing in support of the Company's request to certify and proceed with the BESS projects, BESS augmentation reporting requirements, quarterly construction reporting requirements, and a modified certification amount. The Commission issued its Order Adopting Stipulated Agreement on December 12, 2024. The order approved the Company's request to certify and proceed with the five BESS projects, reporting requirements and certified amount.

As required by the Commission in its 2023 IRP Update Final Order, Georgia Power was ordered to evaluate and develop a residential and small commercial solar and battery pilot program that will provide grid reliability and capacity benefits and have at least two collaborative meetings with Commission Staff and interested parties prior to submitting the pilot program for approval as part of the Company's 2025 IRP filing. These meetings took place on July 10, 2024, and September 5, 2024. Georgia Power, EERE Staff, and interested parties representing a variety of different backgrounds attended these meetings. EERE Staff helped facilitate and encourage discussions on different residential and small commercial solar and storage program design elements at these meetings.

The EERE Unit worked with Georgia Power and the IE to develop Georgia Power's Winter BESS RFP to procure approximately 500 MW of BESS capacity resources through a narrowly tailored RFP on an expedited schedule. Georgia Power accepted bids for resources including:

- Standalone BESS with grid charging capability that have a transmission interconnection study completed or are in-progress and require minimal transmission improvements (those that can be completed on or before November 30, 2027); and
- BESS with Renewable Resource and grid charging capability located at an existing or previously certified solar site that have a Point of Interconnection (POI) that allows winter discharging of the BESS.

As ordered in the Commission's 2023 IRP Update Final Order, to expedite the solicitation process, the proposed contracts were based on the Commission approved contracts from Georgia Power's 2029-2031 All-Source RFP, which had been previously commented on by



interested bidders and parties. Final Drafts of the 2023 Winter BESS RFP and the Pro Forma PPA and BTA documents were approved by the Commission on August 8, 2024. Awarded contracts are expected to be completed in May 2025.

### **Demand Side Management and Energy Efficiency**

In 2024, EERE Staff oversaw the Georgia Power Demand Side Management (DSM) and Energy Efficiency programs that were approved during the 2022 IRP and DSM Certification.

The Residential DSM portfolio reached 103.6 percent of its projected 2024 savings goal with the Behavioral, Specialty Lighting, Refrigerator Recycling Plus, and Energy and Assistance for Savings and Efficiency programs exceeding their goals. This overachievement made up for the underperformance of the Home Energy Improvement Program and HopeWorks.

The Commercial DSM portfolio reached 79.8 percent of the approved 2024 savings goal. The combined savings for all programs reached 85.2 percent of the planned savings targets for 2024 while spending was 87.4 percent of the approved budget. Factors such as high interest rates and low occupancy of commercial buildings contributed to the underperformance of the Commercial programs. EERE Staff worked with Georgia Power to increase measure incentive levels to encourage participation with modest success. The Commercial Behavioral program was halted due to a lack of verified savings. In the 2022 IRP, Commission Staff and Georgia Power agreed to analyze the program through the “Evaluation, Measurement and Verification” process to determine if savings were being realized. The report indicated that there were virtually no savings. Therefore, the program and all related spending were discontinued. In the Company’s 2023 IRP Update, Georgia Power requested to expand the Thermostat Demand Response program doubling participation from 25,000 to 50,000 customers with participation reaching over 37,000 by the end of 2024. The Company expects to reach the target of 50,000 participants in 2025.

EERE Staff worked extensively to research and plan for the funding from the Federal Inflation Reduction Act (IRA). The funds will be administered by the Georgia Environmental Finance Authority (GEFA) and could help Energy Efficiency programs meet their energy savings targets. EERE Staff has met with GEFA, Georgia Power, and various stakeholders to prepare for the funding allocation which will launch in 2025 and will offer funding for equipment and programs similar to Georgia Power’s current offerings. EERE Staff, along with Georgia Power, will work to synergize funding opportunities to ensure customers receive maximum benefits.

EERE Staff reviewed Georgia Power’s Annual Demand Side Management True-Up to verify program spending and cost recovery. This review is a key oversight mechanism that ensures customers are receiving the expected value from energy efficiency spending. EERE Staff continued to provide oversight for Georgia Power’s Prepay Program, which has continued to have strong participation and provides an alternative to traditional payment structures in the event that a customer has been shut off for non-payment.

Georgia Power’s 2022 IRP outlined the DSM portfolios for 2023-2025 with an increase of savings targets of 15 percent, as compared to the 2019 IRP portfolio, due to a commissioner motion. There are seven Residential programs and four Commercial programs for the 2023-2025 program cycle. Due to technology improvements and Federal and Georgia code changes, the focus of the programs is shifting away from lighting toward whole home measures, behavioral programs, and low-income focused offerings. The Residential programs, especially Residential Specialty Lighting, Home Energy Improvement Program (HEIP) and Energy Assistance for Saving Energy (EASE, Formerly Home Energy Efficiency Assistance Program),



are concentrated on serving income-qualified customers who may not have participated in previous DSM offerings due to cost barriers. Additionally, a new carveout for manufactured homes was created within HEIP to help ensure serving a diverse range of participants.

EERE Staff provided oversight to the execution of all program offerings agreed upon in the 2022 IRP including the ongoing development of new income-qualified offerings, approving and reviewing new pilots, and reviewing the 2024 Evaluation Measurement and Verification report (EM&V). The EM&V report is a critical step to understanding the savings impact of the programs as well as identifying process improvements that can be implemented to increase participation and program satisfaction. Dozens of recommendations are offered by the evaluation team and will be implemented in 2025 and incorporated into the Company's 2025 IRP filing. Additionally, the EM&V Report calculated the Net to Gross ratio for each program which reveals how effective the programs are and is a part of the Additional Sum calculation.

EERE Staff is the facilitator for the Demand Side Management Working Group which met four times in 2024. The DSM Working Group consists of advocates, Georgia Power, and Commission Staff who provide expertise to assist in the development of Georgia Power's programs in the Company's upcoming 2025 IRP as well as feedback for current programs.

## FACILITIES PROTECTION UNIT

The Facilities Protection Unit of the Georgia Public Service Commission is comprised of two distinct areas: Pipeline Safety and enforcement of the Georgia Underground Facility Protection Act (GUFPA or Damage Prevention)

The pipeline safety function is carried out under an agreement with the Federal Pipeline and Hazards Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) of the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT). Pipeline safety inspectors are responsible for enforcing federal regulations for the safe installation and operation of natural gas pipelines.

The Commission assumed responsibility for damage prevention efforts in 2000, following the passage of the Georgia Underground Facility Protection Act (GUFPA). GUFPA works to prevent injury to Georgians and damage to buried utilities by requiring a call to 811 before digging, so facility owners can mark the location of buried utility facilities to avoid damage.

### Pipeline Safety

The PSC has safety jurisdiction over several classifications of intrastate natural gas operators:

<b><u>OPERATOR INFORMATION &amp; INSPECTION UNITS</u></b>		
<b><u>DISTRIBUTION</u></b>		
<b><u>Operator Type</u></b>	<b><u>No. of Operators</u></b>	<b><u>No. of Inspections Units</u></b>
Private	2	132
Municipal	78	140
Master Meter	55	74
Propane	4	2
<b>Total Distribution</b>	<b>139</b>	<b>348</b>
<b><u>INTRASTATE/TRANSMISSION</u></b>		
<b><u>Operator Type</u></b>	<b><u>No. of Operators</u></b>	<b><u>No. of Inspections Units</u></b>
Intrastate-Transmission	14	102
Intrastate- Liquid Natural Gas (LNG)	1	3
<b>Total Intrastate</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>105</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>154</b>	<b>453</b>

Source: 2024 PSC Progress Report to PHMSA

Additionally, the PSC is responsible for over 45,000 miles of interstate pipeline:

### **Jurisdictional Pipelines**

Miles of Distribution Main	44,200
Miles of Transmission Main	1,290
<b>TOTAL MILES</b>	<b><u>45,490</u></b>
Number of Services	2,256,890
Total Inspection Units	456

Source: 2024 PSC Progress Report to PHMSA

Inspection numbers per inspector vary annually depending on inspection type, however, each inspector is required to have at least 85 inspection days per year. Each inspector must conduct a compliance follow-up inspection if there are current or remaining violations. Often, follow-up inspections can take as many days as the actual inspection.

### **2024 Statistics**

Intrastate natural gas is transported through 149 of Georgia's 159 counties. The table below illustrates the types of inspections performed in 2024. Inspectors can conduct certain inspections virtually, which allows time to conduct more inspections and to finalize reports. In 2024, there were 190 virtual inspections, as well as the following inspections:

<b><u>Inspection Days by Inspection Type</u></b>	
<b><u>Inspection Type</u></b>	<b><u>Inspection Days</u></b>
Standard Comprehensive	279
Design, Testing, and Construction	133
Integrity Management	235
Operator Qualification	94
Investigating Incidents or Accidents	26.5
Compliance Follow-up	151.5
Public Awareness	4
Drug & Alcohol	37
<b>TOTAL Inspection Days</b>	<b>960</b>

Source: 2024 PSC Progress Report to PHMSA

The table below shows the Enforcement Actions taken against natural gas operators under the PSC's jurisdictions.

<b><u>Enforcement Actions in 2024</u></b>	
<b><u>Enforcement Action</u></b>	<b><u>2024</u></b>
Notice of Probable Violation	23
Notice of Amendment	6
Warning Letter	6
Letter of Concern	12
Observed Issue	7
No Violation Found	112
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>166</b>

Source: 2024 PSC Progress Report to PHMSA

### **Georgia Underground Facility Protection Act (GUFPA) Enforcement**

Efforts to prevent damage to buried utilities in Georgia stem from the requirements of the Georgia Underground Facility Protection Act of 2000, which assigns responsibility for enforcement to the Georgia Public Service Commission.

Facilities Protection is one of the few areas where Commission jurisdiction extends beyond the electric, telephone, and natural gas industries. The Commission is responsible for enforcing Call Before You Dig laws for all utility facilities. In 2024, system owners and operators reported 4,392 incidents where facilities were damaged. As demonstrated in the following table, more than 78 percent of the damage was to natural gas lines.

<b>Reported Damages Utility Damages in 2024</b>	
Natural Gas	3,452
Telephone	586
Electric	295
Cable TV	24
Water	30
Sewer	5
Total Non-Gas Incidents	940
<b>Total Damages Reported</b>	<b>4,392</b>

Staff investigated 1,380 incidents for alleged violations of the GUFPA law. See below for other significant GUFPA statistics:

<b><u>Enforcement Actions</u></b>	
Hearing Notices	137
Consent	
Agreements	356
Final Orders	321
Warning Letters	56

<b><u>Hearing Officer Cases</u></b>	
2024	87

<b><u>Closed Damage Cases</u></b>	
Closed	890
Gas Related	724
Civil Penalties	
Levied	\$1,833,000
Mitigated with	
Training	<u>(\$1,472,500)</u>
Deposited in	
General Fund	<u>\$360,500</u>

The goal of the PSC Facilities Protection Unit is safety, not punishment. To promote safety and education between excavators and facility owners, the Commission gives violators of the Georgia dig law the option of attending safety training, instead of paying the full civil penalty assessed. The Commission-approved safety training classes explain the severity of possible damage when safety regulations are ignored. The classes also discuss the legal aspects of the damage prevention law. In 2024, 616 locators, excavators, and facility owners, and operators attended one of the 141 Commission-approved dig law training presentations.

### **Training and Pipeline Safety Seminar**

The Facilities Protection Unit continually offers training opportunities to operators. It also allows operators to request an informal conference to discuss any potential or probable violations of the Federal or State pipeline safety rules. Pipeline Safety Staff has spent a great deal of effort traveling Georgia to provide municipalities the opportunity to meet with Facilities Protection Staff, to discuss issues or concerns, or to inquire about the Staff's expectations for inspections. The goal is to ensure the municipal operators located outside of Metro Atlanta have the same opportunities as the operators located in Metro Atlanta.

In 2024, Staff worked with the Georgia Municipal Association to conduct the Pipeline Safety Seminar. This annual meeting provides natural-gas operators information on regulatory updates.

These seminars offer municipal operators the opportunity to meet the Director/Staff and discuss issues, ask questions, etc., on both pipeline safety and damage prevention. Facilities Protection Staff strive to build strong and effective working relationships between the Commission and natural gas operators to achieve the goals of pipeline safety and damage prevention.

## **The National Association of Pipeline Safety Representatives and The National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners**

In 2024, Staff attended the National Association of Pipeline Safety Representatives (NAPSR) Annual conference in Niagara Falls, NY. The Southern Regional Conference was held in Kentucky. The Regional Conference is held annually in one of eight Southeastern states and serves to have regional pipeline safety and damage prevention departments meet and discuss regulations and other topics. The Facilities Protection Director at the PSC serves as the Vice-Chair for the Southern Region, as well as a member of NAPSR's Public Awareness and Damage Prevention Task Group and the Security Integrity Foundation Advisory Group-Board of Directors.

The Director is currently on the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners (NARUC) Pipeline Safety Staff Sub-Committee. In this role, she attends annual and quarterly NARUC meetings to exchange ideas and discuss pipeline safety and damage prevention issues with staff and Commissioners from other states. This group also assists the NARUC legal counsel with questions or concerns regarding budget funding for the states.

## **Additional Facility Protection Program Activities**

Pipeline Safety Staff continued its enforcement of federal public awareness regulations, including Drug and Alcohol, Operator Qualifications, Construction, Comprehensive Inspections, and Integrity Management. In addition, several Staff members participated in numerous on-site operator training classes to provide operators with in-depth information on specific regulations, policies, and procedures.

The Facilities Protection Unit employed 10 inspectors at the end of 2024, including newly hired inspectors who started in April 2024 and June 2024. The new inspectors are required to travel to Oklahoma City to participate in – and pass – numerous training classes focusing on pipeline safety and the Code of Federal Regulations for Pipeline Safety. Before completing certification, new inspectors are paired with seasoned inspectors. This allows new employees to train under more experienced employees, invaluable given the steep learning curve for these positions.



## **ADMINISTRATION DIVISION**

In 2024, the Commission maintained the highest standards in performing administrative functions, enabling the Commission to better serve the public through the most prudent use of its resources. The Commission worked within the constraints of its budget to promote efficiencies and maximize the use of taxpayers' monies to fulfill its mission.

The Commission's Administration Division, headed by the Executive Director, is comprised of the Executive Secretary, Fiscal and Budget Office, Human Resource Office, Public Information and Legislative Liaison, the Office of Operations Support and the Office of Consumer Affairs. An overview of the responsibilities and accomplishments of each of these is set forth below.

### **Executive Secretary**

The Executive Secretary's Office is responsible for receiving all public documents filed at the Commission. The Executive Secretary's responsibilities include scheduling Commission proceedings, assigning hearing officers, signing and certifying Official Orders, and preparing lists of interveners for docketed matters.

In 2024, the Executive Secretary's Office opened 499 new case dockets, processed 4,047 filed documents, and filed 777 orders prepared for the Chairman's and Executive Secretary's signature.

The Commission held 73 public hearings constituting either a quorum of the Commission or a hearing officer assigned by the Commission. Matters docketed for public hearing are generally heard by the entire Commission in open session with a majority of the five-member Commission constituting a quorum.

Regular Commission Administrative Sessions are held on the first and third Tuesdays of each month. Committee Meetings are held on Thursdays prior to Administrative Sessions. The four standing Committees of the Commission are Facilities Protection, Telecommunications, Energy and Administrative Affairs.

### **Fiscal and Budget Office**

The primary role of the Fiscal and Budget Office is to develop the Commission's annual operating budget and oversee expenditures, ensuring the Commission's compliance with all its fiscal responsibilities. This task is accomplished in conjunction with the Executive Director and the Commissioners through interactions with the Governor's Office of Planning and Budget (OPB), the legislative budget offices, as well as other Commission staff.

The Office manages the fiscal resources of the Commission through recommendations and monitoring requests for the Agency's state and federal funding, purchasing, asset management and accurate financial reporting provided to federal, state and other agencies.

The Office is responsible for preparing the annual budget, ensuring that all Commission financial needs are assessed and incorporated. It sets priorities based on available resources, economic conditions, and strategic goals. It provides regular financial reports to the leadership, the stakeholders, and the public, offering insights into budget performance, including any deviations or issues with revenue or spending. The Fiscal Office works closely with auditing bodies to ensure compliance with financial regulations, providing necessary documentation and

supporting internal or external audits. Beyond immediate budget concerns, it is also engaged in long-term financial and strategic planning.

In FY2024, the Office effectively managed an annual budget of \$14.2 million, ensuring all financial activities were aligned with the state and federal policies, and that all funds were allocated appropriately across various programs and departments. The Office maintained strict oversight to ensure expenditures remained within the approved budgetary limits, while facilitating smooth operations, maintaining efficiency, transparency, and accountability.

In its continuous effort to modernize and streamline operations, the Office has transitioned to cloud-based document storage. This shift has increased work efficiency through seamless file management and collaboration. Additionally, it positions the Office to better prepare for the new financial system implementation in FY2026.

The PSC continues to utilize Enterprise PeopleSoft for day-to-day operations and financial reporting, making the Agency's financial information readily available for OPB, Legislative Budget Offices and SAO.

The Office continued to support state leadership by meeting all goals and directives and by maintaining a high level of responsiveness and accuracy in its financial operations. It has been a key support pillar for the PSC's leadership by providing timely financial reports, forecasts, and insights that facilitated strategic planning and decision-making.

### Human Resources Office

The Human Resources Office is responsible for planning, organizing and directing a comprehensive human resource services program for the Commission. This includes personnel and position management, labor relations, staff development, equal opportunity, recruitment and placement, succession planning, HR system administration, compliance reporting, employee benefits and services, and time and labor transactions.

The Commission continues to use a hybrid model. An analysis of Commission work shows that productivity is holding steady.

In 2024, the Commission lost 10 staff members: 7 left for other opportunities, 2 retired and 1 deceased. Eight new staff members were hired. At the end of 2024, the Commission employed 82 staff members.

Staff demographics as of December 31, 2024:

	Percentage			
<b>Years of Service</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2021</b>
30 years +	5%	6%	2%	3%
20 years +	18%	18%	19%	22%
10 years +	27%	24%	28%	33%
5 years +	13%	23%	17%	21%
Less than 5 years	37%	29%	34%	21%

	Percentage			
<b>Ethnicity</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2021</b>
Black/African American	39%	42%	43%	39%
Hispanic/Asian/Indian/Other	10%	6%	7%	4%
White	51%	52%	50%	57%

	Percentage			
<b>Gender</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2021</b>
Female	49%	48%	47%	44%
Male	51%	52%	54%	56%

	Percentage	
<b>Age of Employee</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>2023</b>
65 +	11%	12%
55 +	24%	26%
45+	34%	29%
35 +	17%	19%
25 +	13%	13%
Under 25	1%	1%

In summary, the PSC turnover rate of 12% is lower than the 17% average turnover rate for state of Georgia agency employees. However, recruitment of qualified candidates continues to present a challenge. The Commission continues to explore all options. Human Resources is a strategic partner in replenishing open positions with highly qualified individuals. Overall, the Commission is proud of its retention rate.

### **Office of Operations Support**

In 2024, the Office of Operations Support upheld its commitment to delivering superior IT services to the expanding Georgia Public Service Commission and to Georgia taxpayers. With critical funding provided by the Georgia State Legislature, the department achieved significant advancements, including the strategic expansion of its workforce through the recruitment of skilled professionals and the successful modernization of its antiquated phone system into a modern communication platform. Operations Support also continued the development of its primary production software system. By prioritizing cybersecurity and data protection, the team advanced operational efficiency and productivity through continued strategic integration of cloud-based technologies.

The department completed significant upgrades to the IT infrastructure in 2024, migrating essential services to more resilient and scalable platforms. These strategic enhancements yielded measurable improvements in productivity, strengthened security protocols, and elevated user experience throughout the agency.

In alignment with the partial telework policy of the Commission, the Office of Operations Support maintained a steadfast focus on ensuring system stability, operational availability, and compliance with regulatory requirements.

In 2024, the Commission convened 73 proceedings utilizing in-person, remote, and hybrid formats. These sessions were made publicly accessible through secure broadcasts, with recordings available on the Commission's official YouTube channel: <https://youtube.com/georgiapublicservicecommission>

The agency's website continued to serve as a critical information hub, attracting substantial traffic and providing updated content in a timely manner. The department prioritized achieving and maintaining compliance with ADA standards while ensuring the website remains an effective, accessible, and valuable resource for all residents of Georgia.

## **Public Information and Legislative Liaison Office**

The Public Information Office (per O.C.G.A. §46-2-7) coordinates official Commission news releases, media contacts and, along with the Executive Secretary, maintains Commission public information files. The office also helps produce much of the Commission's website content and manages the agency's internal communications. As the Commission's Legislative Liaison, the office coordinates the Commission's legislative agenda and acts as the primary contact for legislators' needs from the Commission. In 2024, the office responded to numerous legislator inquiries, tracked 38 bills in the General Assembly that had the potential to impact the agency and the utilities it regulates, provided daily legislative updates during the General Assembly session, and coordinated the Commission's analysis of legislative proposals.

Local, state and national news media as well as utility trade press publications continued extensive coverage of Commission activities and proceedings including:

- Continued monitoring of the Vogtle 3 and Vogtle 4 expansion projects including the start-up of Unit 4 and construction cost recovery;
- Efforts by utilities to recover after Hurricane Helene;
- A Commission ruling on Georgia Power's 2023 IRP Update;
- Significant increases in power needs attributed primarily to data centers
- An eminent domain case regarding a railroad land taking in Sandersville, Georgia

In the 2024 General Assembly, legislators introduced a number of bills affecting state government, the Commission and utilities. The Commission monitored several bills including those described below.

### PSC Related Legislation in 2024

House Bill 73, by Rep. Joseph Gullett and others. The PSC and the Attorney General's Office have seen significant upticks in consumer complaints regarding bad actors in the residential solar power market. Although unsuccessful, HB73 attempted to curb these bad actors from preying on Georgians.

House Bill 300, by Rep. Trey Kelley and others. This bill, passed and signed into law, outlines the process of decommissioning solar panels and large-scale utility solar facilities when contracts with landowners end or when the panels have reached the end of their usefulness.

House Bill 1033, by Rep. Rob Leverett and others. This bill, passed and signed into law, creates enhanced penalties for assault on any utility worker acting within the scope of his/her duties.

## **Office of Consumer Affairs**

The Consumer Affairs Unit is the primary path for consumers to contact the Commission to make their concerns and issues known. Consumers can file in one of three ways: complaint, inquiry, or opinion. Collectively, these are referred to as Consumer Response System Cases.

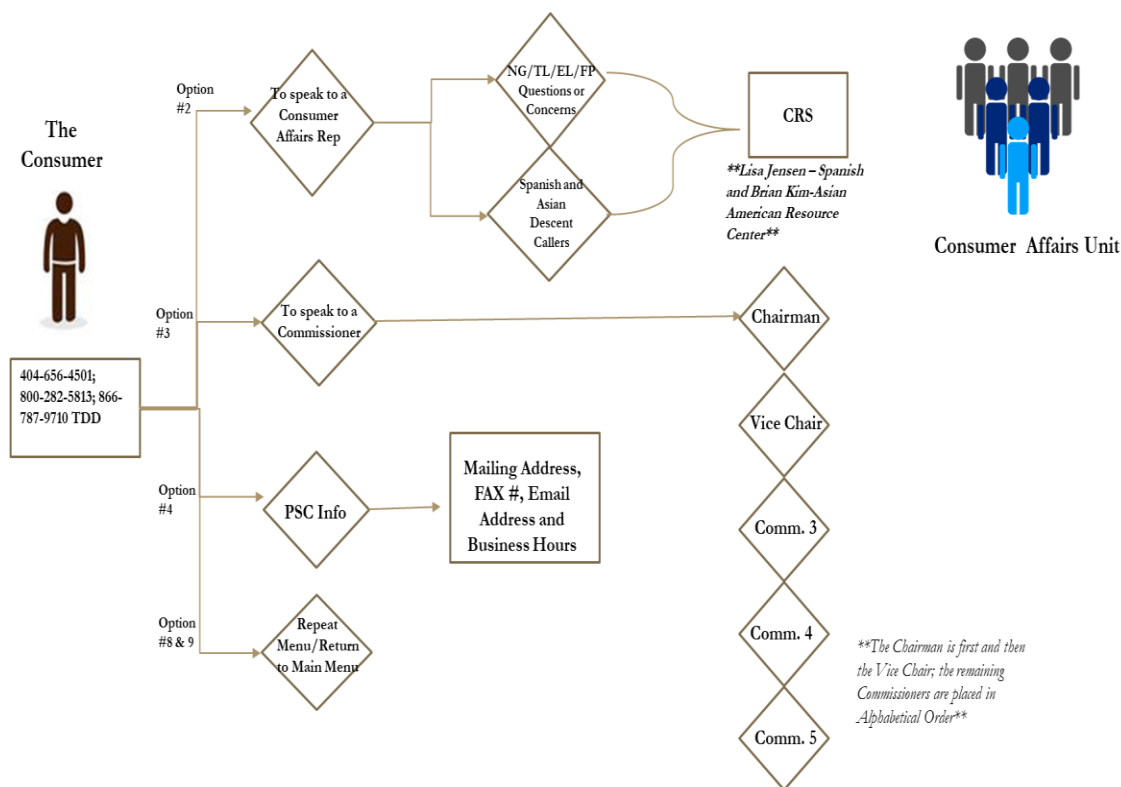
The primary method used by consumers to contact the Commission is telephone. The Consumer Affairs Unit has a total of six staff members that answer all calls coming through our Automated Call Distribution Phone System. Incoming Spanish-language calls are routed to one of two bilingual staff members (Lisa Jensen and Millie Williams). We also have access to an Asian descendant translator, where a 3-way conference call can be conducted through a volunteer with the Asian American Resource Center.

## Inbound Contacts

The Consumer Affairs Unit fielded 10,579 calls in 2024 (this includes calls routed to Spanish speaking staffers and routed through the Asian American Resource Center). Consumer Affairs also handled 4,026 email contacts, 3,346 contacts through the Commission's online portal, 333 letters and faxes, and six walk-in consumers. In total, Consumer Affairs processed 5,616 inquiries, complaints, and opinions in 2024.

Some of the contacts received from consumers require referral or follow-up by a Consumer Affairs staff member. Contacts requiring referral or follow-up are recorded in the Consumer Response System (CRS). Referrals are the contacts that staff send via e-mail to the utility companies for a response. Follow-Ups include making calls or sending e-mails to the representatives of the utility companies as well as correspondence to and from consumers.

With a significant increase in the number of emails and online cases, Consumer Affairs began a policy where Commission representatives send all electronic correspondence received by the Commission directly to the utilities, unedited. This has the advantage of keeping issues in the original words of the consumer without a Commission staff member's attempt at a summary. Initially, this caused confusion with some utilities. Staff at some utilities expressed concerns about poor grammar and incomplete information. Consumer Affairs held meetings with representatives of the utilities to explain the new process. These meetings proved successful, and the process is running smoothly.

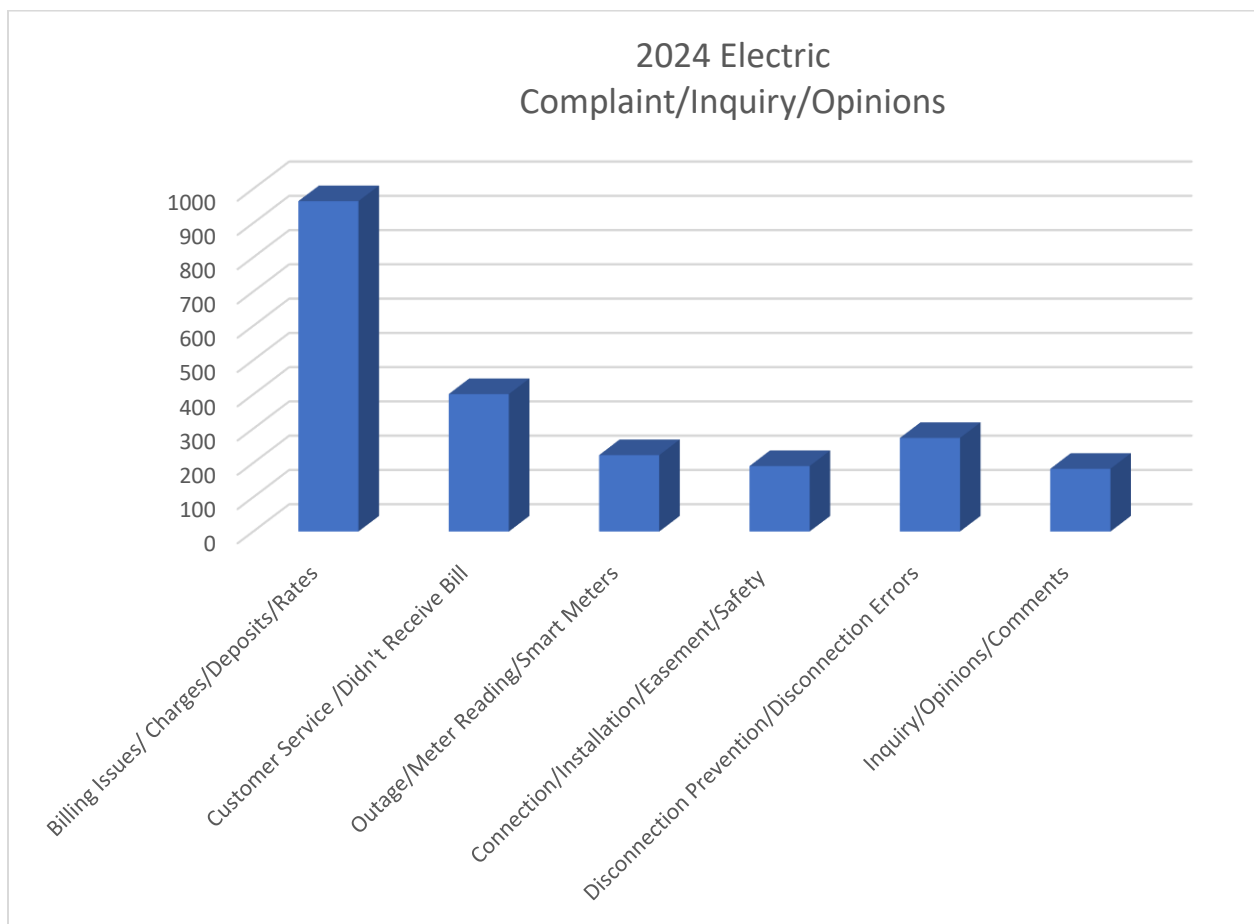


*Public Service Commission Phone System for Consumer Affairs*

## Electric Consumer Issues

Consumer Affairs fielded 2,233 CRS Cases regarding electric utilities in 2024. Cases involved Georgia Power, Electric Membership Corporations and municipal power companies. Although the Commission's jurisdiction on electric service is limited to Georgia Power, Consumer Affairs works with all electric providers in Georgia to try to resolve consumer issues.

Many electric cases in 2024 were spurred by low statewide temperatures in the 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter. Georgia also saw hurricanes and tornados in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter that caused outages and customer service issues to electric utility customers.

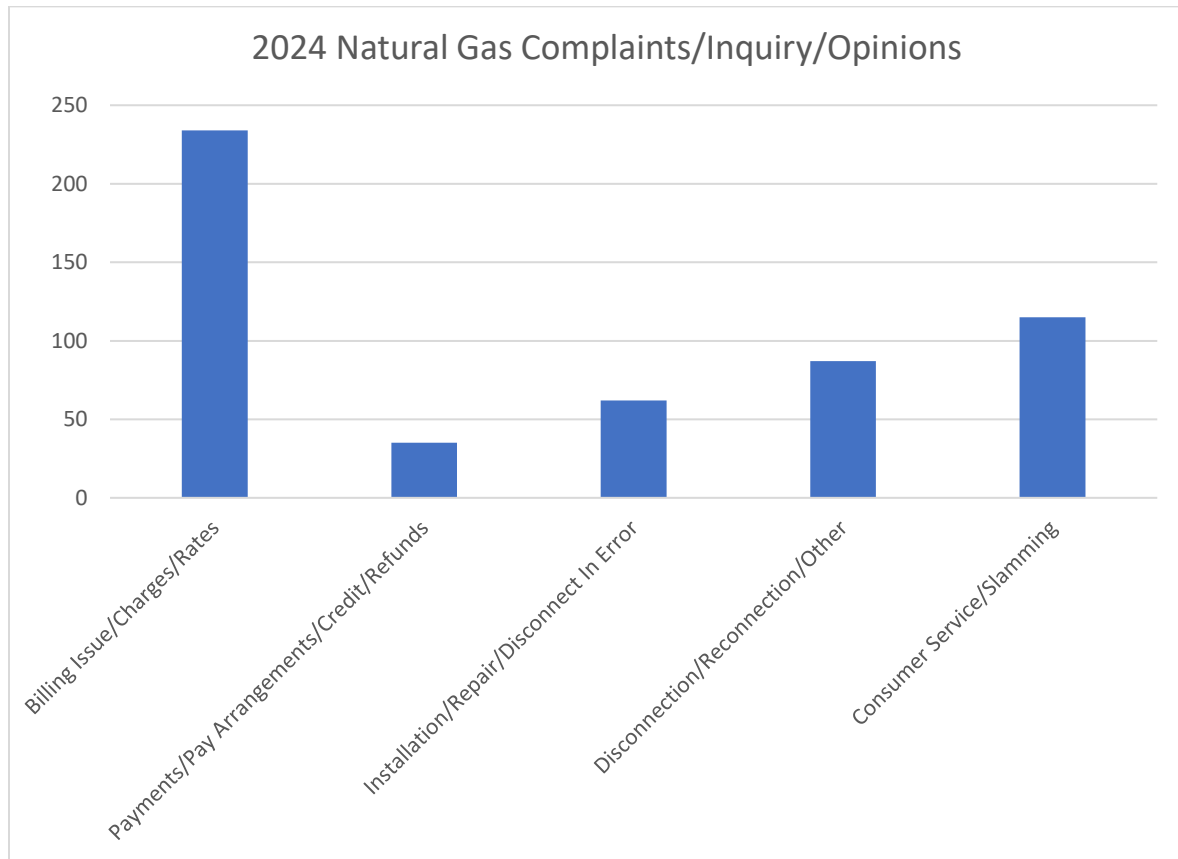


*Electric Utility Issues reported to Consumer Affairs by type*



## Natural Gas Consumer Issues

Consumer Affairs received 533 cases related to Natural Gas in 2024. Most of the cases concerned billing issues and rates. Other concerns involved customer service issues and service disconnections.

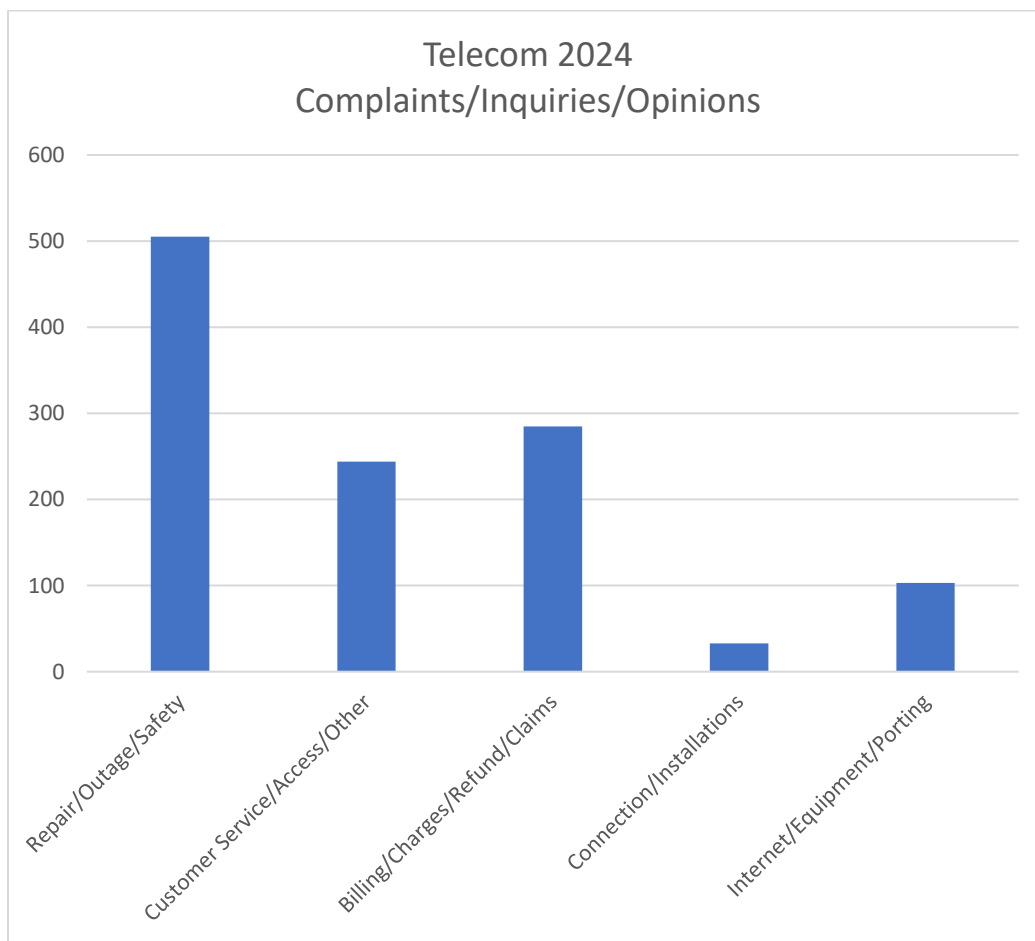


*Natural Gas Utility Issues reported to Consumer Affairs by type*

## Telecommunications Consumer Issues

Consumer Affairs fielded 1,170 Telecommunication Cases in 2024. The primary telecom issues for 2024 related to repairs, outage or safety, caused by removed or damaged phone lines. Billing issues were also highly reported. This can be attributed to recent bill increases due to new “bundle” plans offered by the Telecommunication Companies. The bundle plans offer more services but come with higher costs.

The number of cases related to Internet/Equipment/Porting issues decreased slightly from 2023. Previous years saw increases in Internet/Equipment/Porting issues because of the increase in rural broadband service.



*Telecommunication Issues reported to Consumer Affairs by type*

## NOTEWORTHY COMMISSION ACTIVITIES IN 2024

### Vogtle Unit 4 Goes Online



Nine months after Unit 3 went into commercial operation at the Vogtle Nuclear Power Plant, Unit 4 is now online — splitting atoms, creating clean electricity and sending it to the power grid for all Georgians to use day or night, rain or shine.

The clean, carbon-free energy from these two new nuclear units will power approximately 1 million homes and businesses in Georgia.

“Today is a great day and a generational event for all Georgians,” said PSC Commissioner Lauren “Bubba” McDonald. “This plant will produce carbon-free energy for the people of Georgia for the next 80 years.”

Commissioner Tim Echols said he is proud of the accomplishment. “Georgia has done what no other state could do by completing the first nuclear project from scratch in more than three decades,” he said. “We now have the largest clean energy site in North America.”

## Governor's Tax Bill Leads to Power Bill Relief



The PSC unanimously approved a motion to expedite savings for Georgia Power customers based on recent corporate tax cuts, initiated by Gov. Brian Kemp.

About \$122 million in tax cuts realized by Georgia Power was applied to customers' bills beginning in January.

In the 2022 Rate Case, the PSC directed Georgia Power to pass any savings from tax breaks to rate payers. Then, in April 2024, Gov. Kemp signed a bill that reduced Georgia's corporate income tax rate. The PSC subsequently directed Georgia Power to apply the tax relief to customers' bills starting in January 2025. This will expedite savings for Georgia Power customers. Without this motion, the tax savings would not have been applied to power bills until January 2026.

## **PSC Commissioner Tricia Pridemore Sworn in as NARUC National President**

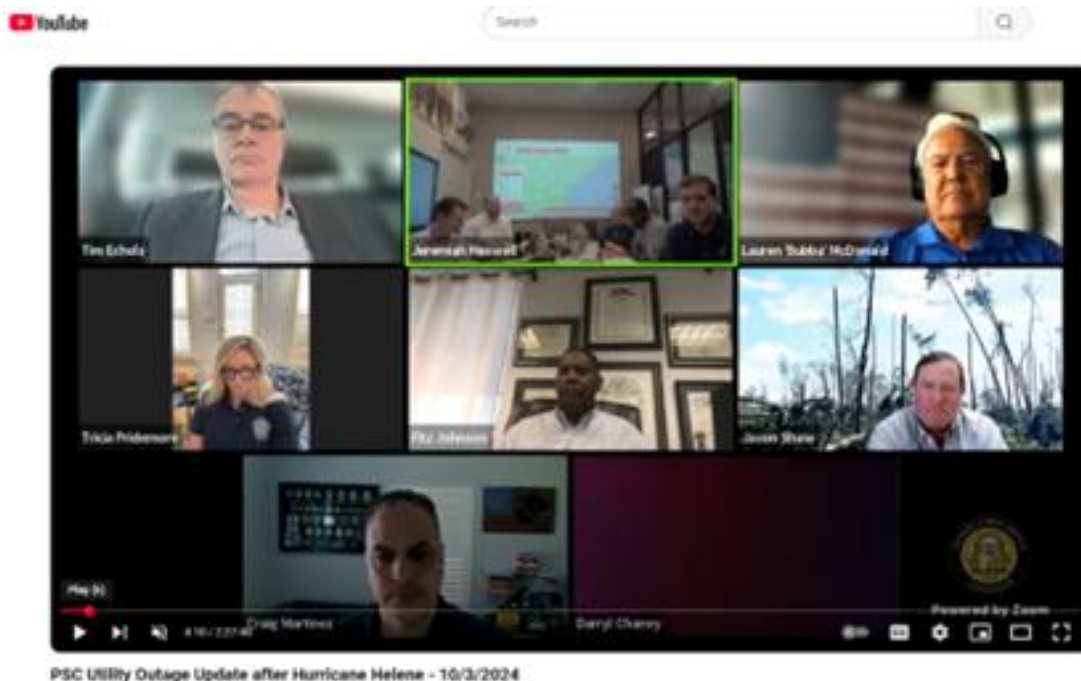


Commissioner Tricia Pridemore was sworn in as president of the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners (NARUC), the first time in 19 years a Georgia Commissioner has led the organization.

“As President of NARUC, it will be an honor to represent regulatory Commissioners from across the U.S.,” Pridemore said. “I will represent my fellow Commissioners through hard work, a listening ear and with a heart to serve. I am grateful and humble for the confidence the organization has placed in me.”

At NARUC’s Annual Meeting, Commissioner Pridemore announced the new theme for the Association, “Let There Be Light,” focusing on the need to meet an ever-increasing demand for energy. Pridemore’s tenure as NARUC president also will foster the sharing of best practices across utility sectors. To that end, she announced a new Demand Roundtable, where seven state Commissioners, seven utilities/regional operators and seven hyper-scalers/mega users will meet to discuss the critical issues surrounding increased demand and work toward innovative solutions.

## Utilities Update Commissioners on Hurricane Helene Damage



PSC Commissioners held a livestream Zoom call with utility officials across the state in the days following Hurricane Helene for an update on service outages and repairs.

Officials providing updates included Georgia Power, Atlanta Gas Light, electric membership corporations (EMCs), the Municipal Electric Authority of Georgia (MEAG), the Municipal Gas Authority of Georgia (MGAG), as well as telecommunications providers. Members of the public and the media were able to watch the update live via the PSC YouTube page.

Members of the public were provided the opportunity to email questions to the Commissioners in advance of the meeting.

The Commissioners also took the time following the hurricane to remind the public about the vital work performed by Georgia's linemen and linewomen.

In a statement, the Commissioners said: "As always, when you flip the switch and the lights come on, you can thank a lineman. When the storms are over and your power is restored – quickly, correctly and safely – you can thank a lineman."



## **Commission Chairman Jason Shaw Named one of Georgia's Most Influential**



PSC Chairman Jason Shaw was named one of the 100 Most Influential Georgians by Georgia Trend Magazine. The magazine's annual list includes dignitaries in government, business and civic organizations. As the editors point out, the Georgians named in the issue make a positive impact whether through education, job creation, policy or hands-on healthcare services. Some perform their duties in the public eye; some work behind the scenes.

In Chairman Shaw's section, the magazine noted that PSC Commissioners ensured new businesses, including data centers, had access to sufficient energy produced by Georgia Power. The magazine also noted Chairman Shaw's previous eight years in the General Assembly.

## Commissioner Johnson and Consumer Affairs Staff Attend HEAT Meeting



Commissioner **Fitz Johnson** and staff from the PSC Consumer Affairs Unit attended the annual meeting of the Heating Energy Assistance Team — or HEAT.

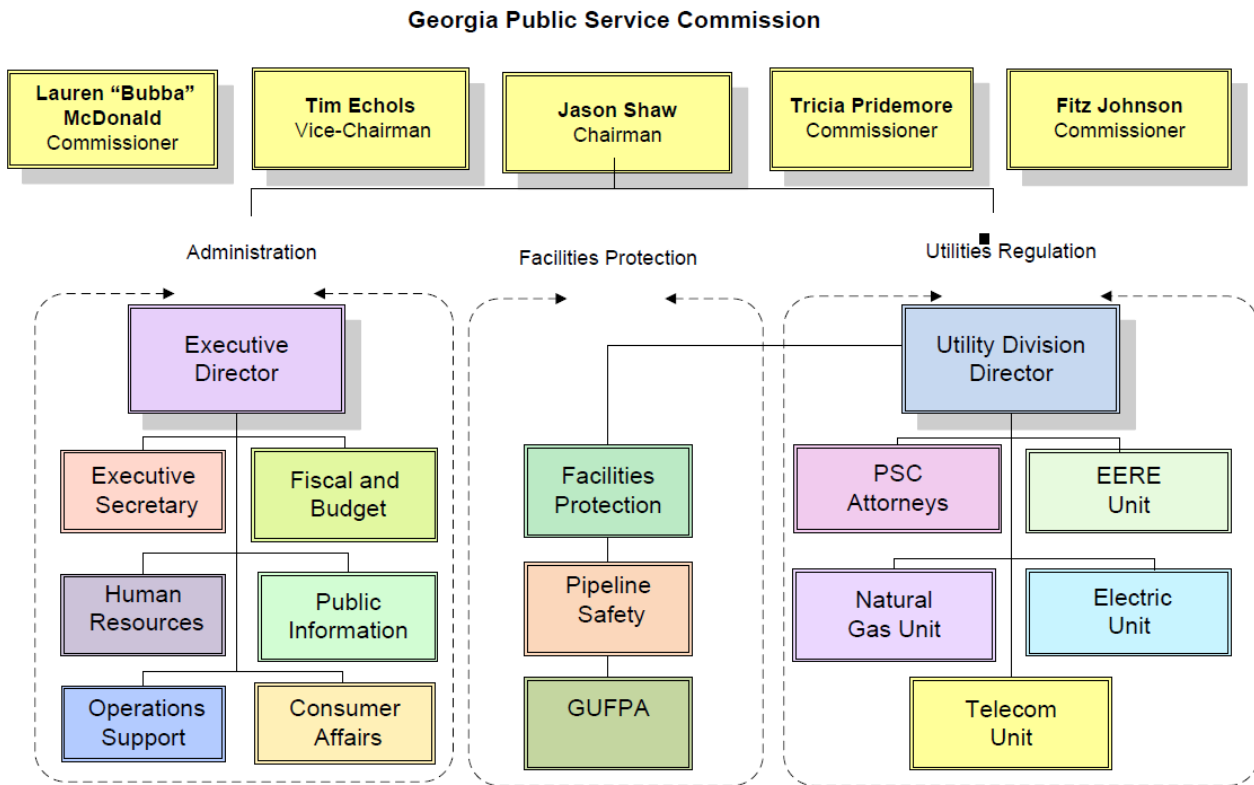
Commissioner Johnson was honored to be the keynote speaker. He discussed the many ways HEAT helps the disenfranchised in Georgia to ensure they remain warm during the winter.

HEAT began as part of Atlanta Gas Light to help combat the energy crisis of the late 1970s. After 45 years – now a separate non-profit organization – HEAT continues to help those who have a hard time keeping up with a fast-moving society in a rapidly growing state such as Georgia. With the help of concerned citizens, businesses, and public agencies including the Georgia Public Service Commission, HEAT helps about 1,000 households each year pay their natural gas bills. Since the program began, more than a quarter-million individuals have kept warm through HEAT assistance.

**AGENCY BUDGET**  
**Fiscal Year 2024 Budget**

	FY 2023	FY 2024	FY 2025 (AOB)
<b>Revenue</b>			
General Assembly Appropriations	11,603,054	12,753,982	12,819,894
Federal and Other Funds	1,237,836	1,483,303	1,231,100
<b>Total</b>	<b>12,840,890</b>	<b>14,237,285</b>	<b>14,050,994</b>
<b>Budgeted Expenditures</b>			
Personal Services	10,971,149	11,441,809	12,007,665
Regular Operating Expenses	778,794	518,099	662,852
Motor Vehicle Purchases	-		-
Equipment	114,037	166,393	60,000
Computer Charges	134,709	531,696	138,285
Real Estate Rental	669,559	676,759	959,665
Telecommunications	116,612	119,575	149,132
Contractual Services	6,030	782,954	73,395
Grants and Benefits	50,000		
<b>Total</b>	<b>12,840,890</b>	<b>14,237,285</b>	<b>14,050,994</b>
<b>Associated Revenue</b>			
Regular Assessment Fees	1,050,000	1,050,000	1,050,000
Paid Directly to Dept. of Revenue			
Penalties and Fees Collected and Remitted to State Treasury	536,107	475,354	169,570
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,586,107</b>	<b>1,525,354</b>	<b>1,219,570</b>
<b>*Note: Penalties and Fees Collected in FY 2025 through December 31, 2024</b>			

# PSC ORGANIZATIONAL CHART 2024



Georgia Public Service Commission  
 244 Washington Street, S.W.  
 Atlanta, Georgia 30334  
 404-656-4501 (telephone)  
 866-787-9710 (Telecommunications Device for the Deaf)  
 404-656-2341 (facsimile)  
 800-282-5813 (toll-free within Georgia)  
[psc.ga.gov](http://psc.ga.gov)