

Senate Bill 250

By: Senators Tate of the 38th and Thomas of the 2nd

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT

1 To amend Article 5 of Chapter 4 of Title 46 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated,
2 known as the "Natural Gas Competition and Deregulation Act," so as to provide that a
3 marketer shall be prohibited from discontinuing service to persons 65 years of age or older
4 or to persons with physical or mental disabilities for nonpayment of bills during any winter
5 heating season and the 30 days immediately following such winter heating season; to provide
6 an exception; to provide that prior to August 1, 2001, a marketer shall file with the
7 commission the price per therm to be charged to retail customers which price shall not be
8 increased more than \$.50 during any three-year period unless any additional increase is
9 authorized by the commission pursuant to an emergency in accordance with procedures
10 provided in Code Section 46-2-25; to provide that a marketer shall be prohibited from
11 charging a retail customer for any pamphlets, inserts, or other publications designed to
12 educate its customers or the general public with respect to pricing, services, or other matters
13 relating to the distribution of natural gas in this state; to provide that a marketer shall be
14 prohibited from charging a retail customer for the delivery of natural gas during any period
15 unless the marketer determines the amount of gas actually consumed by the customer for
16 such period from the customer's gas meter; to provide civil penalties for violations of certain
17 provisions of this Act; to provide for related matters; to provide an effective date; to repeal
18 conflicting laws; and for other purposes.

19 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

20 **SECTION 1.**

21 Article 5 of Chapter 4 of Title 46 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, known as the
22 "Natural Gas Competition and Deregulation Act," is amended by adding at the end of Code
23 Section 46-4-156, relating to customer assignment methodology, a new subsection (g) to read
24 as follows:

25 "(g) A marketer shall be prohibited from discontinuing service to persons 65 years of age
26 or older or to persons with physical or mental disabilities for nonpayment of bills during

1 any winter heating season and the 30 days immediately following such winter heating
2 season; provided, however, that nothing in this subsection shall be construed to impair the
3 obligation of any contract in existence on the effective date of this subsection."

4 **SECTION 2.**

5 Said article is further amended by adding at the end of Code Section 46-4-160, relating to
6 authority of commission with respect to marketers, the following:

7 "(h) Prior to August 1, 2001, a marketer shall file with the commission the price per therm
8 to be charged to retail customers which price shall not be increased more than \$.50 during
9 any three-year period unless any additional increase is authorized by the commission
10 pursuant to an emergency in accordance with procedures provided in Code Section
11 46-2-25.

12 (i) A marketer shall be prohibited from charging a retail customer for any pamphlets,
13 inserts, or other publications designed to educate its customers or the general public with
14 respect to pricing, services, or other matters relating to the distribution of natural gas in this
15 state."

16 **SECTION 3.**

17 Said article is further amended by adding between Code Sections 46-4-160 and 46-4-161 a
18 new Code Section 46-4-160.1 to read as follows:

19 "46-4-160.1.

20 (a) A marketer shall be prohibited from charging a retail customer for the delivery of
21 natural gas during any period unless the marketer determines the amount of gas actually
22 consumed by the customer for such period from the customer's gas meter.

23 (b) Any marketer which willfully violates any provision of subsection (a) of this Code
24 section shall be liable for any penalties authorized under Code Section 46-2-91."

25 **SECTION 4.**

26 This Act shall become effective upon its approval by the Governor or upon its becoming law
27 without such approval.

28 **SECTION 5.**

29 All laws and parts of laws in conflict with this Act are repealed.