

# PEOPLE'S POWER UNION - WELCOME PACKET

## OUR VISION

**An authentic, sustainable energy democracy in Georgia.**

## OUR MISSION

The People's Power Union is a consumer union organizing a democratic and affordable clean energy future for Georgia by holding Georgia Power and the Georgia Public Service Commission accountable to the needs of the public.

## WE'RE HERE BECAUSE GEORGIA POWER IS FAILING US:

- They choose expensive fuels that give our kids asthma over cheap, clean energy.
- They rigged the system to guarantee them profits even when the economy is bad.
- They slow-walk renewable energy adoption, making climate change more destructive.

## HOW TO JOIN THE PEOPLE'S POWER UNION

Becoming a People's Power Union member is completely free and voluntary!

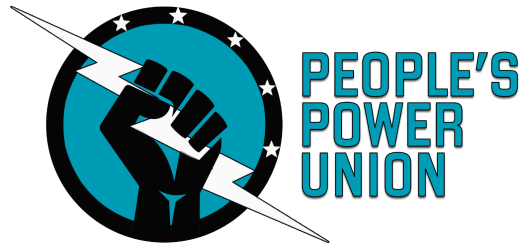
**All you have to do is sign [our People's Power Union Membership Pledge](#).**

### **We ask that union members support:**

1. Holding Georgia's Public Service Commission & Georgia Power Accountable
2. Building an Alternate Vision for Georgia Energy's Future
3. Speaking Out for Affordable Clean Energy

Members will get exclusive access to union events and meetings, special union swag, and education on how to save money on energy bills and what's driving bill increases. More importantly, members can build power together to win a better energy future.

As our membership grows, we plan to explore how we can more directly support members struggling with their utility bills, but we can only get there by growing the union large enough to share the load.



## **WE NEED THE PEOPLE'S POWER UNION.**

The union will be where people across this state come together to demand lower bills and safe energy. With input from everyone, the Union will also put forward our alternative to the power company's long-term vision. The **People's Power Plan** will outline how we build a better energy future for Georgia, and we will submit it as part of the 2025 Georgia Power Integrated Resource Plan process.

## **WHAT IF I GET MY ELECTRICITY THROUGH SOMEONE BESIDES GEORGIA POWER?**

Some Georgians get their electricity through something called an "Electric Membership Cooperative" or EMC. If this is you, Georgia Conservation Voters' EMC Organizer Deborah Opie would like to talk to you. Additionally, there are some cities that provide power to their residents directly, but everyone is still impacted by the Public Service Commission (PSC). For instance, everyone's bills went up because the PSC pushed the most expensive power plant in human history over cheaper, safer options.

## **HOW DO WE WIN?**

We're not here to lie to you. Our numbers are the only advantage we have over the company and the elected officials that take their money. We have to get organized. Every new member of the union can take immediate action to push us forward.

- [Officially join the Union by taking the Union Pledge.](#)**
- [Take the People's Power Plan Survey.](#)** This online survey will take around fifteen minutes to complete, but it's very important. We need at least 1,000 survey responses to build out the People's Power Plan - our alternative to Georgia Power. **Anyone who takes the survey is automatically entered into a drawing to win \$1,000 towards their utility bills!**
- Ask 3 friends to take the survey.** Don't forget to tell them about the drawing!
- [Sign up to tell the PSC how you feel and support the People's Power Plan at the May 27-30 Integrated Resource Plan Hearing in Atlanta.](#)**



## WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?

**The Public Service Commission (PSC)** is a five-person committee that is supposed to protect us from high utility bills and dangerous energy policies. Instead, it approves every expensive project that Georgia Power wants. It also approves the company's long-term plans—called the “Integrated Resource Plan”—that decide how much expensive fuel GA will use instead of low-cost, safe power. **Since 2023, the PSC voted for 6 bill increases, raising the average monthly bill by almost \$50.**

**Georgia Power** is owned by Southern Company, a corporation that rakes in billions a year in profits. They are the only electricity provider for nearly 3 million households and businesses in Georgia, and the only people who can hold them accountable are the Public Service Commissioners - and us. The PSC allows Georgia Power to rely on expensive, dangerous fuels, burning methane gas (48%) and coal (15%). **These costs get passed on to us in our bills, and Georgians pay the country's second-highest prices for natural gas.**

**December 2019** - Georgia Power raised customer rates by about \$1.8 billion over the next three years.

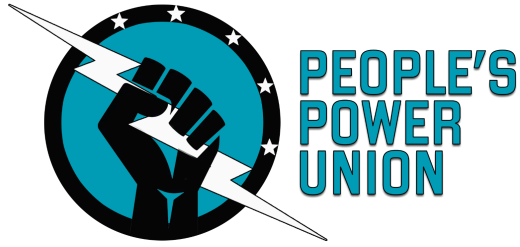
**July 2020** - Georgia Power “recouped” \$7.7 million in COVID-19 costs, adding those costs to energy bills and resumed shutting off power in the middle of the pandemic

**December 2022** - Georgia Power was granted another \$1.8 billion rate increase.

**May 2023** - Georgia Power customers will see their electric bills rise dramatically starting in June as the company begins to recoup \$2.1 billion in fuel costs.

**December 2023** - Georgia Power is allowed to recoup another \$7.56 billion from customers for Plant Vogtle (bringing the total price tag for the plant to over \$30 billion, more than twice what they originally said it would cost)

**January 2025** - A 3.5% rate increase raised the average household bill by \$5.48 per month.



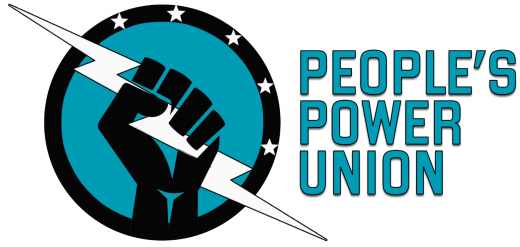
## **WHAT DO I REALLY NEED TO KNOW? GIVE ME THE BASICS.**

To get started with the PPU, these are the things you really need to know about the Public Service Commission (PSC).

- The PSC is a small yet influential elected board responsible for making critical decisions on issues ranging from raising electric bills, where railroads can be built, how many digits are in a phone number, and importantly - how we do or do not advance renewable energy development.
- The Commissioners on the PSC are the only five people in Georgia with legal authority over Georgia Power.
- They set the rates people pay for electricity and approve Georgia Power's plans for how to make or buy that power and deliver it to customers.
- By setting electricity rates, the PSC significantly affects people's daily lives and finances.
- One day, water utilities may also come under the authority of the PSC.
- In Georgia, average people are largely unaware of the PSC's impact and don't engage with the process as fully as they could.
- The future of clean energy depends on the decisions made by this commission.

These commissions shape utilities' climate change goals. Regulators review and either approve or deny proposals for building solar and wind farms, nuclear plants, and battery storage facilities. As Americans concerned about climate change, environmental justice, and energy affordability look for ways to make an impact, public utility regulators often go unnoticed despite their crucial role as decision-makers who could greatly influence the future of U.S. emissions.

We're here to change that and open a new front for working people.



## UTILITY ASSISTANCE IN GEORGIA

As a union, we're a family, and we want to support our members in any way we can. The following is a list of current utility assistance programs available to Georgia residents. We will work to keep this list updated and, over the longer term, grow these resources.

**The Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program** is a Federal Government program that can help low-income families to pay their energy bills. The program is managed by the Georgia Division of Family & Children Services and is available every year from November to May.

**The Salvation Army's Project SHARE** provides "emergency bill-payment assistance to individuals and families facing a temporary crisis that threatens their home." Last year, Project SHARE provided assistance to more than 50,000 Georgians. If you would like to apply, call 1.800.25SHARE. They take calls for assistance from 9-10 a.m. local time on Wednesday mornings. You can also try calling your power company's customer service number.

**The Heating Energy Assistance Team** distributes energy assistance funds to needy families. For more information call 404.656.6696 or your local Community Action Agency.

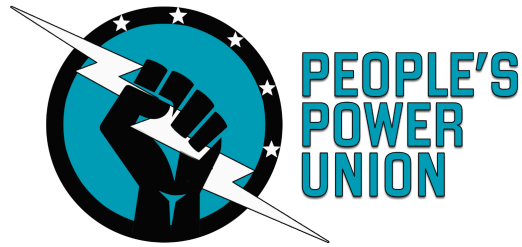
**Georgia Power's Senior Citizen Discount** gives customers that are 65 or older and meet income requirements up to \$24 off their monthly bills. Georgia Power also offers a FlatBill program, which allows you to pay a 12-month fixed price that does not fluctuate when your power usage does. Georgia Power's Prepay Program allows you to pay as you go with your PrePay account. As you use electricity, your balance is reduced. This flexibility allows you to better manage your budget and energy usage.

**The Georgia Environmental Finance Authority** distributes funds for weatherization assistance through Community Action Agencies for the repair or renovation of homes of low-income residents to make them more energy-efficient. For more information call 404.656.3826 or contact your local Community Action Agency.



## GLOSSARY

- **Georgia Power:** Georgia's largest electric utility company, serving over 2.6 million customers in 155 of Georgia's 159 counties.
- **Southern Company:** One of the largest power companies in the United States and the parent organization of Georgia Power. Primary power provider in Alabama and Mississippi as well.
- **Plant Vogtle:** A nuclear power plant near Augusta, Georgia. Construction of two new reactors—Unit 3 and Unit 4—began in 2009. Unit 3 entered service in 2023, with Unit 4 in 2024. Both units have experienced significant delays, and the total project cost has more than doubled during construction to over \$36 Billion.
- **Electric membership cooperative (EMC):** A member-owned utility that serves various regions of Georgia, particularly rural areas not covered by Georgia Power's service area. These utilities are not fully regulated by the PSC but are instead governed by their own boards.
- **Municipal Energy Authority of Georgia (MEAG):** An organization that provides electricity to municipal energy providers across Georgia.
- **Public Service Commission (PSC):** A public agency tasked with regulating utilities.
- **Rate:** The price per unit of electricity. Public utility commissions typically hold the final authority to approve these figures for investor-owned utilities.
- **Ratepayer:** A customer of an electric provider who pays for electricity rates.
- **Integrated resource plan (IRP):** A long-term strategy for a utility company to address its energy needs. In Georgia, the plan covers a 20-year period and is updated every three years with input from the PSC and various *stakeholders*.



- **Rate case:** The formal process used to determine the amounts to charge customers for electricity that they use. In Georgia, this happens every three years following the Integrated Resource Plan (IRP).
- **Intervenor:** A stakeholder or advocacy group that requests and is granted permission to provide input on a power company's plans before regulators. In Georgia, these groups have the right to cross-examine Georgia Power representatives before the PSC and present their own witnesses to offer input on the company's proposals.
- **Megawatt (MW):** A unit of power used to measure the energy output of large resources, such as a power plant or solar field. One megawatt is equivalent to one million watts.
- **Renewable energy:** Energy generated from wind, solar, and geothermal sources (the Earth's internal heat) is classified as 'renewable' because these resources are inexhaustible, unlike fossil fuels, which are limited and limited.
- **Clean or carbon-free energy:** Electricity produced without the use of fossil fuels.
- **Community solar:** Community-based solar energy programs that allow local residents and businesses to collaborate and share resources, making renewable energy more accessible and affordable than it would be for individual households.
- **Rooftop solar:** Solar panels installed on the roof of a home or business.
- **Energy efficiency:** The practice of using less energy to accomplish the same task or achieve the same result.
- **Energy burden:** The portion of household income allocated to energy bills.
- **Energy affordability:** The principle that consumers should be able to afford energy costs without compromising other essential living expenses.



Learn more about the Public Service Commission, Georgia Power, and what's really going on behind the scenes using the following resources:

### **Electricity Utilities**

- Georgia Power: [By the Numbers](#)

### **State & Local Climate & Energy Plans**

- [Atlanta Regional Commission \(ARC\) Atlanta MSA Priority Climate Action Plan](#)

### **Clean Energy & Climate Impact**

- [Integrated Resource Plan \(IRP\) Training by Southface, Partnership for Southern Equity, & Vote Solar](#)
- [Coal Ash: In Georgia, ratepayers face a big bill for coal ash cleanup, while a utility profits:](#)

### **Climate & Environmental Justice**

- [Council on Environmental Quality Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool](#) - Census tracts that are overburdened and underserved are highlighted on the map.

### **Electric Rates:**

- Bill Are Too High: [billsaretoohigh.com](#)
- [State regulators approve 12% Georgia Power rate hike to start this summer:](#)
- [Your Georgia Power Bill Is Going to Go Up \\$16 Next Month. Here's Why.:](#)
- [The 2022 Rate Case: Georgia Power's \\$2.9 Billion Ask:](#)

### **Organizing & Community Building**

- [The Commons: Social Change Library](#) - Resources and tools for social justice organizing:
- [Organizing: People, Power and Change](#) (Guide) (Multiple languages)
- [One-on-One Toolkit:](#)
- [Greenlink Equity Map - Process Guide For City-Community Collaboration:](#)

### **News Sources or Outlets to Follow**

- [E & E News](#) - [Grist](#) - [Canary Media](#) - [Floodlight](#) - [Inside Climate News](#) - [The Current](#) - [Coastal GA News](#) - [Power Magazine](#) - [Climate Town YouTube Channel](#)