

Support Legislation to Reestablish a Consumer Utility Counsel for Georgians

A **Consumer Utility Counsel (CUC)** is essential for protecting utility customers, ensuring Georgians fairness in the regulatory process and is a proven, cost-effective solution empowering consumers and promoting accountability.

What is a CUC?

- A CUC is a state agency that represents ratepayer interests in utility regulatory proceedings.
- Georgia is one of only four states without a CUC, leaving consumers without a formal voice in these critical discussions.
- Business and utility interests invest heavily in rate proceedings to achieve favorable outcomes, because lobbying works. In contrast, consumers have no comparable advocates.

Georgia's History With a CUC

- Georgia previously had a CUC within the state Consumer Protection Division, which operated from the 1970s until 2008.
- The CUC was staffed with 4-6 utility finance and regulatory experts who worked independently of the Public Service Commission (PSC).

Why Does Georgia Need a CUC?

⚡ The PSC cannot fully represent ratepayers:

- While the PSC is supposed to balance utility financial needs with consumer protection, utilities and business interests invest significant resources to influence rate hearings.

⚡ Consumers need independent advocacy:

- Ratepayers currently lack professional, dedicated representation to ensure that their voices are heard and their interests are considered during utility regulatory proceedings.

How Does a CUC Care for Customers?



Professional
Representation



Staying Focused on
Protecting Affordability



A Commitment to
Preventing Exploitation

REESTABLISH A CONSUMER UTILITY COUNSEL AND
GIVE GEORGIANS **THE ADVOCACY THEY DESERVE**



For more information, visit www.gcepp.org or email Andrea Young Jones – Andrea@GeorgiaWand.org

Support Legislation to **Weed Out Bad Actors**

Stronger oversight is essential to safeguard Georgia's residents, natural resources, and economy. Companies with poor compliance records have no place endangering communities — **this legislation ensures that only responsible businesses receive permits**. Proactively protecting communities from bad actors will reduce long-term costs including health care, cleanup, and disaster response expenses.

The Legislation at a Glance

- The proposed legislation would require the Georgia Environmental Protection Division (EPD) to investigate and consider the regulatory history — both in-state and out-of-state — of companies applying for industrial and waste permits.
- By including a review of a company's compliance history, it would strengthen environmental protections and promote responsible business practices across Georgia.

Why is this Legislation Necessary?

⚡ Protecting Vulnerable Communities:

- Small and rural communities often lack the resources and expertise to investigate the regulatory history of industrial companies seeking permits to operate in their areas.
- Without this critical information, these communities are at risk of hosting companies with poor compliance records, potentially leading to health hazards and environmental degradation.

⚡ Ensuring Accountability:

- A company's past actions are the best predictor of its future behavior. Reviewing their regulatory history ensures that businesses operating in Georgia demonstrate good practices, compliance with safety requirements, and a commitment to community welfare.

The BioLab Example:

The recent fire at the BioLab facility in Conyers, Georgia, is a glaring example of why this legislation is needed. This fire is the fifth incident at the facility in the past 20 years, underscoring a troubling pattern of safety and operational issues.



THIS LEGISLATION **PROTECTS GEORGIANS'**
HEALTH & SAFETY, PROMOTES INDUSTRY RESPONSIBILITY,
AND PREVENTS ENVIRONMENTAL INJUSTICE.



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Support the Resolution to Study the

CUMULATIVE IMPACT OF POLLUTION ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & GROWTH IN GEORGIA

The Resolution will establish a study committee to evaluate the cumulative impact of pollution on community health, property values, and Georgia's economic development, and will investigate how new and existing industrial facilities affect environmental quality and long-term economic opportunities for Georgia's communities.

ECONOMIC IMPLICATIONS OF POLLUTION

Pollution Impacts Wealth & Opportunity

Pollution undermines homeownership, which is the cornerstone of the American Dream.

Lower property values are tied to limited amenities, struggling schools, and fewer opportunities for residents to improve their quality of life.

Economic stability depends on preserving clean air, water, and viable soil to protect agricultural production and promote long-term investment.

Barriers to Public & Private Investment

Pollution deters employers and businesses like grocery stores, health care providers, and professional services from locating near industrial areas, limiting job opportunities for residents.

Georgia's economy relies heavily on agriculture, which is jeopardized by air, water, and soil pollution that harms crop yields and food security.

The Importance of Shovel-Ready Communities

Clean air, access to clean water, and healthy, educated workforces are essential for attracting economic development investments.

Communities burdened by industrial pollution are at a disadvantage, lacking the necessary foundation to thrive in Georgia's growing economy.



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