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DOCKET# 37090
DOCUMENT# 227416

Docket No. 37090

City of Thomson Gas System
210 Railroad Street
Thomson, GA 30824

REF: Comprehensive Inspection # JS25-027

☒ Certified Mail ☐ Regular Mail ☐ Email

Attention: John Waller

On July 3, 2025, a representative of the Georgia Public Service Commission Pipeline/Facilities Safety Office conducted an inspection of your gas system. The enclosed inspection report numbered JS25-027 is provided for your information and file.

In conjunction with this inspection report, Staff has recommended the following enforcement(s):

Enforcement Action:

- ☐ Notice of Probable Violation
- ☒ Notice of Probable Violation with Proposed Civil Penalty
- ☐ Notice of Amendment

Enforcement Letter:

- ☐ Warning Letter
- ☒ Letter of Concern

Enforcement Notification:

- ☐ Observed Issue
- ☐ No Violation

Please review and respond to this report in accordance with the attached Instructions for Responding to Enforcement Actions, Enforcement Letters, and Notifications Issued by the Georgia Public Service Commission. Please refer to Docket No. 37090 in your response.

Please let me know if there are any questions concerning this report at (404) 985-4271 or mthebert@psc.ga.gov. Thank you for your continuing contribution toward increased pipeline safety.

Sincerely,

Michelle Thebert

Michelle L. Thebert
Director, Office of Pipeline Safety/Facilities Protection

COMMISSIONERS

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REPORT OF NATURAL GAS SAFETY

INSPECTION NO: JS25-027

OPERATOR: City of Thomson Gas System

INVESTIGATOR: Jason Smith

INSPECTION DATE: July 3, 2025 REPORT MAILED DATE: July 29, 2026

Any questions concerning this report may be directed to the above address or by telephoning (404) 463-6526.

1. PURPOSE OF INSPECTION

To conduct a comprehensive inspection of the Operator's plans, programs, procedures, pipeline, and pipeline facilities for compliance with the minimum federal safety standards in 49CFR Parts 191 and 192.

2. CONTINUING VIOLATIONS

Violation	Description	Inspection#	Date
192.195(a)	General requirements. Except as provided in §192.197, each pipeline that is connected to a gas...	JS17-013	5/8/2017
192.473(b)	Each impressed current type cathodic protection system or galvanic anode system must be designed...	JS17-013	5/8/2017
Under Consent Agreement	Operator is under a Consent Agreement.	AT20-002	1/8/2020
192.616	Public education.	JH20-010	2/24/2020

3. CLEARED VIOLATIONS

4. NEW VIOLATIONS

Violation	Description	Inspection#	Date
192.459	External corrosion control: Examination of buried pipeline when exposed.	JS25-027	7/3/2025
192.751	Prevention of accidental ignition.	JS25-027	7/3/2025
192.615(b)(2)	Train the appropriate operating personnel to assure that they are knowledgeable of the emergency...	JS25-027	7/3/2025
192.465(a)	Each pipeline that is under cathodic protection must be tested at least once each calendar year...	JS25-027	7/3/2025
192.473(b)	Each impressed current type cathodic protection system or galvanic anode system must be designed...	JS25-027	7/3/2025
192.475(b)	Whenever any pipe is removed from a pipeline for any reason, the internal surface must be...	JS25-027	7/3/2025

5. OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS/COMMENTS

SEE ATTACHED INSPECTION REPORT

On July 2, 2025, Staff began reviewing the City of Thomson Gas System's Operations & Maintenance manual utilizing the GA/PHMSA comprehensive form.

On August 11-13 and October 20-23, 2025, Pipeline Safety Staff reported to the City of Thomson to perform the comprehensive inspection on the Operator's procedures, records and facilities.

During this inspection the Operator was represented by:
Trelles 'Tee' Robinson - Natural Gas Director
Chris Cawley - MGAG/SRCS (consultant)
Rodney Dunaway - MGAG/SRCS Training (consultant)

Commission Staff was represented by:
Jason Smith - Lead Inspector
Glen Murphy - Pipeline Safety Inspector
Brian Withrow - Pipeline Safety Inspector

At the time of this inspection the City of Thomson Gas System was under three (3) previously existing probable violations and under a consent agreement identified under Inspection #AT20-002. These violations and consent agreement are addressed under Follow-Up Inspection Number JS25-026.

NOTICE OF PROBABLE VIOLATION

As a result of this inspection Staff found that the City of Thomson Gas System was in probable violation of the minimum federal safety standards; specifically:

1. 49CFR §192.459 - External corrosion control: Examination of buried pipeline when exposed.
   Whenever an operator has knowledge that any portion of a buried pipeline is exposed, the exposed portion must be examined for evidence of external corrosion if the pipe is bare, or if the coating is deteriorated. If external corrosion requiring remedial action under §§ 192.483 through 192.489 is found, the operator shall investigate circumferentially and longitudinally beyond the exposed portion (by visual examination, indirect method, or both) to determine whether additional corrosion requiring remedial action exists in the vicinity of the exposed portion.

   Inspection form question #5. Examination of Exposed Portions of Buried Pipe - states: Do records adequately document that exposed buried piping was examined for corrosion?

   STAFFS COMMENTS: Thomson Gas System's O&M manual section 9-D 'External Corrosion Control: Examination of Buried Pipeline When Exposed' states: Whenever City of Thomson has knowledge that any portion of a buried pipeline is exposed, the exposed portion will be examined for evidence of external corrosion if the pipe is bare, or if the coating is deteriorated.

   During this inspection Staff reviewed work orders and found instances where the Operator failed to document the examination of pipe they had exposed for the evidence of external corrosion. Examples of the work orders in question include:

   - repairing a damaged service on 11/2/2023 at 154 Brannan Street
   - repairing a damaged service on 10/27/2021 at 1494 Washington Road
   - repairing a damaged service on 2/05/2020 at 226 Hoey Street

On all three of these work orders, the Operator failed to document if they performed the examination for external corrosion.

PROBABLE VIOLATION: The City of Thomson Gas System failed to demonstrate that they examined buried pipe when it is exposed for evidence of external corrosion as required by §192.459 and their O&M Procedures Manual.

2. §192.465 External corrosion control: Monitoring and remediation.
   (a) Each pipeline that is under cathodic protection must be tested at least once each calendar year, but with intervals not exceeding 15 months, to determine whether the cathodic protection meets the requirements of §192.463. However, if tests at those intervals are impractical for separately protected short sections of mains or transmission lines, not in excess of 100 feet (30 meters), or separately protected service lines, these pipelines may be surveyed on a sampling basis. At least 10 percent of these protected structures, distributed over the entire system must be surveyed each calendar year, with a different 10 percent checked each subsequent year, so that the entire system is tested in each 10-year period.

   Inspection form question #8. Cathodic Protection Monitoring - states: Do records adequately document cathodic protection monitoring tests have occurred as required?

   STAFFS COMMENTS: During this inspection, Staff reviewed City of Thomson Gas System's cathodic protection records and found on the 2020 CP survey, their contractor was unable to obtain a pipe-to-soil reading at 414 Johns Road. They noted under the recommendations section that the test station at this location needed to be repaired.

   The 2021 CP survey states they discovered 414 Johns Road was isolated by a dresser coupling. The recommendations for the test station from the previous year was due to bad wiring, but this location will be replaced with a test station at 419 Johns Road. The contractor was able to obtain a reading at 414 Johns Road during this time.

   When examining the CP surveys for 2022 - 2025, Staff discovered 414 Johns Road was no longer being monitored for adequate cathodic protection. It was replaced with 419 Johns Rd.

   Thomson Gas System has an Isolated Structure Monitoring list that contains approximately eighty-three (83) locations they monitor, independently from the annual CP survey, as isolated services. 414 Johns Road was not on this listing. The last time CP readings were recorded at 414 Johns Road was during the 2021 CP survey.

   PROBABLE VIOLATION: The City of Thomson Gas System failed to inspect and perform electrical tests to assure that electrical isolation is adequate

3. 49CFR §192.473 - External corrosion control: Interference currents.
   (b) Each impressed current type cathodic protection system or galvanic anode system must be designed and installed so as to minimize any adverse effects on existing adjacent underground metallic structures.

Inspection form question #17. Interference Currents - states: Do records document an effective program is in place to minimize detrimental effects of interference currents and that detrimental effects of interference currents from CP systems on other underground metallic structures are minimized?

STAFFS COMMENTS: During this inspection, Staff reviewed Thomson Gas System's cathodic protection records from 2020 through 2025. Staff found there were no pipe-to-soil readings to check for the effects of interference currents from Thomson's CP systems on to other adjacent underground metallic structures.

Staff also reviewed a 2019 CP Rectifier Groundbed Evaluation Survey done for Thomson's seven rectified systems. This record did not actually address the issues of their CP system having possible effects on adjacent underground metallic structures.

PROBABLE VIOLATION: The City of Thomson Gas System failed to demonstrate that they checked to ensure that their cathodic protection system is not having an adverse effect on existing adjacent underground metallic structures.

4. 49CFR §192.475 - Internal corrosion control: General.
(b) Whenever any pipe is removed from a pipeline for any reason, the internal surface must be inspected for evidence of corrosion. If internal corrosion is found—

Inspection form question #19. Internal Corrosion in Cutout Pipe - states: Do records document examination of removed pipe for evidence of internal corrosion?

STAFFS COMMENTS: City of Thomson Gas System's O&M manual section 9-L 'Internal Corrosion – General' states: Whenever any pipe is removed from a pipeline for any reason, the internal surface will be inspected for evidence of corrosion.

During this inspection, Staff reviewed work orders and found instances where the Operator failed to document the examination of pipe when it is removed from the pipeline for evidence of internal corrosion. Examples of the work orders in question include:

- repairing a damaged service on 11/2/2023 at 154 Brannan Street
- repairing a damaged service on 10/27/2021 at 1494 Washington Road
- repairing a service on 4/24/2020 at 814 Hillcrest Dr
- repairing a damaged service on 2/05/2020 at 226 Hoey Street

On all four of these work orders, the Operator failed to document if they performed the inspection for internal corrosion.

PROBABLE VIOLATION: The City of Thomson Gas System failed to examine buried pipe that is removed from the pipeline for any reason, for evidence of internal corrosion.

5. 49CFR §192.615 - Emergency plans.
(b) Each operator shall:
(2) Train the appropriate operating personnel to assure that they are knowledgeable of the emergency procedures and verify that the training is effective.

Inspection form question #7. Emergency Response Training - states: Has the operator trained the appropriate operating personnel on emergency procedures and verified that the training was effective in accordance with its procedures?

STAFFS COMMENTS: City of Thomson Gas System's Emergency Manual section IX. Acquainting Operating and Maintenance Personnel with Procedures' states: The Gas Superintendent, or his/her designee, is responsible for ensuring that Operations and Maintenance personnel who perform emergency response activities are trained in the contents of this plan and are knowledgeable of the requirements contained therein. It references appendix P which is the Verification of Emergency Plan Training Sheet.

During this inspection, Staff found the Operator's last documented time of completing an Emergency Plan Training was November 20, 2011, for four gas employees. Staff asked the Operator if they had a way of proving that their five current gas system employees have received the Emergency Plan Training, but they were not able to do so.

PROBABLE VIOLATION: The City of Thomson Gas System failed to ensure appropriate operating personnel received training to assure that they are knowledgeable of the emergency procedures and verify that the training is effective.

6. 49CFR §192.751 - Prevention of accidental ignition.
Each operator shall take steps to minimize the danger of accidental ignition of gas in any structure or area where the presence of gas constitutes a hazard of fire or explosion, including the following:
(a) When a hazardous amount of gas is being vented into open air, each potential source of ignition must be removed from the area and a fire extinguisher must be provided.
(b) Gas or electric welding or cutting may not be performed on pipe or on pipe components that contain a combustible mixture of gas and air in the area of work.
(c) Post warning signs, where appropriate.

Inspection form question #27. Prevention of Accidental Ignition - states: Do records indicate personnel followed processes for minimizing the danger of accidental ignition where the presence of gas constituted a hazard of fire or explosion?

STAFFS COMMENTS: City of Thomson Gas System's O&M section 13-Z 'Prevention of Accidental Ignition' states: City of Thomson will take steps to minimize the danger of accidental ignition of gas in any structure or area where the presence of gas constitutes a hazard of fire or explosion.

During this inspection, Staff reviewed 2020 – 2025 work orders and was unable to find where the Operator documented that gas system personnel followed their written procedures for minimizing the danger of accidental ignition where the presence of gas constituted a hazard of fire. As of this inspection, Thomson Gas System is not currently utilizing the HiperWeb database for completing their work orders, which addresses accidental ignition.

PROBABLE VIOLATION: The City of Thomson Gas System failed to demonstrate that steps were taken to minimize the danger of accidental ignition of gas in any structure or area where the presence of gas constitutes a hazard of fire or explosion.

LETTER OF CONCERN

1. 49CFR §192.739 - Pressure limiting and regulating stations: Inspection and testing.
   (a) Each pressure limiting station, relief device (except rupture discs), and pressure regulating station and its equipment must be subjected at intervals not exceeding 15 months, but at least once each calendar year, to inspections and tests to determine that it is—
   (1) In good mechanical condition;
   (2) Adequate from the standpoint of capacity and reliability of operation for the service in which it is employed;

   STAFFS CONCERN: During this inspection, Staff reviewed Thomson Gas System's 2020 - 2025 regulator station inspections that were performed by their contractor, Ideal Gas Measurement. In the 2020 - 2022 inspections, IGM recommendations on the Town Border Station states; the set needs to be upgraded. In the 2023 and 2024 inspections, IGM recommendations on the Town Border Station states; the Operator needs to rebuild the reg station.

   When Staff performed a field inspection at the Town Border Station location, both 1st and 2nd cut regulator stations are located in one building with limited space for making repairs to relief valves. Both regulator stations are equipped with American A.F.V. 2-inch regulators. Staff is concerned that these regulators are antiquated. Repairing leaks or failed parts on these regulators may become time consuming due to the difficulty in finding the parts to make repairs.

   Staff believes the Town Border Station needs to be upgraded / rebuilt with newer regulators and reliefs that, if necessary, parts will not be difficult to obtain. It should also be reconfigured to have better access to the relief valves.

2. Under the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administrations (PHMSA) Guidelines for States Participating in the Pipeline Safety Program, Staff are tasked with reviewing and evaluating operators procedures and actions to address recommendations from the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) and PHMSA advisory bulletins. During this inspection Staff found that the City of Thomson Gas System had neither a procedure in place, nor any records to demonstrate that that they had reviewed any of these items.

   STAFFS CONCERN: Staff are concerned that in the event of an accident or incident the Operator will not be able to demonstrate that they performed a review of the relevant NTSB and/or PHMSA notices, or what actions they decided to take, or not to take, in regard to the notices. Staff recommends that the Operator develop a procedure to review these bulletins and then document what actions they took in regard to the notices.

OPERATOR QUALIFICATION PROTOCOL 9 FIELD EVALUATIONS

While on site, Staff performed Operator Qualification Protocol 9 field validation inspections on gas department personnel to ensure that covered tasks are being performed in accordance with appropriate operator-approved procedures. The Operator provided qualification records for Derick Martin - Gas Supervisor; for Pipeline Safety Staff to examine prior to observing performance of the tasks. Staff verified that the qualification records were current.

Derick Martin performed the following covered task:

- Task #1261 'Perform Walking Gas Leakage Survey' - Qualification good through 4/26/2027
- Task #1291 'Locate Underground Pipelines' - Qualification good through 6/3/2026
- Task #1311 'Inspect Pipeline Surface Conditions by Patrolling Right of Way or Easement' - Qualification good through 2/12/2030.

Staff verified Derick Martin was able to perform the covered tasks according to the procedures and was able to identify abnormal operating conditions (AOCs).

PROPOSED CIVIL PENALTY

Under Commission Rule 515-9-1.01, by virtue of the authority vested in the Commission by law and pursuant to orders issued by the Commission on May 4, 1967, July 6, 1967, April 23, 1968, and October 29, 1970, all Rules and Regulations prescribed by the United States Department of Transportation applicable to the "Transportation of Natural and Other Gas by Pipeline: Minimum Safety Standards" (C.F.R. 49, Parts 191 and 192) are by this Rule made the Rules and Regulations of the Georgia Public Service Commission for the safe installation and operation of all natural gas transmission and distribution facilities by companies subject to the jurisdiction of the Commission within this State.

Under Commission Rule 515-9-3-.08 (Written Formal Notice of Violation), the Commission may propose a civil penalty in conjunction with this notice of probable violation. Further, the City of Thomson Gas System is subject to civil penalties under O.C.G.A. § 46-2-91(b) which states that: Any operator which violates any rule or regulation of the commission prescribed pursuant to subsection (i) of Code Section 46-2-20, or which fails, neglects, or refuses to comply with any order after notice thereof, shall be liable to a penalty not to exceed the maximum penalties provided for in 49 C.F.R. Section 190.223.

Staff has reviewed the circumstances surrounding the probable violations cited in this report and has recommended the civil penalty/penalties listed below. Please note that this recommended amount is less than the amount authorized by Georgia law.

Item #	Code / Rule	Description	Proposed Penalty
5	§192.615(b)(2)	Emergency Plan / Training	$5,000.00
TOTAL PROPOSED PENALTY			$5,000.00

Please review and respond to this report in accordance with the attached Instructions for Responding to Enforcement Letters Issued by the Georgia Public Service Commission.

OPERATOR RESPONSE FORM

Operator Name: City of Thomson

Informal Conference Requested: Yes ☐ No ☐

Docket Number: 37090

Responses required within **30 days of electronic mail.** Provide the following information for this report:

Response to Inspection Number:_____

Type of Enforcement Action(s) cited in report:			Informal Conference Requested	
☐ Notice of Probable Violation (NOPV)	☐ New	☐Continuing	☐ Yes	☐ No
☐ Notice of Amendment (NOA)	☐ New	☐Continuing	☐ Yes	☐ No
☐ Warning Letter	☐ New	☐Continuing	☐ Yes	☐ No
☐ Letter of Concern	☐ New	☐Continuing	☐ Yes	☐ No
☐ Observed Issue	☐ New	☐Continuing	☐ Yes	☐ No
☐ Proposed Civil Penalty	$ _____ PCP $ Amount (Total for report)			

Indicate below (A-E) based on the type of Enforcement Actions in this report: (Check all that apply)
Complete a separate copy of Page 2, Operator Response to Enforcement Action, for each cited item.

A. Response for **Notice of Probable Violation** (with and without proposed civil penalty):
   1. ☐ Written statement indicating that corrective measures have achieved Compliance or
   2. ☐ Written plan of action outlining the corrective measures that will be taken to achieve compliance and when compliance is anticipated.

B. Response for **NOA**:
   1. ☐ Contested: Attach written explanation, information, or other material in answer to the allegations in the Notice of Amendment stating your reasons for objecting to the NOA, in whole or in part; or
   2. ☐ Not Contested: Explanation, information, or other material believed to warrant modification of the NOA in whole or in part; or
   3. ☐ Written request for clarification. (Attached)

C. Response for **Continuing** and/or **Existing** violations:
   Current status, updates, expected completion dates, proposed modifications, etc., of the continuing and/or existing violations, even if this information was previously provided. Referencing a previously filed response letter, as status, updates, etc. alone is not sufficient for this response. Failure to provide this information may result in formal interrogatories from the Director through data requests.

D. Response for ☐ **Letter of Concern** / ☐ **Warning Letter**
   I acknowledge receipt of the Letter of Concern/Warning Letter:_____
   SIGNATURE / TITLE

   Additional Comments: (Optional)_____

E. Response for **Observed Issue** and **No Violation**: (Optional Response)
   Staff requests that the Operator acknowledge receipt of the Observed Issue/No Violation in writing, or by submitting an email to the FPU Director

Operator Response to Enforcement Action

Enforcement Action for:_____ ☐ New Violation ☐ Continuing Violation
Enter Code / Commission Rule (Complete a separate attachment for each enforcement action)

Enforcement Action(s) cited in report:	Conference Requested:
☐ Notice of Probable Violation (NOPV)	☐ Yes ☐ No
☐ Notice of Amendment (NOA)	☐ Yes ☐ No
☐ Warning Letter	☐ Yes ☐ No
☐ Letter of Concern	☐ Yes ☐ No
☐ Observed Issue	☐ Yes ☐ No
☐ Proposed Civil Penalty	☐ Yes ☐ No

$_____
Proposed Penalty for this violation

OPERATORS RESPONSE: _____

Response Provided by: _____ Date:_____
Name / Title

Internal use only:

Lead Inspector: _____ Date Response Reviewed:_____

Actions Acceptable: ☐ Yes ☐No Re-inspection Needed:☐ Yes ☐ No Clear Violation:☐ Yes ☐ No

Supervisor Review by:_____ Date Reviewed:_____

Additional Enforcement Recommended: ☐ Yes ☐ No

Director Review

Approved: ☐ Yes ☐No Schedule Special Follow-up Inspection: ☐ Yes ☐ No

Cleared Violation: ☐ Yes ☐ No

Comments:_____

Filings:
For all written responses or any other official correspondence, the Operator shall file the response at the following address:

Ms. Sallie Tanner, Executive Secretary
Georgia Public Service Commission
244 Washington Street, SW
Atlanta, Georgia 30334

The Operator must file **five (5)** copies of any response and/or official correspondence, as well as a CD with an electronic version of the response in Microsoft Word and/or a PDF, if applicable.

Informal Conference:
Any Operator who chooses to request an informal conference shall request such a conference through emailing the Director (michellet@psc.state.ga.us), calling the Director (404-463-2765), or selecting the "Request Conference" choice.

Civil Penalty Payments:
Certified check for the full amount of the recommended civil penalty or consent agreement amount made payable to the Georgia Public Service Commission. The Operator's name, applicable Docket No., and Inspection Report No. must be included on the certified check. Mail payment to:

Ms. Michelle Thebert, Director, Facilities Protection Unit
Georgia Public Service Commission
244 Washington Street
Atlanta, Georgia 30334

Hearing Requests:
The Operator has the right to request a hearing before the full Commission to contest the alleged probable violations, recommended civil penalties, and all other proposed actions of enforcement. A request for a hearing must be submitted in writing and in accordance with Commission Rule 515-2-1-.04. The Operator must include a statement of the issues that you intend to raise at the hearing. The issues may relate to the allegations, new information, proposed compliance order, proposed civil penalty, or any other recommendation for enforcement action. Please refer to Commission Rule 515-9-3-.11 and O.C.G.A. § 46-2-91 for assessment considerations upon which civil penalties are based. An operator's failure to specify an issue may result in a waiver of the right to raise that issue at hearing. The request must also indicate whether or not the Operator will be represented by counsel at the hearing.

Open Records and Trade Secret Filings:
The Operator is advised that any material provided to the Commission, and all materials prepared by the Commission, including the Notice of Probable Violations and any Orders issued in this case, may be considered public information and subject to disclosure under the Georgia Open Records Act (O.C.G.A. § 50-18-70 et seq.). If you believe that any portion of your response material is security sensitive, privileged, confidential or may cause your company competitive disadvantages and would qualify for protection under the Commission's "Trade Secret Rule" (Commission Rule 515-3-1-.11), you must, along with the complete original document clearly marked "TRADE SECRET" on each page, provide a second copy of the document with the portions you believe qualify for trade secret treatment redacted, and an explanation of why you believe the redacted information qualifies for such trade secret treatment. Should the Commission receive a request for disclosure of any "TRADE SECRET" material, you will be notified, if after review, the materials and your provided justification are deemed not to meet any exemptions provided in the Georgia Open Records Act. You may appeal the Commission's decision to release material at that time. Your appeal will stay the release of those materials until a final decision is made.

BEFORE THE GEORGIA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION
STATE OF GEORGIA

IN THE MATTER OF:	)	
	)	
City of Thomson Gas System	)	**DOCKET NO. 37090**
	)	
	)	
	)	

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I, hereby certify that I have this day served a copy of the within and foregoing document on the following persons via email and/or United States Mail as follows:

*Sallie Tanner, Executive Secretary
Georgia Public Service Commission
244 Washington Street, SW
Atlanta, GA 30334

*John Waller, City Manager
City of Thomson Gas System
210 Railroad Street
Thomson, GA 30824

*Michelle Thebert, Facilities Protection Unit Director
Georgia Public Service Commission
244 Washington Street, SW
Atlanta, GA 30334

Respectfully Submitted this 3rd day of August 2026:

Cathy Nesbitt

Cathy Nesbitt, Administrative Assistant
Georgia Public Service Commission
Facilities Protection Unit
244 Washington Street, SW
Atlanta, GA 30334