Georgia Power Play: Rising Household Energy Bills and Record Utility Profits

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initiative for energy justice

Energy Equity Project

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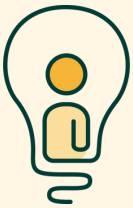

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ENERGY EQUITY PROJECT

Energy Equity Project is an organization dedicated to ensuring energy justice among Black, Brown, Indigenous, and low-income communities.

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OVERVIEW

Households across the U.S. are struggling with skyrocketing utility bills, which have increased by an average of 30% since 2019. The consequences are significant. Nearly 1 in 4 households have reported being unable to pay a utility bill in the prior year, and low-income households and communities of color are disproportionately impacted.[1]

Meanwhile, investor-owned utilities (IOUs) are bringing in exorbitant profits. The corporate utility regulatory model, which rewards utilities for pursuing costly capital infrastructure projects over energy-saving measures for customers, is a key driver of rising bills today.

Across the country, there are growing calls to make energy affordable and hold corporate utilities accountable. This moment presents a unique opportunity to channel these demands into effective mobilization, regulatory reform, and policy change. As states and regulators develop affordability solutions, equity must be at the center: these solutions should benefit the most vulnerable ratepayers.

This report focuses on the State of Georgia and its investor-owned utility, Georgia Power. In 2025, Georgia voters elected two new commissioners to the state's Public Service Commission (PSC), the entity that regulates Georgia Power. This presents new opportunities to hold Georgia Power accountable and rein in unaffordable energy bills.

KEY FINDINGS

- Between 2022–2024, Georgia Power raised residential electric rates a total of 6 times. As a result, the energy bills of Georgia Power customers went up by an average of $43/month, or $516/year.
- Low-income and Black households in Georgia experience high energy burdens and high energy insecurity, making them disproportionately impacted by energy bill increases.
- Georgia households living at or below 150% of the federal poverty level (FPL) experience an average energy burden of 15% – far exceeding the 6% threshold for affordability. This means more than 1 in every 7 dollars they earn goes toward paying their energy bills. For households at 0–100% of the poverty level, average energy burden rises to 21.1%.
- Black Georgians are disproportionately impacted by poverty and high energy burden. Due to legacies of systemic racism, Black households experience a poverty rate 2.1x higher than white households. In majority-BIPOC census tracts, 20% of households face energy burdens above the 6% threshold — five percentage points higher than in majority-white tracts (15%).
- Low-income households, Black households, households with children, and households with disabilities are disproportionately impacted, experiencing energy insecurity at rates of 69%, 58%, 52%, and 59% respectively.

KEY FINDINGS (CON'T)

- Georgia Power residential customers are collectively being charged $538 million more than they can afford, based on a 6% of household income threshold for energy affordability. This means that low-income households (below 150% FPL) on average are paying $1,189 more than they should annually.
- Meanwhile, the president of Georgia Power received a total compensation of nearly $6.2 million in 2024, and the CEO of Southern Company (which owns Georgia Power) received a total compensation of more than $23.8 million.
- Georgia Power has the 6th-highest profit margin among 110 investor-owned utilities in the United States, and its margin has risen sharply from 6.1% in 2021 to 22.6% in 2025. That means that today for a family with a $200 monthly electric bill, more than $45 goes to utility profit.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Georgia Public Service Commission has the ability to adopt and enforce regulations that protect the most vulnerable populations, rein in corporate profits, and lower bills by accelerating the transition to clean energy. The Commission should:

1. Expand bill assistance and shut-off protection programs for low-income and vulnerable households to help lower energy burdens.

2. Rein in Georgia Power's profits and create incentives to keep bills affordable.

3. Encourage low-cost clean energy by removing barriers to rooftop solar and storage and expanding community solar.

4. Dramatically increase energy efficiency programs that reduce overall consumption and home energy bills.

5. Require transparency and protect residential ratepayers from the costs of speculative data center development.

1. INTRODUCTION

Rising electricity bills are deepening economic hardship for households across the country. Today, residential customers are paying on average nearly 30% more for their electric bills than they were in 2019, with rate increases outpacing inflation and creating a higher energy burden for low-income households.[2] In many states, customers are experiencing back-to-back rate hikes multiple years in a row,[3] and in some cases, rates going up multiple times a year.[4] These trends appear poised to continue. In 2025, utilities requested $31 billion in rate increases, more than double the amount requested during the previous year.[5] As a result, 81 million customers are expected to see higher bills.

These trends are affecting customers across geographies and demographics, but low-income households and communities of color experience disproportionate impacts. Black, Hispanic, and Indigenous households pay higher portions of their income on energy than white households,[6] even when controlling for income, and Black households experience higher shut-off rates when they fall behind on their utility bills.[7]

> In 2025, utilities requested $31 billion in rate increases, more than double the amount requested during the previous year

While everyday people are struggling to pay their utility bills, investor-owned utilities (IOUs) are profiting at record levels. A recent analysis of 110 investor-owned utilities revealed that between 2021 and 2024, investor-owned utilities made a cumulative $186 billion in profit. And across those four years, their profits steadily increased, from $38.8 billion in 2021 to $52.5 billion in 2024.[8]

There is growing momentum to demand affordable energy and hold utilities accountable. Across the country, we are seeing state-based efforts to fight rate hikes, as well as new national coalitions working to align on messaging that targets utility profits and power. Energy affordability was also a key issue in statewide races during the 2025 election season. Notably, New Jersey's governor-elect Mikie Sherrill ran on a promise to declare a "state of emergency on utility costs" and to freeze rates on her first day in office,[9] and Virginia's gubernatorial winner, Abigail Spanberger, campaigned with her Affordable Virginia Plan,[10] which included a significant focus on reining in electricity costs.[11]

In Georgia, the election of two new commissioners to the state's Public Service Commission, the entity that regulates investor-owned utilities, was perhaps the most pointed indication that household energy costs are becoming a major concern for voters. The candidates, who campaigned against rising utility prices and corporate greed, were elected by significant margins and were the first challengers to unseat incumbent PSC commissioners in nearly two decades.[12] Together, these trends indicate that household energy costs are becoming a salient political issue for voters across the country.

AIMS OF THIS REPORT

This moment presents a unique opportunity to channel the growing demands for affordable energy and utility accountability into effective mobilization, regulatory reform, and policy change. To meet this moment, it will be critical to ensure that affordability solutions reach the most vulnerable ratepayers, and are tailored to the unique needs and opportunities in local and state contexts. This report builds on the calls for energy affordability that are resonating with ratepayers across the country, and offers two additional contributions for advancing equitable affordability solutions.

1. Achieving more affordable household energy requires clarity around what "affordable" means, and which populations are most harmed by rising utility bills. In this report, we bring an explicit equity lens to the current affordability conversation, contextualizing rising utility rates with data on household energy insecurity and energy burdens experienced by different demographic groups.

2. Translating demands for affordable energy into effective solutions will require identifying the regulatory and policy levers most pertinent in specific local and state contexts. In this report, we home in on key regulatory opportunities for Public Service Commissions (PSCs) to provide immediate relief and long-term solutions for households affected by energy insecurity, high energy burdens, and unaffordable utility bills.

In the sections that follow, we highlight the disjuncture between rising household utility bills and rising profits for corporate utilities. We outline the importance of understanding household energy insecurity and energy burdens when developing equitable affordability solutions. We then present a case study of the State of Georgia and its investor-owned utility, Georgia Power, detailing the impact that rising bills have on residents across the state. We also lift up a series of regulatory actions to rein in runaway corporate profits and make energy affordable for everyday Georgians. We then conclude with a series of takeaways for advocates, regulators, and policymakers seeking to advance affordability and accountability efforts more broadly.

2. RISING ENERGY BILLS: WHO IS HARMED AND WHO PROFITS?

As energy bills rise across much of the country, not all households are impacted equally. Households experiencing high energy burdens, chronic energy insecurity, and utility service shut-offs are especially burdened by rising utility rates and energy bills. At the same time, utility investors and executives are walking away with guaranteed profits and high salaries. In this section, we unpack the two parts of this problematic asymmetry: who bears the burden – and who secures the benefit – of rising energy costs.

UNDERSTANDING ENERGY BURDEN, ENERGY INSECURITY, AND SERVICE SHUT-OFFS

ENERGY BURDEN

Energy burden refers to the percentage of total income that a household spends on electricity, heating, and cooling costs. A household is considered energy burdened if it spends more than 6% of household income on energy costs, and is deemed severely burdened if it spends more than 10% of household income on energy costs.

One in four U.S. households experience a high energy burden, and low-income households are disproportionately impacted.[13] Households with low incomes spend nearly three times more of their income to meet their energy needs when compared to other households. One quarter of low-income households experience energy burdens above 15.2%, which is far above the threshold that constitutes a severe burden.[14]

> *Black households are estimated to spend 43% more of their income on energy needs, Hispanic households 20% more, and Native American households 45% more.*

Data at the national level also points to racial disparities in energy burdens.[15] In comparison with white households, Black households are estimated to spend 43% more of their income on energy needs, Hispanic households 20% more, and Native American households 45% more. These disparities stem from various root causes, including socio-economic inequality and legacies of racialized housing segregation that exclude many low-income people and communities of color from access to well-maintained, weatherized, and energy-efficient housing.[16]

Attention to energy burdens is crucial for ensuring energy affordability measures benefit the most vulnerable households. Populations with high energy burdens are disproportionately impacted by rate increases and high energy bills. Rising bills are likely to force these households to make ever more difficult tradeoffs to meet their basic needs. As a result, affordability solutions should aim not only to keep bills low, but within the established energy burden threshold of 6% of household income.

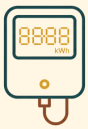
ENERGY INSECURITY

Another important measure of inequality is energy insecurity, which refers to the inability to meet household energy needs.[17] When faced with unaffordable energy bills, many households must make difficult tradeoffs and sacrifices to keep their lights on. In many cases, they turn to coping strategies that put their well-being at risk, including:

- Reducing their energy usage by keeping homes at unhealthy or uncomfortable temperatures.
- Forgoing food, medicine, transportation, or other daily essentials.
- Using dangerous alternative heating sources, such as gas ovens or poorly ventilated gas generators.
- Incurring debt, which may have long-term consequences for credit scores and economic stability.

When households experience energy insecurity, these coping behaviors may help to lower their overall energy bill – and as a result, their total energy burden – but at a significant cost to their health, well-being, and overall economic stability.

> *The fact that many households cut back their energy use to unhealthy and uncomfortable levels means that energy burdens are an inherent underestimate of the impact that high energy bills have for low-income households.*



The fact that many households cut back their energy use to unhealthy and uncomfortable levels means that energy burdens are an inherent underestimate of the impact that high energy bills have for low-income households. When considering affordability measures through an equity lens, energy insecurity provides an important and more holistic indication of how people's lives are impacted by high energy bills. Nationally, nearly 1 in 3 households experience some form of energy insecurity.[18]

SERVICE SHUT-OFFS

The implications of high energy burdens and energy insecurity are stark. When customers fall behind on their bills, many face having their electricity disconnected by their utility. In 2026, the U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA) released a new national report on shut-offs that includes the most comprehensive data collected on shut-offs to date.[19] The EIA reports that 15.1 million shut-offs occurred in 2024 (13.4 million electric and 1.7 million gas). In addition, utilities sent approximately 122 million final shut-off notices that year (94.9 million for electric and 27.1 million for gas) – indicating the enormous number of households at imminent risk of having their power disconnected. Disconnections have also been shown to disproportionately affect people of color. Even when controlling for income, studies indicate that Black households are disproportionately likely to experience a shut-off due to nonpayment.[20]

In today's day and age, energy is a basic necessity of human life. When utility companies cut off a household's electricity, people face damaging consequences. Among them, they lose the ability to keep their home at a safe temperature, to refrigerate food and prepare meals, to power life-sustaining medical devices, to charge phones or use computers, and to wash and dry clothes.

> *A lack of adequate electricity, heating, or cooling can lead to or exacerbate an array of physical and psychological health problems, such as respiratory and cardiovascular illnesses, diabetes and kidney disease, hypothermia or heat stroke, and emotional distress.*

A lack of adequate electricity, heating, or cooling can lead to or exacerbate an array of physical and psychological health problems, such as respiratory and cardiovascular illnesses, diabetes and kidney disease, hypothermia or heat stroke, and emotional distress.[21] Indoor extreme heat is particularly deadly.[22] Shut-offs can also lead to increased rates of carbon monoxide poisoning when people pursue alternative means to keep warm, such as heating their homes with a gas stove, oven, or an improperly ventilated generator. For many, losing access to heating and cooling can become a matter of life and death,[23] and research has shown that utility disconnection moratoria have the potential to save lives.[24] Some argue that, with the loss of energy having such devastating consequences, shut-offs are an unsafe and inhumane practice.

UNDERSTANDING THE CORPORATE UTILITY PROFIT MODEL

While utilities continue to raise rates – with real consequences for human lives and livelihoods – they also continue to increase their profits.

Nearly three-quarters of U.S. electric customers are served by investor-owned utilities (IOUs). As regulated monopolies, these private utility companies are allowed to operate without competition in their service areas, but are subject to oversight and regulation in the rate-setting process. When the U.S. began to electrify more than a century ago, this regulatory model made sense as a way to efficiently expand access to a crucial service without the construction of multiple redundant grids from competing utilities. In attempts to keep these monopolies accountable, the government established a regulatory compact to provide oversight. Today, this regulation takes place through Public Service Commissions (PSCs),[25] which in principle exist to ensure balance between the utility's financial viability and keeping the utility's cost allocation and proposed rates "just and reasonable" for customers. Despite the intent to ensure fairness for electric customers, corporate utilities have become extremely powerful entities able to exert significant influence in the regulatory process for the purpose of maximizing their profits.

While household energy bills are going up due to a variety of factors – including fluctuating fuel costs, increasing load growth, and regulatory decisions around rate design – the striking increase in utility costs in recent years is also the consequence of the outdated regulatory model and profit motives of corporate utilities. The regulatory model drives up rates and bills for everyday customers in several ways:

- **Excessive rates of return.** Return on equity (ROE) refers to the amount of profit utilities are authorized to collect from capital investments. The ROE is set by Public Service Commissions as part of the rate case process. The ROE is intended to reflect the return needed for the utility to attract enough capital to build and maintain a reliable system, while keeping costs fair and reasonable for customers. In practice, however, PSCs often decide the ROE by benchmarking with similar utilities rather than considering the specific capital needs of and business risks to the utility.[26] This has kept ROEs arbitrarily high across the board, at a national average of 9.7%. They are passed on to customers, making up a significant portion of their bills. According to RMI, ROE represents 15–20% of customer bills and even a 1% reduction in ROE could save electric customers across the country $4 billion.[27] Analysis of the average expected return from investment firms suggests utilities could still attract sufficient capital at an ROE of 6.7%.[28]

- **Capital Expenditure (CapEx) Bias.** The corporate utility regulatory model incentivizes utilities to pursue capital-intensive infrastructure projects, rather than energy-saving measures for customers. The vast majority of corporate utility profits stem from the return on equity (ROE) associated with infrastructure investments. This leads to a phenomenon referred to as capital expenditure (CapEx) bias. The more utilities invest in new or upgraded infrastructure, the higher their shareholder earnings will be. This incentivizes utilities to prioritize big spending on capital expenditures, rather than cost-effective investments that can also keep bills low for their customers, such as energy efficiency, demand response, and distributed energy resources. As a result of CapEx bias, utilities often pursue costly infrastructure buildout projects and pass the costs to customers through higher rates.

- **Continued investment in fossil fuels and underinvestment in distributed energy resources.** The corporate utility model favors continued reliance on fossil fuel infrastructure as opposed to distributed, renewable energy resources. Capital expenditure bias incentivizes corporate utilities to continue investing in the same type of major infrastructure that they have historically – polluting gas plants, extremely expensive nuclear reactors, and the build out of poles and wires for transmission. While distributed energy resources (such as solar, storage, and demand response) are cheaper to build, produce fewer carbon emissions, and provide significant savings for households, they produce less financial return for utilities under the current, outdated regulatory model.

- **Climate change and disaster recovery costs.** Climate change is leading to more frequent and severe extreme weather events and is posing significant threats to grid infrastructure. Across the country, utilities are making significant investments to harden the grid, or to rebuild after disasters. In many cases, these costs are being passed on to ratepayers through household rate increases. In wildfire prone states like California and Oregon, hardening the grid to wildfires is driving significant rate increases.[29] Across the Southeast and Gulf South, billions in hurricane recovery costs are being passed on to customers.

The regulatory model for investor-owned utilities has not transformed to meet the conditions of today. Despite the urgent need to address climate change through a transition to clean energy, and to ensure households can meet their basic energy needs with affordable bills, the current model remains structured around perverse profit incentives. This model points to the need not only for programs and policies that make energy more affordable, but also regulatory changes that can rein in corporate utility profits and ensure greater accountability.

> *Despite the urgent need to address climate change through a transition to clean energy, and to ensure households can meet their basic energy needs with affordable bills, the current model remains structured around perverse profit incentives*

EXCESSIVE UTILITY PROFITS & CEO SALARIES

While households across the country experience chronic energy insecurity and struggle to keep up with rising bills, corporate utilities are bringing in exorbitant profits. Since 2021, IOUs have cumulatively made more than $200 billion in profit.[30] Analysis from the Energy & Policy Institute shows that between 2021 and 2024, utilities kept an average of 13% of a customer's bill as profit, and preliminary data from 2025 shows this share has increased to almost 15%. That means for a customer with a $200 electricity bill, $30 goes directly to profit investors. For some utilities, this rate is drastically higher. In 2025 it surpassed 27% for Florida Power & Light and MidAmerican Energy, 26% for SoCal Edison, and 22% for Georgia Power.

As these profit shares go up, utility CEOs are receiving exorbitant salaries. In 2024, the ten highest paid corporate utility CEOs each received compensation between $13 and $21 million annually, with many receiving multi-million dollar raises from the previous year.[31] Cumulatively, the CEOs of 54 major utilities made over $530 million.

3. CASE STUDY GEORGIA POWER

Over the last several years, households in the State of Georgia have been grappling with skyrocketing utility bills, while Georgia Power brings in excessive profit.

The recent election of two commissioners to the state's Public Service Commission (PSC) creates a new opportunity to hold the utility accountable and provide relief for the large proportion of Georgia households struggling with high energy burdens and energy insecurity. In the following case study, we detail how residential electricity bills have gone up, analyze the impact of energy burden and energy insecurity for Georgia households, and present key actions the PSC can take to lower people's bills.

BACKGROUND

Georgia Power is an investor-owned utility serving 2.8 million customers in Georgia. It is a subsidiary of Southern Company, one of the largest and most profitable utilities in the United States, which serves 9 million electric customers across six states. Georgia Power and Southern Company both wield incredible political power. This influence has been used to shape state regulatory proceedings, achieving an allowable rate of return for Georgia Power above the national average. It has also been used to entrench support for fossil fuel interests. One recent investigation found that over the last 60 years, Southern Company spent approximately $62 million to spread climate misinformation and denial.[32]

Recently, Georgia gained national attention when voters elected two new commissioners to the state's Public Service Commission (PSC), the entity that regulates Georgia Power. This PSC election was significant for several reasons. In Georgia, PSC elections take place statewide, even though elected commissioners represent specific districts. While two of these districts favor Democratic candidates, the five PSC seats had long been controlled by Republican commissioners. In 2022 and 2024, scheduled elections for new commissioners were delayed when the NAACP brought a lawsuit arguing that these statewide elections diluted the power of Black voters in Georgia.[33] While the case moved through the courts, incumbent PSC commissioners stayed in their seats for years beyond their elected terms.

When PSC elections resumed in 2025, two Democratic candidates, who campaigned against rising utility prices and corporate greed, were elected by the biggest margins the Democratic Party has seen in a statewide election in Georgia in over 20 years,[34] and it was the first time challengers in Georgia unseated incumbent commissioners in nearly two decades.[35] In an off-year election, it was remarkable that Georgia voters turned out in such large numbers and sent a decisive message for change to what is typically an obscure and little-known regulatory body. With two new commissioners in place, Georgia now has a unique opportunity for regulatory change to help deliver affordable energy and rein in corporate profits.

RISING RATES, SKYROCKETING BILLS

Analysis of the period from 2020–2025 shows that Georgia Power customers experienced frequent, burdensome rate increases that have driven up their monthly electric bills. As a result of these rate hikes approved by the PSC, **Georgia households are now paying an average of $43 more each month – or $516 each year – to keep their lights on.**

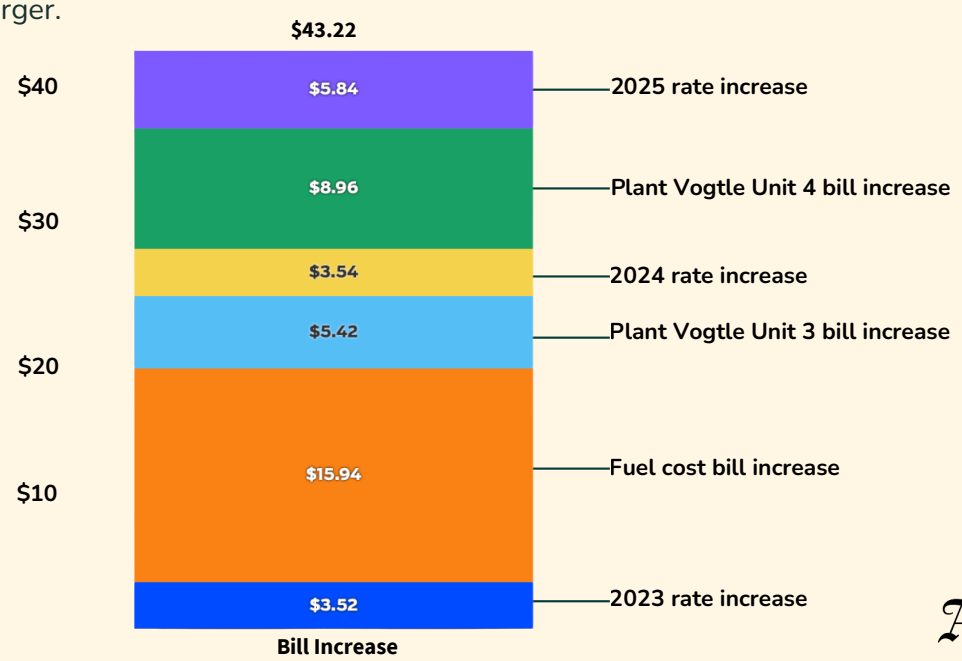
While some of these increases were approved as part of standard rate case proceedings,[36] others reflect the consequences of mismanaged fuel and capital cost projections by Georgia Power:

1 The single largest driver of monthly bill increases for Georgia households during this period reflects fuel cost recovery from reliance on volatile and expensive methane gas (i.e. "natural gas"). In May 2023, the PSC approved a special rate increase to recover $6.6 billion in fuel costs over three years.[37] This came after Georgia Power under-recovered $2.1 billion during the 2022 natural gas price spike.[38] This rate increase resulted in an average monthly bill increase of $15.94 for households in Georgia Power service territory. In this scenario, Georgia Power customers bear all of the risk of an unpredictable fossil fuel market, while the utility still earns its guaranteed return on equity.

2 The second largest driver of monthly bill increases came with the completion of two new nuclear reactors at Plant Vogtle, the most expensive nuclear project in U.S. history. Due to years of mismanagement and limited regulatory review from the PSC, the project experienced massive cost overruns and delays. The total cost came to approximately $35 billion, far surpassing the $14 billion originally budgeted, and its completion came seven years behind schedule.[39] With two special rate increases to cover these runaway costs, Georgia households are again paying the price. The Plant Vogtle boondoggle has driven up the average monthly household electric bill by $14.38.

Georgia Power bill increases since 2023

A series of six rate increases since the start of 2023 means a Georgia Power residential customer using 1,000 kilowatt-hours of electricity a month can expect to pay $43 more on their monthly power bills. For residences that use more power, the bill increases will be much larger.



Source: Adapted from Atlanta Journal-Constitution, August 12, 2025

A total of six back-to-back rate increases, occurring in a short time span from 2022–2024, mean that Georgia Power customers are now paying an average of $43 more per month on their electric bills, a 35% increase. **The average monthly residential bill for Georgia Power customers is now estimated to be $171, with summertime averages reaching as high as $266 per month.**[40] It is important to note that this average reflects a monthly usage of 1,000 kWh of electricity, but average household consumption in Georgia is likely higher than this benchmark – meaning many households will see even higher bills.[41] This is of special concern for low-income and vulnerable households living in poorly insulated and energy-inefficient housing, who must use much larger amounts of electricity to keep their homes at safe and comfortable temperatures.

Adding to this existing strain, Georgia Power customers are likely to see their bills continue to rise. In July 2025, the PSC authorized a freeze on base rates through 2028, which Georgia Power marketed as customer relief. However, this freeze only applies to the base rates, and excludes the very costs that have driven the steepest increases in recent years: fuel costs, ongoing cost recovery for Plant Vogtle, and storm recovery. [42]

Without intervention by the PSC, additional increases are likely on the horizon:

1. Hurricane Helene caused an estimated $1.1 billion in damage to utility infrastructure in Georgia.[43] In February 2026, Georgia Power requested authorization to recover $912 million in storm damage costs from customers. If approved by the PSC, this would increase average customer bills by $4.42 per month for four years.[44] While the PSC is conducting an audit to determine "reasonable and prudent" costs, this would represent another major increase for customers already stretched thin.

2. In December 2025, the PSC unanimously approved Georgia Power's request for nearly 10,000 megawatts of new energy capacity,[45] over a 50% increase from all of their existing generating capacity, primarily to serve projected data center demand.[46] The PSC set no caps on spending and did not require the company to explore lower-cost renewable alternatives. As a result, customers are expected to pay $50–60 billion over the coming decades in construction costs, interest, and guaranteed utility profit.[47] Advocates warn this speculative expansion leaves residential customers bearing the financial risk if projected data center demand fails to materialize,[48] while locking them into decades of natural gas price volatility through five new fossil fuel plants. [49]

The current regulatory structure allows Georgia Power to pass massive costs onto customers with limited oversight and accountability. Meanwhile, customers bear all the risk of cost overruns, project delays, and fuel price volatility, while having little say in decisions about their energy future.

ENERGY BURDENS, ENERGY INSECURITY, AND UTILITY PROFITS IN GEORGIA

Across the State of Georgia, households are struggling with unaffordable energy bills, high energy burdens, and chronic energy insecurity – all while Georgia Power brings in excessive profits.

Our analysis of key energy equity indicators reveals notable disparities between demographic groups. Across the state, low-income and Black households experience high or severely high energy burdens, while low-income households, Black households, and households with children and disabilities are affected by widespread and chronic energy insecurity. Over 1 in 10 households (13.3%) in Georgia have incomes below the 100% Federal Poverty Level (FPL) threshold. These conditions mean that rising energy bills are especially burdensome and harmful to these communities.

STRUCTURAL ROOTS OF ENERGY INEQUITY IN GEORGIA

In Georgia, energy inequity is shaped by a long history of structural racism and socio-economic exclusion. Histories of enslavement, Black land dispossession, Jim Crow segregation and other discriminatory policies have produced enduring racial inequalities and a significant racial wealth divide. Decades of redlining in the mid-20th century cut Black communities off from mortgage access, massively curtailing Black homeownership and wealth building.[50] Urban renewal and highway construction in Atlanta bisected thriving Black neighborhoods and severed them from economic opportunity. Discriminatory lending practices, which persist to this day, continue to limit Black housing opportunities and home upgrade investments.[51] And disinvestment in formerly redlined areas has meant less green space, hotter neighborhoods, and higher home cooling costs.[52]

As a result of discriminatory institutions and policies, Black Georgians today experience poverty at a rate 2.1x higher than white Georgians. The racial wealth divide is similarly stark: the median wealth for Black households is just $10,000, compared to $146,000 for white households.[53] This context of racial and socio-economic exclusion is key to understanding the patterns of energy burden and energy insecurity we see today across the state.

ENERGY BURDENS

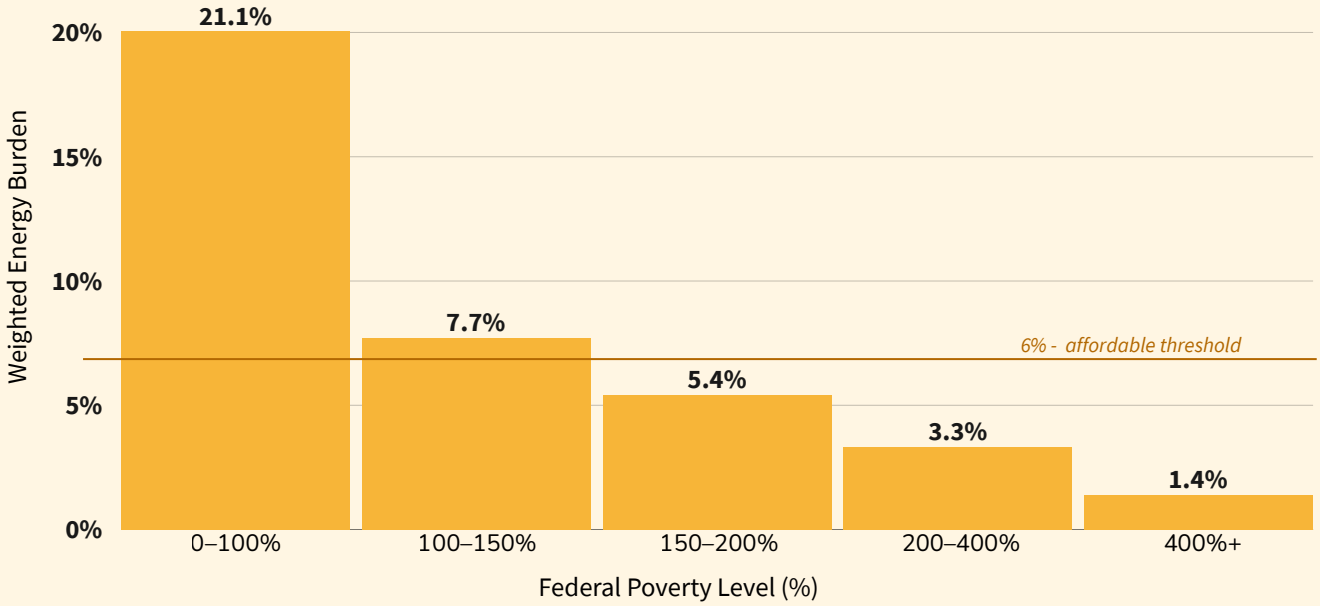
One in five households in Georgia experiences a high energy burden, meaning they pay more than 6% of their income on energy bills. Low-income and Black Georgians are disproportionately affected.

Low-income households in Georgia face severe and disproportionate energy burdens

Low-income households in Georgia experience disproportionately high energy burdens. Georgia households living below 150% of the federal poverty level ($41,000 for a household of 3) experience an average energy burden of 15% – far above the 6% threshold for affordability.[54] This constitutes a severe burden, and means over 1 in every 7 dollars they earn goes toward paying their energy bills. For households in the lowest income bracket (0–100% of the federal poverty level), the average energy burden is even more severe at 21.1% – meaning more than 1 in every 5 dollars earned goes toward paying energy bills.

Figure 1: Disproportionate Energy Burdens Affect Lower-Income Households

Weighted mean energy burden by income level – Georgia Power territory, Georgia (2024 est)



Source: DOE LEAD v4 (2022); electricity costs projected to 2024 via EIA 861 rate change; income via ACS B 19013

Collectively, Georgia Power residential customers are being charged $538 million more than they can afford to pay

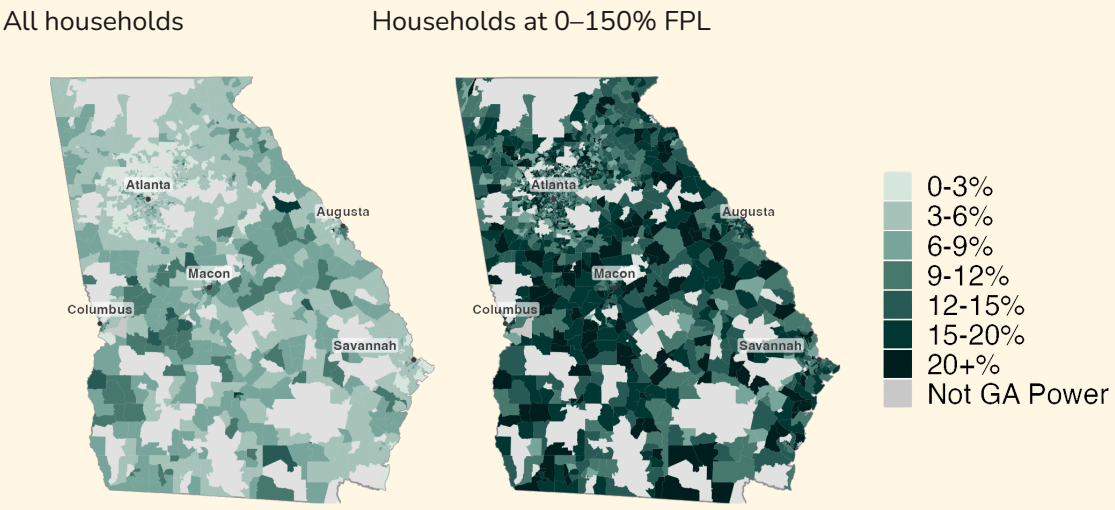
The difference between what Georgia Power customers currently spend on energy bills, and what they would spend at a 6% affordability threshold amounts to $538 million per year. At the household level, this means that households living at 0–150% of the federal poverty level are charged on average $1,189 more than they should annually. Referred to as the Home Energy Affordability Gap (HEAG), this figure reflects the dollar difference needed to achieve energy affordability for Georgia Power customers. Closing this gap would make an enormous material difference for low-income households, while representing only a fraction of the profit Georgia Power and its parent company, Southern Co. make each year.

Low-income energy burdens are widespread across rural and urban areas

The geographic distribution of energy burdens across all Georgia households (**First Map of Figure 2**) reveals that many of the most severe burdens are found in the Black Belt. Stretching east-west across central Georgia, this region is historically characterized by a concentration of cotton plantations and a large enslaved population, and presently by significant Black populations and high poverty rates.[55] Pockets of severe energy burden in this region reflect the state's compounding legacies of enslavement, poverty, and geographic isolation in shaping energy inequity.

The spatial distribution of energy burdens for low-income households, meanwhile, shows that severe energy burdens are widespread across the state (**Second Map of Figure 2**). The vast majority of census tracts in Georgia Power territory – spanning both rural and urban areas – are impacted by high energy burdens exceeding 9%. This pattern reveals the high prevalence and wide geographic reach of severe energy burdens in nearly all corners of the state.

Figure 2: Energy Burden by Census Tract – Georgia Power Territory (2024 est.)



Source: DOE LEAD v4 (2022); electricity costs projected to 2024 via EIA 861 rate change; income via ACS B 19013

BIPOC households in Georgia face both high poverty and high energy burden

At the aggregate level, predominantly BIPOC areas experience higher energy burdens than predominantly-white areas. When comparing majority-BIPOC and majority-white census tracts across the state, majority-BIPOC tracts have a weighted mean burden of 5.1%, versus 4.1% in majority-white tracts.[56] The share of households exceeding the commonly cited 6% affordability threshold is also higher: 20% versus 15%.

Table 1: Aggregate Energy Burden by Tract Racial Composition

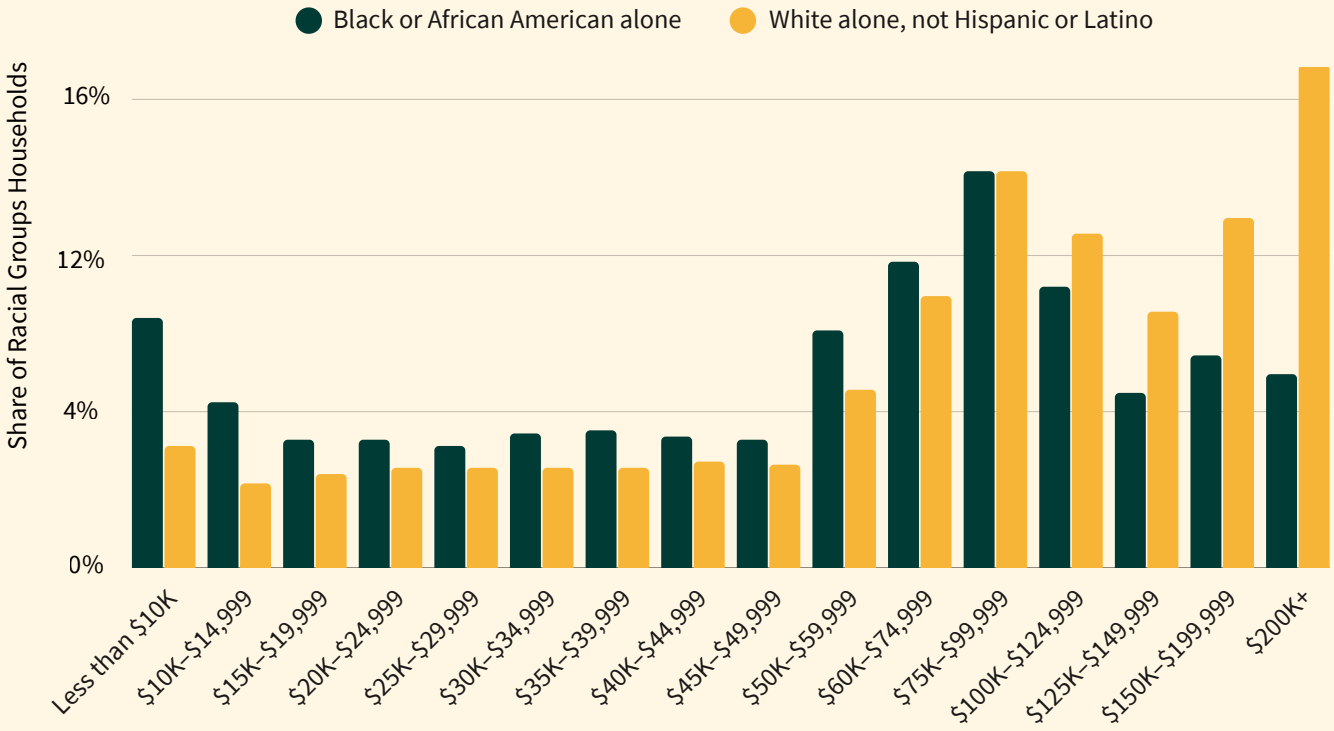
Tract type	Wgt. mean burden (%)	Median burden (%)	Total households	% above 6% threshold
Majority BIPOC	**5.14**	**3.98**	**1,303,062**	**20.0**
Majority white	**4.10**	**4.17**	**1,473,630**	**14.7**

Source: DOE LEAD v4 (2022), projected to 2024. Burden = estimated annual energy cost ÷ estimated annual household income.

Households at 0–100% of the federal poverty level across the two tract types experience nearly equal energy burdens, hovering close to 21% (20.7% in majority-BIPOC tracts and 21.5% in majority-white census tracts). While household energy burdens are nearly equivalent for white and Black Georgians living at the very lowest income levels, drivers of severe energy burden in Georgia cannot be explained by income alone. In Georgia, legacies of enslavement, segregation, and structural discrimination have sorted many Black Georgians into the lowest income brackets and foreclosed opportunities to build wealth.

Black households in Georgia Power's service territory face a poverty rate of 18.7%, compared to 8.9% for white (non-Hispanic) households, and Black households are 2.1× more likely to live below the federal poverty line. In this context, Black households are disproportionately impacted by a dual burden of poverty and high energy burden.

Figure 3: Household Income Distribution by Race – Georgia Power Territory (2024 ACS)



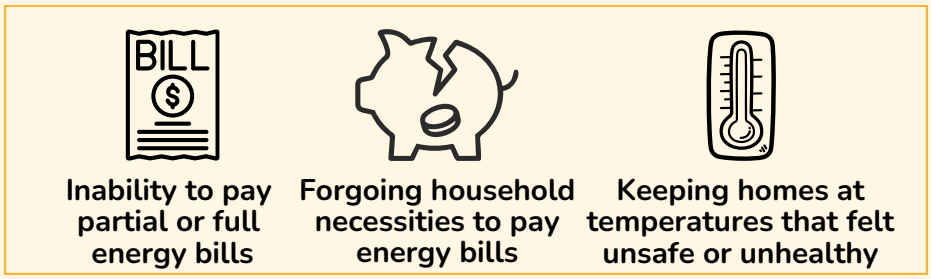
Source: ACS 5-year estimates, 2024. Tables B19001B (Black) and B19001H (White-NH). Territory tracts only.

These patterns underscore that for the most economically vulnerable customers in Georgia Power service territory, electric costs are not merely a line item, they are a source of deep and persistent financial hardship.

ENERGY INSECURITY

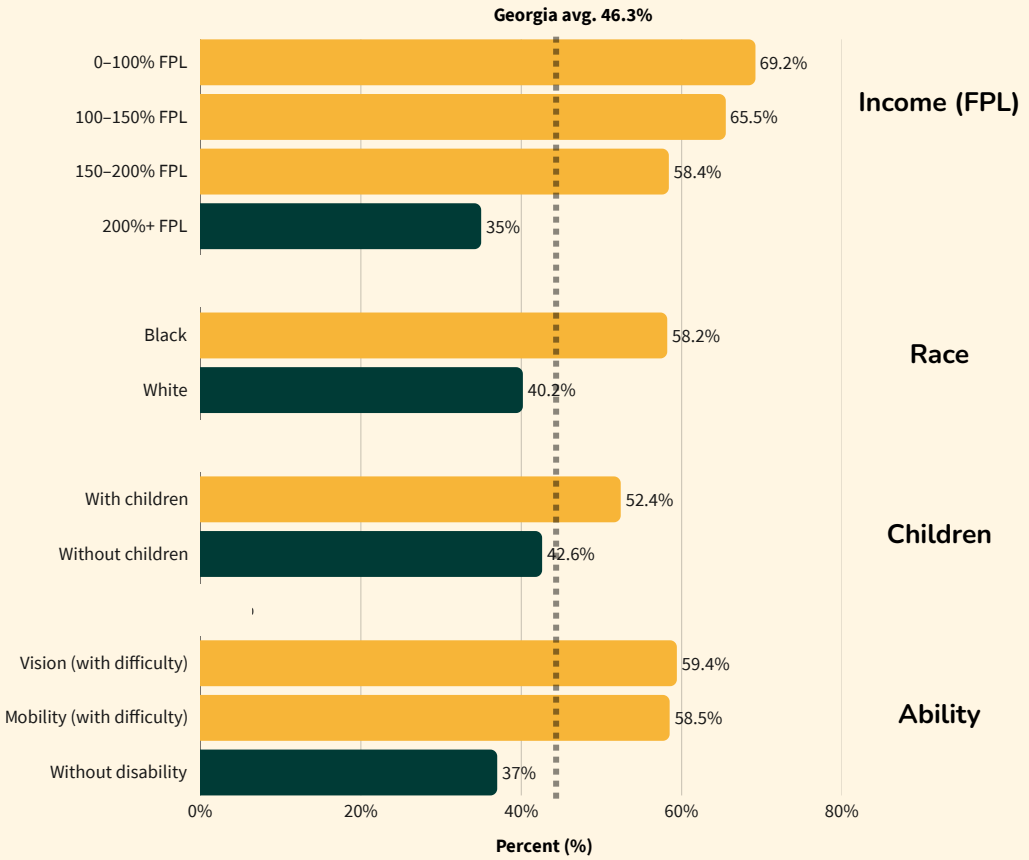
Energy insecurity, or a person's inability to meet household energy needs,[57] is widespread, consistent, and chronic in the State of Georgia. Here, we measure energy insecurity through three indicators in the U.S. Census Household Pulse Survey:[58] 1.) Inability to pay partial or full energy bills; 2.) Forgoing other household necessities in order to pay energy bills; 3.) Keeping homes at temperatures that felt unsafe or unhealthy.

Indicators of Energy Insecurity



In the 2023–2024 study year, 46% of Georgia households experienced at least one of these three indicators of energy insecurity. Twenty-five percent of Georgians reported that they were unable to pay partial or full energy bills, 37% reported forgoing other household needs to make energy bill payments, and 23% reported keeping their homes at unsafe or unhealthy temperatures.

Figure 4: Household Energy Insecurity (at least 1 of 3 hardships) – Georgia Power Territory, Georgia
Weighted shares of households experiencing hardship, by demographics (2023–2024)



Source: Household Pulse Survey, US Census Bureau. FPL tiers derived from income bracket midpoints and HHS poverty guidelines. With difficulty groups (some or a lot); without disability group (no vision or mobility difficulty). Dashed line = GA statewide avg.

For many households, these experiences of energy insecurity combine. More than 1 in 10 households experienced all three energy insecurity risks at some point during the year, while 4–9% of households face these conditions almost every month.

Income is the sharpest dividing line

The deepest disparities are driven by income. Households living below the Federal Poverty Level (0–100% FPL) experience energy insecurity at nearly double the statewide rate (69% vs 46%). Almost half (47%) of these households report being unable to pay their energy bill, compared to just 14% of households above 200% FPL. The gap is similarly clear for households keeping homes at unsafe temperatures: 37% vs 17%.

Racial disparities compound income effects

Black households in Georgia face energy insecurity at a rate of 58%. This is 12 percentage points above the statewide average (46%) and 18 points higher than white households (40%). The starkest racial gap appears in bill payment hardship: 39% of Black households report being unable to pay energy bills, more than double the rate for white households (17%). The gap narrows but persists for keeping homes at unsafe temperatures (25% vs 21%), suggesting that bill affordability and housing quality are primary factors in this racial disparity.

> *The starkest racial gap appears in bill payment hardship: 39% of Black households report being unable to pay energy bills, more than double the rate for white households (17%).*

Households with children face elevated risk

The financial pressures of raising children significantly compound energy insecurity challenges. Families with children report energy insecurity at 52%, about 10 points higher than households without children. The bill payment gap is especially pronounced: 33% of households with children cannot pay their energy bills, compared to 19% of those without, showcasing a 14-point difference. That means households with children are 74% more likely to face bill payment challenges than households without children.

> *Households with children are 74% more likely to face bill payment challenges than households without children.*

Households with disabilities disproportionately impacted

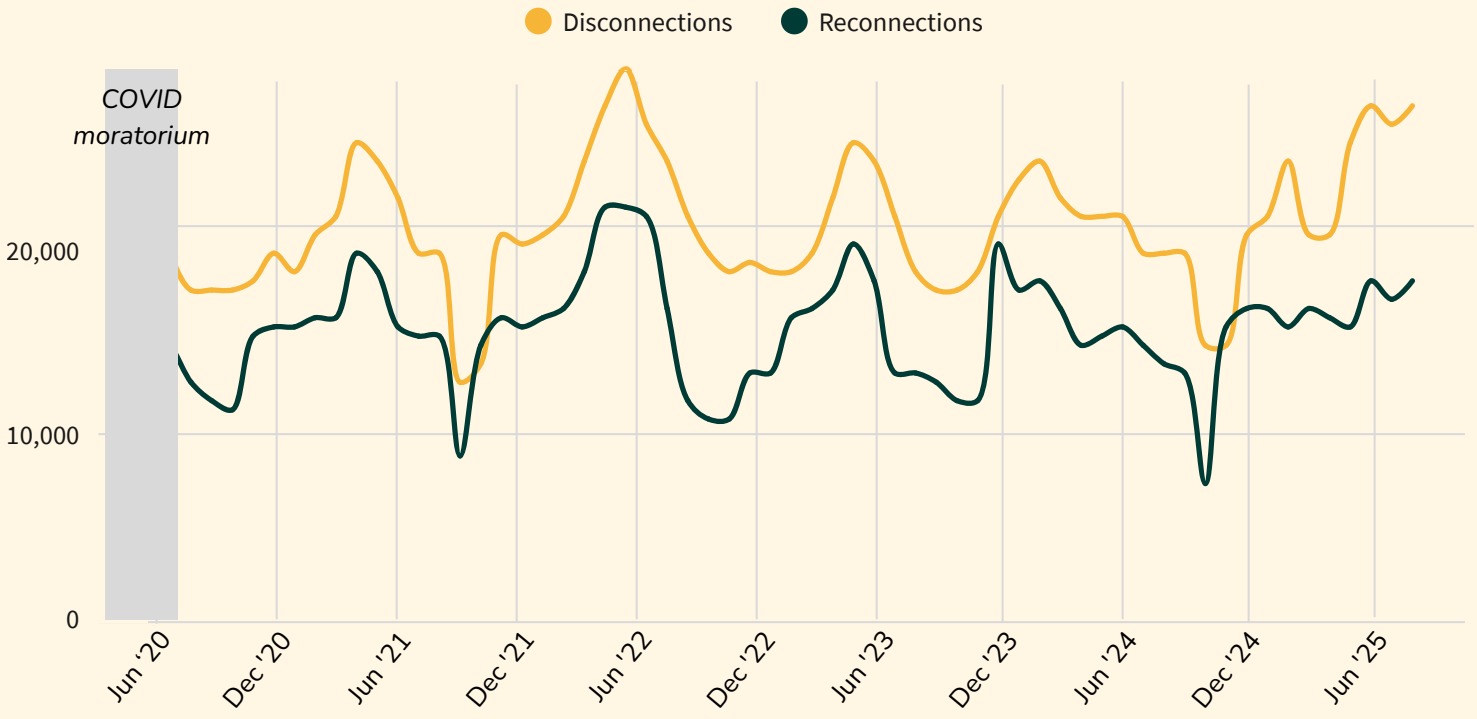
Georgians with vision or mobility difficulty face energy insecurity at roughly 59%, about 22 percentage points above Georgians without either disability (37%). The unsafe temperature gap is especially striking: about 32% of people with vision or mobility difficulty kept their homes at an unsafe temperature, compared to 16% of those without disability. Forgoing household essentials to pay energy bills is also disproportionately common, affecting roughly half of those with difficulty (49% vision, 49% mobility), compared to 29% of non-disabled households. Taken together, these patterns suggest that disability compounds energy insecurity across every dimension, not just payment, but unsafe temperatures and basic household trade-offs.

Shut-offs

Hundreds of thousands of Georgians experience utility service shut-offs each year. EIA data from 2024 shows that Georgia electric utilities carried out 458,435 service disconnections that year, while gas utilities carried out 134,421.[59] [60] Based on those numbers, the State of Georgia has some of the highest shut-off rates in the nation, ranking 14th-highest for electric and 2nd-highest for gas shut-offs.

A focus on Georgia Power territory specifically reveals high numbers of service disconnections over time. Data from the Energy Justice Lab Disconnection Dashboard shows that from 2020 through August 2025, residential Georgia Power customers experienced more than 1.25 million shut-offs (1,254,281 total).[61] Disconnections surged after the end of COVID-era moratorium protections, peaking at over 260,000 annually in 2021–2022, before declining modestly in 2023–2024. Early 2025 data (January–August) suggests disconnections are accelerating again, with 180,383 disconnections recorded in just eight months — on pace to exceed any prior full year except 2021–2022. Throughout 2020–2025, roughly 26% of disconnected customers were never reconnected.

Figure 5: Monthly Disconnections & Reconnections – Georgia Power
2020–2025 (through last available month)



Source: EJL Disconnection Dashboard. Shaded region = COVID moratorium (no disconnection data). 2025 data through August.

GEORGIA POWER PROFITS

While household energy bills in Georgia climb to increasingly unaffordable levels, Georgia Power continues to increase its profits. With one of the highest utility profit margins in the country, the company's shareholders and executive leadership reap the financial benefits while many Georgia families struggle to keep their lights on.

Increasing & excessive profit margins

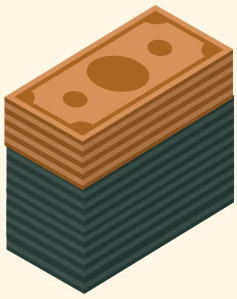
Georgia Power has the **6th-highest profit margin of 110 investor-owned utilities** in the United States. Analysis from the Energy & Policy Institute reveals that in 2025, a striking 22.6% of Georgia Power residential bills went to profit.[62] This means that for a family with a $200 monthly electric bill, over $45 of that bill goes to utility profit. Over the last five years, Georgia Power has increased its profit margin steadily and significantly, **up from 6.1% in 2021.** While Georgia Power keeps a growing portion of residential bills as profit, household bills have also risen significantly, adding new economic strain for households across the state.

Where Does Your Electric Bill Go?

A breakdown of the typical $200 monthly Georgia Power bill

22.6% of residential bills went to profit.

This means that for a family with a **$200 monthly electric bill over $45 of that bill** goes directly to utility profit.



$45
UTILITY PROFIT
22.6%

$155
ENERGY & OPERATIONS
77.4%

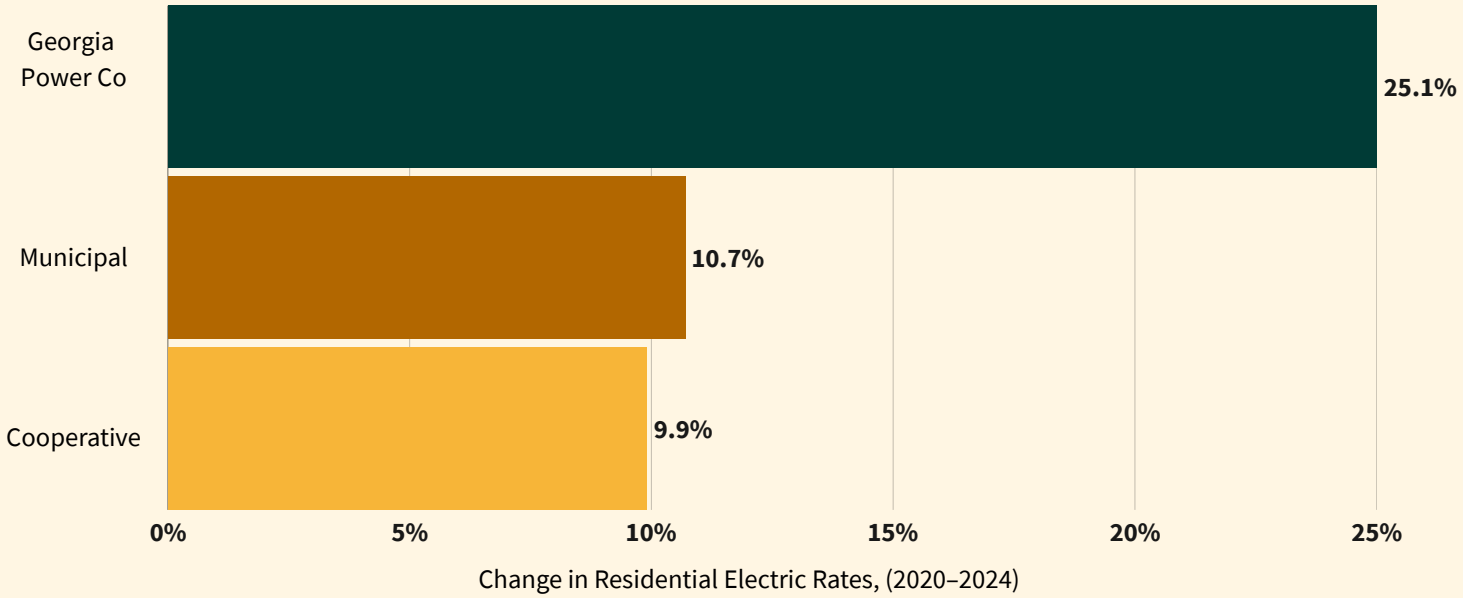
Georgia Power raising rates 2x higher than other Georgia utilities

Profit-driven **investor-owned utilities tend to charge higher rates – and are raising rates faster – than not-for-profit utilities** that are publicly or cooperatively owned.[63] In Georgia, electric utilities across the state have raised rates in recent years, but Georgia Power stands out, having increased its rates 2x more than not-for-profit municipal and cooperative utilities,[64] as shown in Figure 6. As a result, Georgia Power residential customers paid an estimated $319 more in 2024 alone than they would have paid being a municipal or cooperative customer. Over the five years from 2020 to 2024, this excess totals roughly $1,100 per customer, an additional cost borne solely because a customer happens to live in Georgia Power's monopoly service area. Across all 2.4 million Georgia Power residential customers, this amounts to $2.6 billion in cumulative excess charges over the period (**See Figure 7**).

> *Over the five years from 2020 to 2024, this excess totals roughly $1,100 per customer, an additional cost borne solely because a customer happens to live in Georgia Power's monopoly service area. Across all 2.4 million Georgia Power residential customers, this amounts to $2.6 billion in cumulative excess charges over the period.*

Figure 6: Georgia Power Company increases rates by 25%

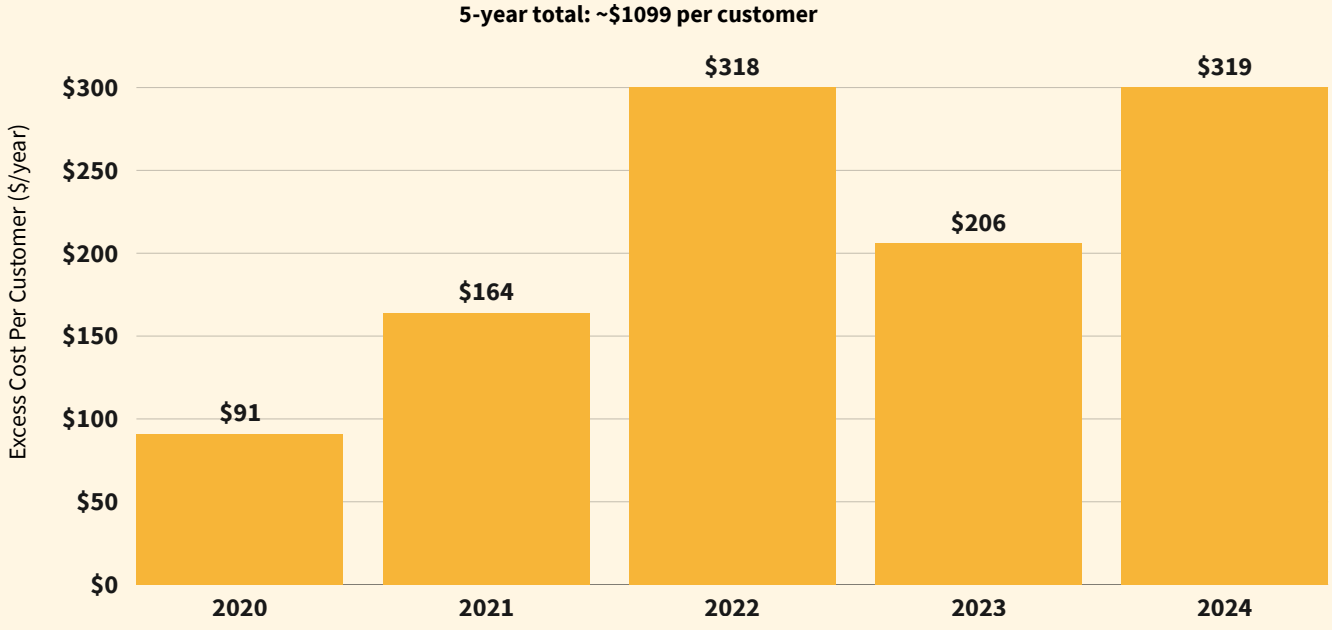
Georgia Power increases residential rates by ~2x more than other utilities



Source: EIA Form 861, 2020–2024

Figure 7: How Much More Each Georgia Power Customer Paid

Annual excess vs. Municipal & Cooperative rates, 2020–2024



Source: EIA Form 861

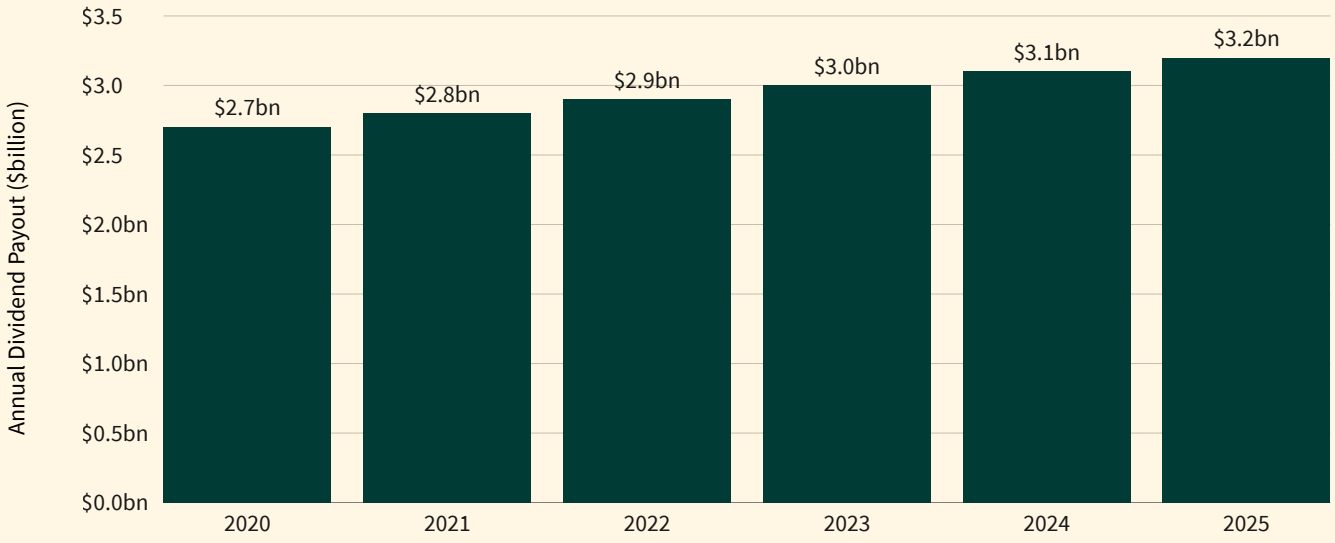
High shareholder payouts

Georgia Power's parent company, Southern Company, has seen consistent stock price increases and high shareholder payouts. From 2020–2025, Southern Company had a cumulative return of 79% (capital gain + dividends) (**See Figure 8**). Almost 75% of Southern Company's earnings are being paid out directly to shareholders, resulting in $3.2 billion in dividend payouts in 2025 alone.[65] This is well above the 35–50% payout range generally considered healthy for utilities, suggesting substantial room to reinvest in infrastructure and affordability without jeopardizing shareholder returns.[66] As shown in Figure 8, dividend payouts have steadily increased since 2020. For every $1 in excess electric costs (cumulatively $2.6 billion) borne by residential customers due to rate increases from 2020 to 2024, shareholders received $5.70 in dividend payments.

> *Almost 75% of Southern Company's earnings are being paid out directly to shareholders, resulting in $3.2 billion in dividend payouts in 2025 alone. This is well above the 35–50% payout range generally considered healthy for utilities, suggesting substantial room to reinvest in infrastructure and affordability without jeopardizing shareholder returns.*

Figure 8: Billions in Dividends Paid to Southern Company Shareholders

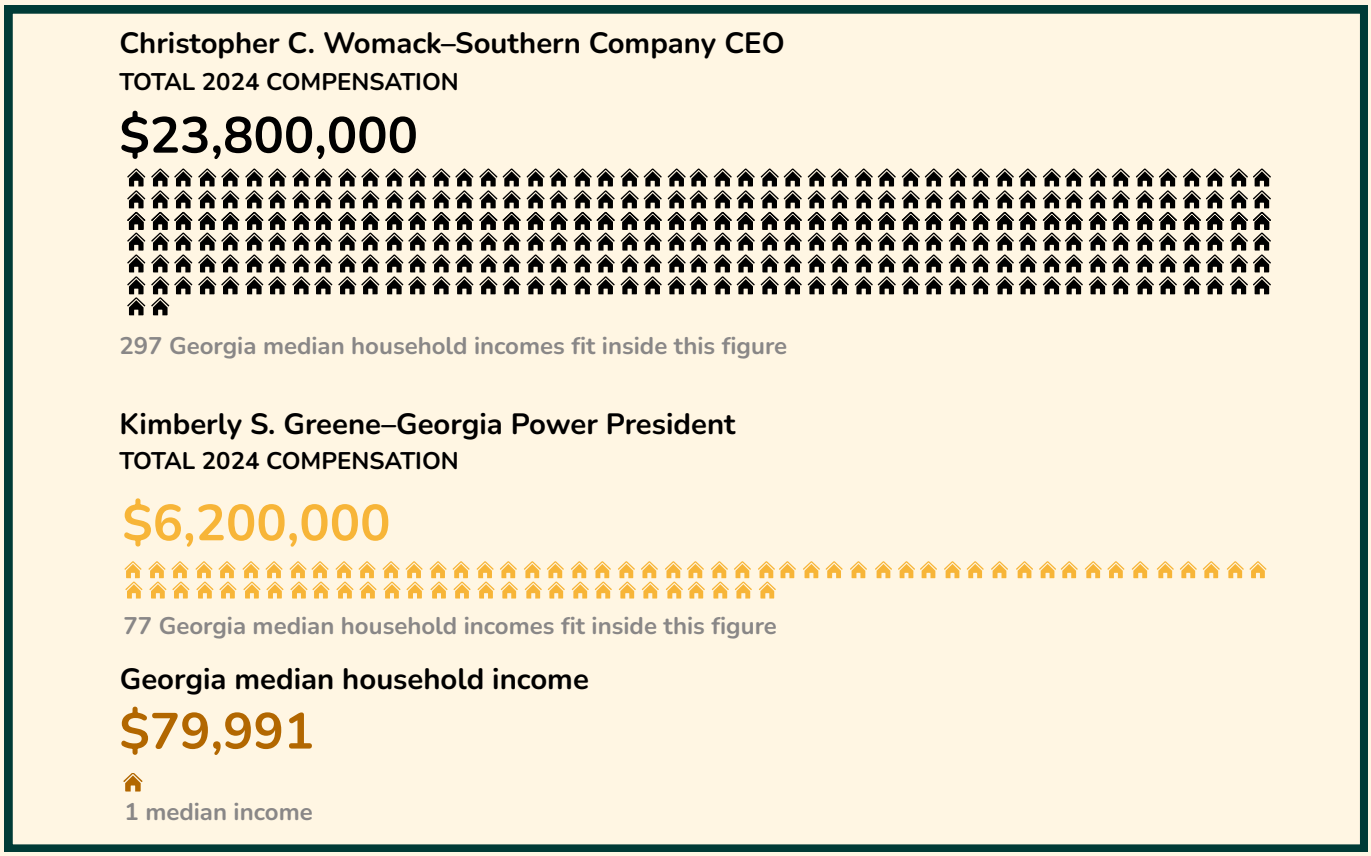
$17.8 billion in cumulative dividend payouts (2020–2025)



Source: http://stockanalysis.com/stocks/so/financials/balance-sheet

Exorbitant CEO Pay

The executive leadership of Georgia Power and Southern Company are massive beneficiaries of the company's decisions to gouge customers year after year. The president of Georgia Power, Kimberly S. Greene, received total compensation of approximately $6.2 million, including salary, stock awards, and additional incentives and compensation. Southern Company CEO Christopher C. Womack's total compensation in 2024 surpassed a staggering $23.8 million. Compensation for other high-level executives of Georgia Power and Southern Company reaches upwards of $4.5 million according to SEC filings.[67]



This system, where executives and shareholders get richer and richer while working people fall deeper and deeper into utility debt, is not our only option. There are many other ways to deliver energy services critical for human well-being and survival, without exploiting those at the bottom.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS: ACHIEVING ENERGY AFFORDABILITY IN GEORGIA

The Georgia Public Service Commission has the ability to adopt and enforce regulations that protect the most vulnerable populations, rein in corporate profits, and lower bills by accelerating the transition to clean energy. In upcoming PSC proceedings, the Commission should:

1 Expand bill assistance and shut-off protection programs for low-income and vulnerable households to help lower energy burdens

a **Expand discounted rates for low-income customers.** The PSC should use its authority to significantly expand Georgia Power's Income Qualified Discount (IQD), and establish a percentage-of-income payment plan (PIPP) that caps monthly bills at a fixed share of household income, regardless of how high rates climb.[68] Households in the hardest hit census tracts and those that receive other public benefits (like SNAP) should be automatically enrolled in low-income discount programs. These tools could close the Home Energy Affordability Gap (HEAG) for the most cost-burdened Georgians, who collectively are paying more than $538 million more than they can afford annually.

The PSC should also require Georgia Power to report annually on IQD enrollment, waitlists, and participation rates disaggregated by income tier, race, and geography. Without this data, it is difficult to know how many eligible households are being left behind or whether existing programs are reaching those who need them most.

b **Protect vulnerable households from service disconnections.** Shut-off protections in Georgia are insufficient and have critical gaps that leave vulnerable households at risk of harm. Current regulations prevent disconnections on days when forecasts meet thresholds for extreme temperatures, as well as for customers who provide proof of a serious medical condition.[69] Georgia's heat threshold is especially dangerous – tied to a National Weather Service Heat Advisory, when the heat index is 105°F or higher.[70] The PSC should expand its definition of "vulnerable populations" protected from shut-offs to include low-income households, seniors (65+), households with children under 6, people with disabilities or chronic health conditions, and renters, and extend targeted protections accordingly. The PSC should also require mandatory public reporting by Georgia Power on the number of disconnections by month, county, census tract, and adjacent to extreme weather days. Without this data, neither the PSC nor the public can verify compliance or identify patterns of harm in vulnerable communities.[71]

c **Work toward eliminating disconnections.** In the long term, the PSC should pursue solutions that allow all Georgians uninterrupted access to energy without the threat of being disconnected due to inability to pay. Opening a dedicated disconnections docket[72] would create a central repository for program recommendations that may include lifeline rates[73] or a minimum free energy rate for those behind on bills,[74] offering energy efficiency and distributed solar and storage benefits to customers who have been most impacted by disconnections, and ensuring that affordability programs are sufficiently funded to serve all eligible customers. Ultimately, alleviating the toll of disconnections is not only the humane approach, it is likely to be in the financial public interest of all ratepayers,[75] by lowering the costs Georgia Power spends on collections and reducing uncollectibles.

2 Rein in Georgia Power's profits and create incentives to keep bills affordable

a **Lower Georgia Power's return on equity (ROE).** The Georgia PSC authorizes Georgia Power to receive an 11.9% return on equity for its capital expenditures, which is far above the national average of 9.7% and exceeds the actual cost of capital. This excessive rate of return incentivizes Georgia Power to invest in more expensive capital projects, rather than cost-effective energy efficiency and distributed energy resources that keep household bills low. The PSC should reduce Georgia Power's return on equity to a rate more closely benchmarked with the actual cost of capital.

b **Implement performance-based regulations.** While the current regulatory model incentivizes utilities to invest in costly infrastructure spending, performance-based regulation (PBR) incentivizes utilities to be compensated based on their performance. With PBR, regulators could reward the utility for keeping household bills affordable, expanding access to renewable energy, improving interconnection timelines, reducing climate emissions or preventing outages during extreme weather events. This alternative regulatory approach can create new utility incentives to protect Georgia families from high bills, help conserve energy, and promote a transition to more affordable clean energy.

c **Implement fuel-cost sharing.** When fuel prices are volatile, utilities typically pass unexpected costs to customers through additional rate increases (i.e., fuel adjustment clauses). In this scenario, everyday customers bear the financial risks and consequences when fuel costs exceed what the utility originally forecasted. In Georgia, fuel cost adjustments have been one of the largest drivers of electric bill increases in recent years. By implementing fuel-cost sharing, the PSC can require Georgia Power to absorb a percentage of fuel costs when they surpass forecasted amounts.[76] Conversely, when fuel costs stay below projected amounts, the utility could keep a percentage of the savings. This two-way risk and reward system between the utility and its customers can incentivize more efficient fuel cost management and protect everyday Georgians from fuel price volatility.

3 Encourage low-cost clean energy by removing barriers to rooftop solar and storage and expanding community solar

a **Improve interconnection timelines.** Solar energy with battery storage is the lowest cost and fastest way to deploy new electricity and meet rising demand, but is hindered by overly slow and cumbersome processes for interconnection with the grid. The PSC can support the transition to affordable clean energy by streamlining and expediting interconnection for rooftop solar, battery storage, and other distributed energy resources. This can include mandates to reduce the timeline for interconnection studies, implement automatic pre-approval for small rooftop systems (e.g., under 25 kW), and create fast-track processes for solar+storage projects that relieve stress on the overall grid.

b **Remove arbitrary limits on rooftop solar.** Current regulations in Georgia limit the size of a residential rooftop solar system to 10 kW and cap the aggregate amount of solar energy that can be sold back to the grid at just 0.2% of Georgia Power's overall electricity demand. Removing these arbitrary limits (and guarding against other restrictive caps) could open up the rooftop solar market and allow more individuals to lower their bills. The Commission should also replace or improve the state's Solar Buy Back program with net metering to provide fair compensation for households installing rooftop solar.

c **Restructure Georgia Power's community solar program.** Currently, Georgia Power offers a program in which customers can subscribe to a portion of a solar array in exchange for credits on their bill. Yet, the utility has structured the program so that the subscription fees are likely to exceed any bill credits a customer receives.[77] This design offers customers the option to pay more to support clean energy, rather than delivering the cost-saving benefits of solar to low-income and renter households.[78] The PSC should require Georgia Power to redesign the program to actually deliver bill savings that a community solar program should provide.

4 Dramatically increase energy efficiency programs that reduce overall consumption and home energy bills

a **Establish and incentivize energy efficiency goals.** Energy efficiency investments are recognized as the lowest cost way to reduce household energy costs,[79] but Georgia significantly under-invests in this solution.[80] Georgia has no Energy Efficiency Resource Standard (EERS) requiring Georgia Power to meet savings targets,[81] and the utility's spending on low-income energy efficiency programs is among the lowest in the nation.[82] The PSC should establish an EERS for Georgia Power and require the utility to meet an energy efficiency goal that achieves savings equal to 1% of retail sales, with a minimum required investment set for low-income households.

b **Expand low-income weatherization programs.** The PSC should require Georgia Power to expand and strengthen its low-income weatherization programs. Georgia Power's current program[83] excludes many of the home upgrades identified as most effective[84] and has no requirement to reach the households experiencing high energy burdens. The PSC has the authority to set stronger conditions through the Demand-Side Management certification process, including raising spending caps on weatherization investments, expanding the types of upgrades considered eligible, and requiring transparent public reporting on households reached.

5 Require transparency and protect residential ratepayers from the costs of speculative data center development

a **Require transparency in demand forecasts and cost projections and comparison with lower-cost options.** In December 2025, the PSC approved Georgia Power's proposal to build five new fossil gas plants (~10 GW) and 1,000 miles of transmission to power a projected data center boom. Estimated to cost customers $50–60 billion, these capital investments were approved without adequate assessment of lower-cost, renewable energy options and without firm contracts in place for the needed energy increase. Requiring full transparency around projected demand and the costs of new capital projects in comparison to distributed energy resources like low-cost solar, energy efficiency, and demand response are essential for protecting consumers from further skyrocketing costs.[85]

b **Ensure data centers pay their fair share.** The rapid growth of Artificial Intelligence (AI) has spurred a rush for massive new energy capacity. Yet, it remains difficult to accurately predict future AI demand, and analyses indicate that projected energy demands may be significantly inflated.[86] The build-out of fossil gas infrastructure to meet projected demand before contracts are in place could leave residential ratepayers on the hook for billions if development does not materialize. Georgians should not be required to subsidize big tech companies. Measures like large load tariffs and requiring clean energy investments can ensure data centers and other large industrial users pay their fair share, while protecting residential customers from the risks of speculative data center development.

There is much the PSC can do to ensure Georgia Power works in the public's interest, rather than the sole interest of its shareholders. Customers should have access to affordable energy, protection from skyrocketing bills, and a future powered by clean energy, rather than being locked into a monopoly utility model that profits from the build out of expensive fossil fuel infrastructure. The election of two new commissioners to the Public Service Commission holds promise, and opens new opportunities for Georgians to bring their voice to the table.

5. CONCLUSION

As households struggle to afford skyrocketing utility bills, utilities continue to drive up electric rates. In 2025, utilities requested $31 billion in rate increases, more than 2x what they requested in 2024.[87] These rising costs are creating significant strain for ratepayers, many of whom are being forced to choose between keeping their lights on or paying for other basic needs like food, medicine, and transportation. Meanwhile, utility profits have soared.[88] Without intervention, these trends are likely to continue.

The corporate utility regulatory model – which incentivizes utilities to pursue capital-intensive infrastructure projects, rather than energy-saving measures for customers – is one of the key drivers behind rising bills today. Public Service Commissions exist to ensure that utilities are not exploiting their power as regulated monopolies, but these regulators are not doing enough to ensure rates remain "just and reasonable" for everyday customers.

Across the country, demands for affordable energy and utility accountability are growing. While pathways to affordable energy may differ across regional and regulatory contexts, states have a wide variety of regulatory, legislative, and executive tools at their disposal to rein in corporate profits and keep bills affordable for households.[89] Interventions that deliver near-term relief as well as longer-term structural change to the utility regulatory model are both needed.

In Georgia, where nearly half of all households are energy insecure, Georgia Power has steeply raised rates – as well as its profit margin. With the election of two new PSC commissioners, there are new opportunities to bring badly needed oversight and accountability to Georgia Power. While legislative opportunities may currently be limited in Georgia's political landscape, many regulatory options exist for making meaningful progress on reining in corporate profits, keeping bills affordable, and expanding access to low-cost clean energy. Years of advocacy and organizing were crucial for electing new commissioners concerned with affordability,[90] and continued organizing and engagement with the Commission will be needed for Georgians to have a greater voice in their energy decisions.[91]

Above all, as Georgia and other states pursue affordability measures, an equity lens is crucial to ensure solutions reach the most vulnerable ratepayers. Low-income households, households of color, and other vulnerable groups are disproportionately impacted by high energy burdens and energy insecurity. In this context, rising energy bills further threaten the economic stability, health, and well-being of these groups. Policies and programs aimed at bringing energy costs below the 6% energy burden threshold can make an enormous difference in the lives of struggling households.

METHODOLOGY & SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Methodology, data, and coding scripts used in the analysis for this report are available here.

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