



VIOLA DAVIS  
REPRESENTATIVE, DISTRICT 87  
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*HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES*  
COVERDELL LEGISLATIVE OFFICE BUILDING  
ATLANTA, GEORGIA 30334  
404-656-0109

STANDING COMMITTEES  
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October 6, 2025

Georgia Public Service Commission  
244 Washington Street, SW  
Atlanta, GA 30334

Subject: Formal Request for Independent Study on Georgia Power Budget Billing Overcharges and Fees

Dear Commissioners,

I write to you out of concern for potential systemic overcharges in electricity service and fees applied to customers of Georgia Power, particularly in underserved and under-resourced areas across our state.

As a State Representative for House District 87, I have carefully reviewed my own Georgia Power budget billing statements for the past year. That analysis revealed a troubling pattern:

- **Budget billing payments far exceeded actual charges** in many months, resulting in cumulative overpayments of more than \$1,500 in one year.
- **Mandatory fees**—including environmental compliance charges, municipal franchise fees, and sales tax—consistently inflated bills by 15–20% each month.

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Formal Request for Independent Study on Georgia  
Power Budget Billing Overcharges and Fees

- **These fee structures and billing practices disproportionately impact low-income**, elderly, disabled, and minority communities who rely heavily on budget billing to manage household expenses.

Because Georgia Power is a regulated monopoly under your jurisdiction, it is vital that billing practices be transparent, equitable, and in compliance with the public interest.

Therefore, I respectfully request that the Public Service Commission engage an outside, independent, and reputable agency to conduct a comprehensive study to determine:

1. Whether Georgia Power's budget billing practices result in systemic overcharges for customers.
2. The extent to which fees and surcharges increase customer costs beyond the core service amount.
3. Whether these practices disproportionately harm underserved and under-resourced communities.
4. Recommendations for corrective action to ensure fairness, transparency, and compliance with consumer protection principles.

I am willing to provide my billing history and analysis as a catalyst for this study and encourage the Commission to examine broader billing data to confirm whether this problem is systemic.

The families of Georgia deserve accountability, and I believe the Commission is uniquely positioned to bring the transparency and oversight required.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to your response and to working with the Commission to protect Georgia consumers.

Sincerely,



Representative Viola Davis  
House District 87



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**STANDING COMMITTEES**  
Health  
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**October 9, 2025**

**To:**

Chairman and Commissioners  
Georgia Public Service Commission  
244 Washington Street SW  
Atlanta, Georgia 30334

**CC:**

Dr. Benjamin Deitchman, Assistant Director, Electric Unit  
Georgia Public Service Commission  
[bdeitchman@psc.ga.gov](mailto:bdeitchman@psc.ga.gov)

**Re: Follow-Up Request for Independent Investigation and Study of Georgia Power Budget Billing System**

Dear Chairman and Commissioners,

On **Tuesday, October 7, 2025**, I personally hand-delivered a letter to the Commission formally requesting an independent, third-party investigation and **study** into Georgia Power's budget-billing practices. This follow-up transmittal provides the supporting data and documentation I promised to deliver to Dr. Benjamin Deitchman for review and analysis.

After a detailed month-by-month comparison of my own Georgia Power billing statements (October 2024 through October 2025), I identified consistent

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Follow-Up Request for Independent Investigation and  
Study of Georgia Power Budget Billing System

discrepancies between the budget billing amount and the actual service charges, including all fees and taxes. My review—verified through an AI-assisted audit—found that Georgia Power collected approximately \$1,881 more than the total cost of electricity actually used during this period.

**Key Findings from Billing Analysis (Oct 2024 – Oct 2025):**

- **Budget Billing vs. Actual Use:** Monthly payments were fixed at \$767 (or \$599 in late 2024), while actual service charges ranged from \$300 to \$1,400. In low-usage months, Georgia Power retained substantial overpayments.
- **Add-On Fees:** Environmental Compliance Costs, Municipal Franchise Fees, and Sales Tax inflated monthly charges by 15–20%, exceeding core electricity costs.
- **Systemic Effect:** The “budget” structure effectively acts as a pre-payment system, giving Georgia Power advance use of customers’ money without interest or credit to the consumer.
- **Equity Concerns:** This practice disproportionately burdens low-income, elderly, disabled, and minority households—the very populations most reliant on budget billing to manage predictable monthly expenses.

A visual analysis chart (attached) illustrates these trends and clearly shows the consistent gap between budgeted and actual billed amounts, demonstrating a pattern of over-collection that merits regulatory review.

Given these findings, I again respectfully urge the Commission to:

1. **Authorize an independent, third-party study** to determine whether Georgia Power’s budget-billing model results in systemic overcharging of customers.
2. **Quantify the statewide financial impact** of environmental compliance fees, municipal franchise fees, and sales taxes on residential bills.
3. **Assess demographic disparities** to determine if underserved communities are disproportionately affected.
4. **Recommend corrective actions** to ensure transparency, fairness, and compliance with Georgia’s consumer-protection principles.

I appreciate Dr. Deitchman’s prompt response and willingness to review the supporting materials. Enclosed you will find:

- **Copies of my Georgia Power billing statements** (Oct 2024 – Oct 2025);
- **Billing-cycle comparison table** showing monthly totals and differences; and
- **Analytical chart** titled “*Georgia Power Budget Billing vs. Actual Charges (Oct 2024–Oct 2025)*” highlighting the total overcharge of \$1,881.

I respectfully request that the Commission formally acknowledge receipt of these materials and inform my office of the next procedural steps for initiating a formal independent investigation.

Thank you for your continued cooperation and for your commitment to protecting Georgia’s consumers through transparent and accountable oversight of regulated utilities.

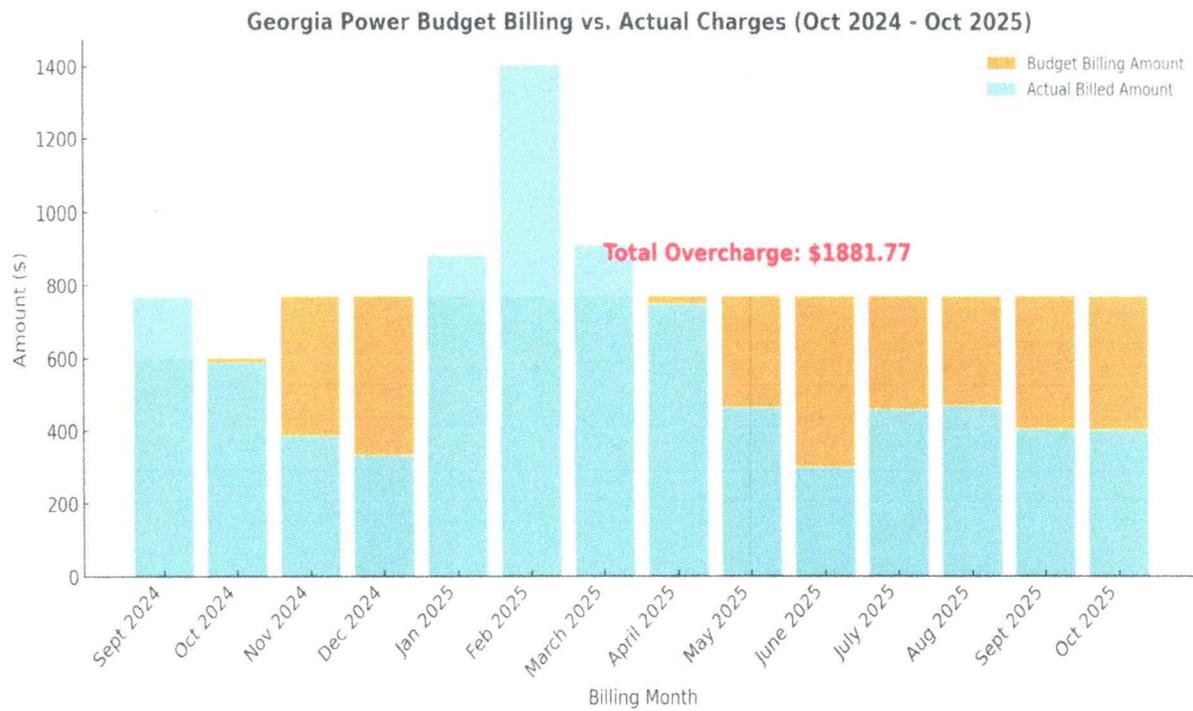
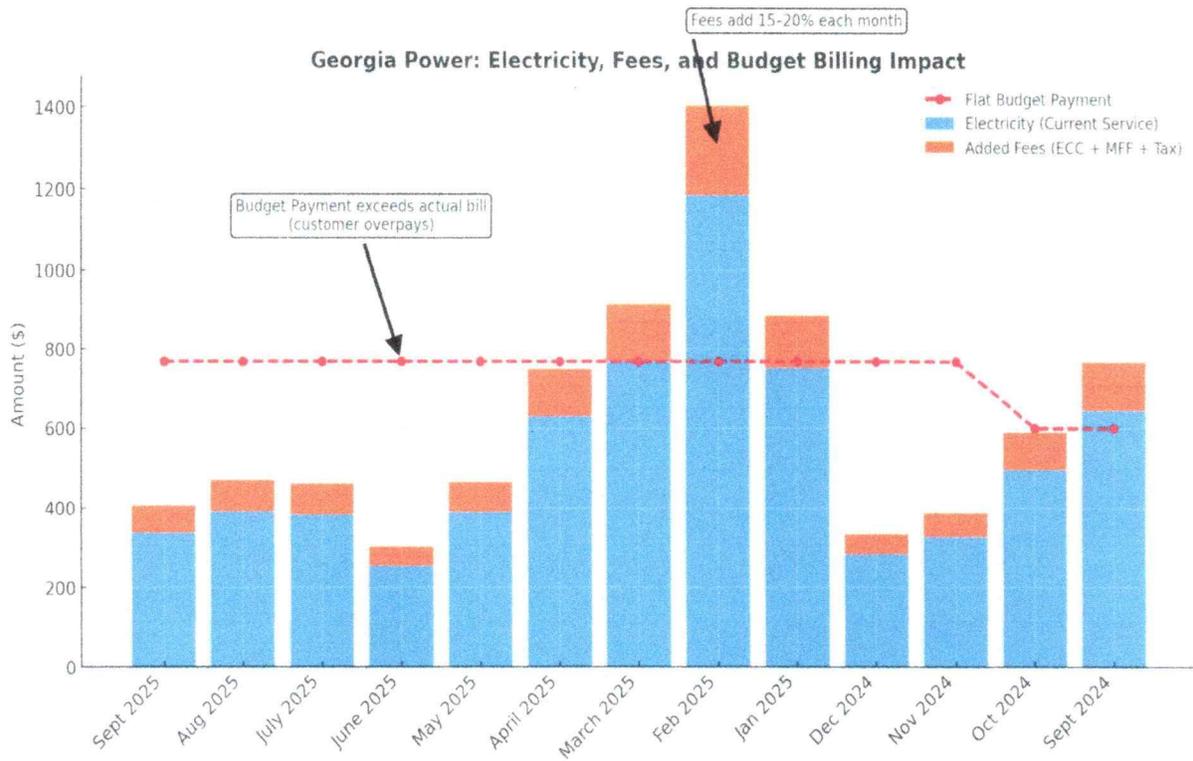
Sincerely,



**Representative Viola Davis**  
Georgia House District 87  
Vice Chair, DeKalb County House Delegation

**Attachments:**

1. Georgia Power Budget Billing vs. Actual Charges Table (Oct 2024 – Oct 2025)
2. Visual Chart – Budget Billing Comparison (Overcharge ≈ \$1,881)
3. Billing Statement Copies (Oct 2024 – Oct 2025)



## Current Electric Service - Residential

Next Scheduled Read Date: On or after Sept 19, 2024

Service Period	Meter #	Reading Type	Meter Reading			x	Constant	= Usage
			Current	-	Previous			
Jul 22 - Aug 21	3839290	Tot kWh	87929	-	84396		1	3,533

### Billing Period

July 22, 2024 - Aug 21, 2024

Current Service	\$ 643.83
Environmental Compliance Cost	55.76
Nuclear Construction Cost Recovery	0.00
Municipal Franchise Fee	8.29
Sales Tax	56.64

**Total Current Electric Service \$ 764.52**

## Billing Summary

Previous Bill Amount		\$ 767.00
Payment Received On 09/09/25	Thank You!	-767.00
Current Budget Billing Payment Due		+767.00

**Total Due \$ 767.00**



# Georgia HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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## Guest Editorial

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

Friday, October 10, 2025

Contact: Betsy Theroux

(404) 656-3996

[betsy.theroux@house.ga.gov](mailto:betsy.theroux@house.ga.gov)

Kehl Mackesey

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## **Could Georgia Power's Budget Billing Be Overcharging Georgians? It's Time for Answers**

*By State Representative Viola Davis (D-Stone Mountain)  
(572 words)*

Electricity is not a luxury; it's a lifeline. But could Georgia Power's plan, referred to as "budget billing" be quietly charging families, seniors and the disabled more than they actually owe?

That's the question I began asking after reviewing my own electricity bills over the past year. What I found raised enough concern that I have now requested an independent third-party investigation and study by the Georgia Public Service Commission (PSC).

Georgia Power's budget billing program is marketed as a way to help families stabilize their monthly payments. Instead of fluctuating charges that spike during summer and winter, customers pay a fixed "budgeted" amount each month based on estimated usage.

In theory, this should make household budgeting easier. But after a year of tracking my own payments, I found something troubling: the fixed amount I was charged was often hundreds of dollars higher than my actual service cost, and by the end of the year, I had paid over \$1,500 more than the total value of my electricity usage.

While one example doesn't prove a statewide problem, it does raise serious questions:

- How are these “budget” amounts calculated?
- Does Georgia Power earn interest or financial benefit from holding customer overpayments?
- Are low-income and elderly customers, underserved and under-resourced areas disproportionately affected?
- And most importantly, are Georgia families being overbilled without realizing it?

These are questions only an independent investigation and/or study can fully answer.

Each Georgia Power bill includes not just the base electricity charge, but also a series of additional costs, environmental compliance fees, municipal franchise fees and sales tax, which collectively add 15 – 20 percent to monthly bills.

For customers on budget billing, this means they may be paying inflated amounts each month that go well beyond their actual usage. In my own case, several months showed actual service costs below \$400, while I continued to pay \$767 – a significant gap for any household.

Budget billing may be convenient for the company, but for families already struggling to cover rent, food and medicine, that extra money each month can make the difference between stability and crisis.

That's why on October 7, 2025, I hand-delivered a letter to the PSC requesting an independent third-party investigation and study of Georgia Power's budget billing system.

This study should determine whether:

1. Georgia Power's budget billing practices result in systemic overcharges;
2. Fees and surcharges significantly inflate customer costs;
3. These impacts disproportionately harm underserved and under-resourced communities;

4. Corrective policies or regulations are needed to ensure fairness and compliance with consumer-protection principles.

In addition to calling for oversight, I am drafting legislation, the Georgia Fair Utility Billing and Consumer Protection Act, to strengthen transparency and consumer protections. This bill will propose:

- Mandatory reporting and auditing of budget billing practices;
- Interest-bearing credit or refunds for overpaid balances;
- Independent public disclosure of surcharge and fee impacts on consumers.

As legislators, our duty is not only to write laws, but to protect the people who send us to the Capitol, especially when they face rising costs for basic necessities.

Electricity keeps our homes running and our families safe. It should not come with hidden overcharges or confusing billing structures that burden the very people trying to play by the rules. That's why I'm asking for answers, and I'm asking the Georgia Public Service Commission to join me in finding them.

Because every dollar matters, and every Georgian deserves fair, transparent and accountable billing.

*Representative Viola Davis represents the citizens of District 87, which includes a portion of DeKalb County. She was first elected to the House of Representatives in 2018 and currently serves on the Defense & Veterans Affairs, Health, Insurance, Natural Resources & Environment and Urban Affairs committees.*

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*The views expressed above and information shared are those of the author.*



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Health  
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Urban Affairs  
Defense and Veterans Affairs

**October 23, 2025**

**To:**

Chairman and Commissioners  
Georgia Public Service Commission  
244 Washington Street SW  
Atlanta, Georgia 30334

**CC:**

Dr. Benjamin Deitchman, Assistant Director, Electric Unit – [bdeitchman@psc.ga.gov](mailto:bdeitchman@psc.ga.gov)

**Re: Ethical Concerns Regarding Direct Utility Access to Legislator's Account –  
Request for Independent Review Protocols**

Dear Chairman and Commissioners,

I am writing to bring to your attention a serious ethical and procedural concern regarding a recent communication I received from Commissioner Tim Echols on October 22, 2025. In that email, Commissioner Echols requested that I send my personal Georgia Power account number directly to an employee of Southern Company, Mr. Jeremiah Haswell, to “check” or “analyze” my individual billing records.

While I appreciate the Commissioner's willingness to engage, this request raises multiple conflicts of interest and procedural risks that undermine the transparency and objectivity necessary for a credible investigation into Georgia Power's Budget Billing program, the very issue presently under review in **Docket 44280 (STF-PIA-36)**.

My initial request to the Commission specifically called for an independent third-party investigation and study to ensure an unbiased review of Georgia Power's billing practices. Allowing a subsidiary of the very company under scrutiny to handle, analyze, or interpret my data directly contradicts the principle of independence and could compromise both the investigation's credibility and public trust.

The intent of my inquiry was to protect Georgia's consumers, not to have their complaints routed back through the same corporate structure that is being examined.

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Ethical Concerns Regarding Direct Utility Access to  
Legislator's Account

Utility account numbers are tied to sensitive personal and financial information. Directly providing that data to a corporate entity, particularly one currently the subject of formal review, raises serious data privacy, chain-of-custody, and transparency concerns. Any analysis of customer billing data should be carried out under PSC supervision or by an independent auditor appointed by the Commission, not by the company being investigated.

Even if well-intentioned, the act of a Commissioner forwarding a customer's personal complaint to the regulated company for internal review creates the appearance of bias and risks undermining public confidence in the Commission's impartiality. This situation reinforces the importance of maintaining clear separation between investigative oversight and corporate participation.

To preserve integrity in this process, I respectfully recommend that the PSC:

1. **Adopt a clear protocol** for handling complaints that involve a Commissioner's or legislator's personal account, ensuring review only by PSC staff or independent contractors—not by the utility.
2. **Designate a third-party auditing entity** to receive, analyze, and verify all consumer billing data related to Docket 44280.
3. **Clarify communication boundaries** between Commissioners, staff, and regulated entities when a formal investigation is underway.
4. **Affirm to the public** that the PSC's process will remain independent and objective.

I am forwarding this letter not as an accusation but as a necessary measure to safeguard the impartiality and integrity of the Commission's work. My goal is to ensure that both consumers and regulated entities can have confidence that investigations are conducted transparently, ethically, and independently.

Thank you for your attention and for your continued service to the people of Georgia. I respectfully request a written clarification of the Commission's procedures for handling similar inquiries during ongoing investigations.

Sincerely,



**Representative Viola Davis**

Georgia House District 87

Vice Chair, DeKalb County House Delegation

**Attachments:**

- Copy of Commissioner Echols' email dated October 22, 2025



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**STANDING COMMITTEES**  
Health  
Insurance  
Natural Resources & Environment  
Urban Affairs  
Defense and Veterans Affairs

**October 27, 2025**

**VIA EMAIL AND REGISTERED MAIL – RETURN RECEIPT REQUESTED**

**To:**

Chairman and Commissioners  
Georgia Public Service Commission  
244 Washington Street SW  
Atlanta, Georgia 30334

**CC:**

Dr. Benjamin Deitchman, Assistant Director, Electric Unit – [bdeitchman@psc.ga.gov](mailto:bdeitchman@psc.ga.gov); Tom Krause — [tkrause@psc.ga.gov](mailto:tkrause@psc.ga.gov)  
Heidi Strain — [hstrain@psc.ga.gov](mailto:hstrain@psc.ga.gov)  
Robert Trokey — [rtrokey@psc.ga.gov](mailto:rtrokey@psc.ga.gov)

**Subject:** *Second Request – Ethical Concerns Regarding Direct Utility Access to Legislator's Account and Absence of Written Response*

Dear Chairman and Commissioners,

I am writing to express my continued concern regarding the ethical and procedural issues outlined in my previous correspondence dated **October 23, 2025**, titled “*Ethical Concerns Regarding Direct Utility Access to Legislator's Account – Request for Independent Review Protocols.*”

To date, I have not received a written acknowledgement or response confirming receipt of my letter, nor clarification of the Commission's protocols for overseeing such matters. The absence of an official response raises further questions about transparency and accountability in addressing complaints involving both public officials and regulated entities.

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*Second Request – Ethical Concerns Regarding Direct  
Utility Access to Legislator's Account and Absence of  
Written Response*

The matter at hand involves a Commissioner's direct request that I provide my personal Georgia Power account number to an employee of Southern Company, the very entity currently under review in **Docket 44280 (STF-PIA-36)**. This situation continues to present an unresolved ethical conflict, as it undermines the independence and objectivity required of any credible investigation into Georgia Power's Budget Billing practices.

Given the potential appearance of bias and the sensitivity of personally identifiable utility data, I respectfully renew my request that this issue be referred to a third outside agency for review to ensure fairness, transparency, and accountability. Specifically, I recommend consideration of one or more of the following independent entities:

1. **Georgia Office of the Inspector General (OIG)** – for impartial evaluation of the ethical implications.
2. **Georgia Attorney General's Office** – for review of applicable conflict-of-interest and consumer protection provisions.
3. **State Auditor or an Independent Investigative Firm** – to conduct an external review of complaint handling and billing practices tied to Docket 44280.

These measures would provide confidence to both the public and the regulated community that the Commission's oversight process remains beyond reproach.

I again request a written response confirming receipt of this correspondence and a formal explanation of how such ethical concerns are addressed procedurally within the Commission.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this serious matter and for your ongoing service to the citizens of Georgia.

Respectfully,



**Representative Viola Davis**  
Georgia House District 87  
Vice Chair, DeKalb County House Delegation