FILED
OCT 2 2 2025
EXECUTIVE SECRETARY
GPSC

DOCKET# 12897
DOCUMENT# 224326

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DOCKET NO. 12897

IN RE: UNIVERSAL SERVICE FUND GRANT PROGRAM TO ASSIST LOW-INCOME SENIOR CITIZENS AND OTHER LOW-INCOME CITIZENS

FINAL ORDER APPROVING USF EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE TO LOW-INCOME SENIOR CITIZENS AND OTHER LOW-INCOME CITIZENS

I. Background

At its Administrative Session on October 2, 2001, the Georgia Public Service Commission ("Commission") created a grant program to assist low-income seniors. The Commission found it to be prudent to provide USF funding to assist low-income senior citizens and other gas customers in need of emergency assistance as winter approaches in a time of rising energy costs. Under O.C.G.A. § 46-4-161(a)(3), the Commission is authorized to use funds from the Universal Service Fund ("USF") to assist low-income residential consumers in times of emergency. The General Assembly has left the determination of "emergency" to the Commission's discretion. *Id.*

II. Commissioner Johnson Motion

During the October 21, 2025 Administrative Session, Commissioner Johnson offered a Motion to the Commission for USF low-income emergency assistance in the following:

I move that the Commission release $5,000,000 from the Universal Service Fund to provide energy assistance this winter season for residential customers of Atlanta Gas Light Company.

Of this $5 million, $2.5 million would be distributed equally for the benefit of customers enrolled in the Senior Citizen Discount Program when AGL calculates market share and bills Marketers later this month. As of today, that would include approximately 12,824 senior citizen customers. I further move that the remainder of the $5 million be used to support Atlanta Gas Light's customers in need of emergency energy assistance as follows: $2 million be distributed to HopeWorks as additional funds for its program repairing or replacing gas furnaces and gas water heaters, and $500,000 be distributed to the Salvation Army Utility Assistance Program.

The $2.5 million in funds to be disbursed to AGL shall be passed onto Marketers as a one-time supplemental credit based on the number of customers enrolled in the Senior Citizen Discount Program. This will provide a credit of approximately $194 per enrolled customer starting in November and shall continue to be applied to the customer's bills thereafter until the credit for each enrolled customer is depleted.

This discount from AGL to Marketers is conditioned on Marketers certifying that the Marketers are in fact applying the credits to the qualifying end-use customers and that the Marketers will continue to apply the credit to subsequent bills until each enrolled customer's credit is depleted. Marketers shall make best efforts to communicate with their affected customers that this is a "GA PSC Ordered Credit" that is supplemental to the typical senior citizen discount. To the extent that a Marketer is unable to apply the full amount of the credit to any customer's bill(s) by January 31, 2026, the Marketer shall return any remaining monies to AGL to be returned to the USF.

By February 28th of 2026, AGL and the Natural Gas Marketers shall each file reports with the Commission certifying that they have applied these USF dollars as provided for in this motion.

III. Commission Decision

During the October 21, 2025 Administrative Session, the Commission approved Commissioner Johnson's Motion.

* * * * *

IV. Ordering Paragraphs

WHEREFORE, IT IS ORDERED, that the Commission approves Commissioner Johnson's Motion for USF low-income customer emergency assistance.

ORDERED FURTHER, that jurisdiction over this proceeding is expressly retained for the purpose of entering such further Order or Orders, as this Commission may deem proper.

ORDERED FURTHER, any motion for reconsideration, rehearing or oral argument shall not stay the effectiveness of this Order unless expressly ordered by the Commission.

The above by action of the Commission during Administrative Session on the 21st day of October 2025.

Sallie Tanner
Executive Secretary

10-22-25
Date

Jason Shaw
Chairman

10-22-25
Date