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## Georgia Public Service Commission

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### NEWS RELEASE

#### PSC Authorizes Distribution of \$500,000 to Provide Low Income Assistance for Natural Gas Utility Bills

ATLANTA, May 4, 2010 – The Georgia Public Service Commission (Commission) today unanimously approved the distribution of up to \$500,000 in matching funds from the Universal Service Fund (USF) to the Georgia Department of Human Services (DHS) for the Fresh Start Program. The monies will be used to provide assistance to low income natural gas customers in the Atlanta Gas Light Company (AGLC) service area to pay their bills and/or deposits.

The Commission's approval of the USF disbursement will enable DHS to apply for federal matching grants under the Fresh Start program which has been established to assist low income natural gas customers in the AGLC territory. Fresh Start is a federal program that provides one-time crisis assistance payments for needy families. Under the program, 80% of the monies will be federal funds, 10% will be USF funds, 5-10% will be paid by the Natural Gas Marketers and the recipient will pay 0-5%.

The Commission's decision limits the initial disbursement to DHS to \$100,000 but authorizes up to \$500,000 in disbursements from the USF upon proper showing of need. The Commission's decision requires DHS to submit monthly reports detailing the amount of funds received and how they are spent and stipulates that the USF funds can only be spent on customers in the AGLC service territory.

The Universal Service Fund is a fund established under the Natural Gas Deregulation Act of 1997. The law authorizes the Commission to order disbursements from the USF to assist low income consumers in times of emergency as determined by the Commission.

More information on this issue can be found on the Commission website, [www.psc.state.ga.us](http://www.psc.state.ga.us), under Docket Number 31673.

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