

Georgia Consortium for Personal Literacy

**Protecting Your Cash Flow from Rising Utility Bills
and the role of the Office of the Consumers' Utility Counsel**

Kelli Leaf

Consumers' Utility Counsel

Governor's Office of Consumer Affairs

The Consumers' Utility Counsel is a Division of the **Governor's Office of Consumer Affairs**

OCA's Mission

- The mission of the Governor's Office of Consumer Affairs is to protect Georgia consumers from unfair, deceptive and unlawful practices in the marketplace.

CUC's Part...

- The Consumers' Utility Counsel Division (CUC) of the Governor's Office of Consumer Affairs (OCA) represents Georgia's residential and smallest commercial customers (businesses with ten or fewer employees and \$100,000 or less in annual net after-tax revenues) in utility proceedings before the Georgia Public Service Commission. CUC's clients are the largest group of utility ratepayers in Georgia.

CUC'S Legislative Purpose

(O.C.G.A. § 46-10-1)

The General Assembly recognizes the importance of effective and economical public utilities to the economy of the State of Georgia. It is further recognized that the citizens of Georgia should receive adequate utility services at the lowest reasonable cost to the consumer while maintaining the ability of public utilities to furnish their products and services. It is further recognized that consumers should receive the benefit of technological advances. It is further recognized that the Public Service Commission has been established for the purpose of regulating public utilities and the rates which they charge the consumer and that the commission is responsible for representing the public interest. The General Assembly is aware, however, that the commission must be furnished with all available information concerning the effects of its decisions in rate cases and proceedings before it. It is the purpose of this chapter to ensure that the commission receives such information, particularly in those cases which directly involve the vast majority of Georgia's citizens.

CUC's Statutory Authority

(O.C.G.A. § 46-10-4)

- Enter appearances on behalf of Georgia consumers in all proceedings before the commission which may involve or affect rates for service or services of utilities and in all other proceedings before the commission under its regulatory jurisdiction over utilities.
- Appear in the same representative capacity in similar administrative proceedings before any federal administrative agencies (FERC, FCC, SEC, etc.).
- Appear in any judicial proceeding involving or arising out of any action taken by an administrative agency in a proceeding in which the director is authorized to appear under subsection (a), (b), or (c) of this Code section (Fulton Superior Court, etc.).

CUC's Statutory Authority

(O.C.G.A. § § 46-10-5 and 46-10-7)

- Right to service regarding all public utility matters filed at the Commission.
- Right to take depositions and conduct discovery in all public utility matters filed at the Commission.
- Right to utilize the expertise of the Commission's Staff and Experts.
- Right to access and utilize the same information provided to the Commission.

Recent CUC Participation before the Georgia Public Service Comm'n

- ATLANTA GAS LIGHT COMPANY'S USF STIPULATION
- ATALNTA GAS LIGHT ENVIRONMENTAL COST RECOVERY
- GEORGIA POWER CO./ SAVANNAH ELEC. MERGER
- GEORGIA POWER CO.'S NUCLEAR INQUIRY
- GEORGIA POWER CO.'S FUEL CASES
- AGLC/CITY OF MONROE DISPUTE
- ATMOS GAS SUPPLY PLAN
- BELL SOUTH/ ATT MERGER
- PAYTEL/ ENCARTELE DISPUTE
- MULTIPLE NATURAL GAS PROVIDERS RULEMAKING
- GEORGIA POWER CO. TERRITORIAL CASES
- GEORGIA POWER CO.'S CERTIFICATION REQUEST

Recent CUC Participation before Other Tribunals

- Fulton Superior Court
 - AGLC v. Buford
 - ATMOS v. PSC

- United States Court of Appeals – Eleventh
 - NASUCA v. FCC

CONTACT INFORMATION

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