

# The IRP and Your Energy Bill

YOUR ENVIRONMENT | YOUR HOME | YOUR HEALTH



## What is an Integrated Resource Plan (IRP)?



Every three years, Georgia Power has to file its **Integrated Resource Plan (IRP)** with the Georgia Public Service Commission (PSC). Public advocates and other parties provide recommendations to influence the PSC's ultimate decision on the utility's plan.

## What Does it Include?



### Power Generating Facilities

The size and type of facilities expected to be owned or operated in whole or in part by the utility as well as all existing facilities intended to be removed from service (e.g., COAL PLANT RETIREMENTS);



### Environmental Impacts

Estimated impact of proposed and alternative generating plants on the environment and the means by which potential adverse impacts will be avoided or minimized (e.g., AIR QUALITY, WATER, NUCLEAR WASTE, ETC.);



### Alternative Power Sources

Practical alternatives to the fuel type and method of generation of the proposed electric generating facilities and the reasons for selecting the fuel type and method of generation (e.g., SOLAR, HYDRO, BIOMASS, ETC.);



### Energy Demand

Detailed projected demand for electric energy for a 20-year period and the basis for determining the projected demand (e.g., ESTABLISH RESERVE MARGINS TO SUPPORT COAL PLANT RETIREMENT); and



### Customer Programs and Policies

Existing and planned programs and policies to discourage inefficient and excessive power use (e.g., DEMAND-SIDE MANAGEMENT, ENERGY EFFICIENCY, ETC.).

The Georgia Code § 46-3A-1(7) defines an IRP as a plan that contains these elements:

## How Does the PSC Decide?

### A Quick Glance at the Process

Georgia Power files its IRP on a date determined by the PSC.



PSC Staff studies the filing and requests additional information



Interested parties file petitions to "intervene" within 30 days of public notice



Three rounds of hearings: Georgia Power's direct case, the PSC Staff and Intervenor responsive cases, and Georgia Power's rebuttal



After hearings conclude, Georgia Power, PSC Staff, and Intervenor file recommendations, proposed orders, or briefs



Settlement negotiations may be held to reach a compromise agreement to be presented to Commissioners



PSC Staff presents its recommendations to the Commissioners



Commissioners vote at a publicly noticed meeting rendering a decision on the IRP

## WHY DOES THE IRP MATTER?

The outcome of this process will influence your energy bills for the next 20 years! During the IRP process, citizens and advocates can push for beneficial programs like **energy efficiency** and **community solar** that can go a long way toward reducing our energy bills and reliance on dirty energy. Whether you are interested in lowering your energy bill or simply advocating for cleaner energy sources, now is the time to get active and make your voice heard.

### 2016 IRP SUCCESS STORY

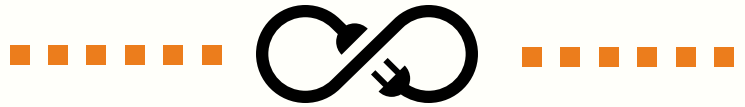
In a settlement with Georgia PSC Staff and Intervenor including Georgia Watch, Georgia Power agreed to:

- Triple its reliance on solar power and other renewable energy;
- Dedicate \$1.5 million per year for the next three years to Energy Efficiency programming for low-income affordable housing; and
- Create a \$2.5 million pilot budget for Energy Efficiency and programs to manage customer demand, and address how these funds may be applied to Energy Efficiency for low-income families.

## ENERGY EFFICIENCY

Energy efficiency means using less energy to perform the same function. It can refer to the character of individual appliances as well as an entire home. For example, an LED light bulb uses less energy to provide the same amount of light as a traditional incandescent light bulb.

Energy efficiency can **lower your energy bills** and reduce financial instability related to high energy bills. No Georgian should have to choose between groceries and energy bills. Increasing financial stability is just one potential benefit of energy efficiency. Families living in energy-efficient homes also show lower incidences of asthma symptoms, allergic reactions, and respiratory illnesses.



## COMMUNITY SOLAR

Community solar presents an ideal alternative for low-income households who rent, cannot afford the high upfront costs of rooftop solar panels, live in multi-family housing, or lack suitable rooftops for panels. Community solar, sometimes called shared solar, allows individuals to purchase affordable clean energy produced close to home, without installing any new equipment. Using this model, a solar array is built in a location with good sun exposure and access to the power grid. Anyone who pays their own power bill, including renters and owners, can then buy subscriptions for a portion of the energy produced by the system, which is credited against their power bill.

## What Can Citizens do to Impact the PSC's Decision?

Citizens can get involved in various ways by serving as public witnesses to provide comments regarding an individual's position about an issue, appearing in large numbers before the Commission (many citizens advocating for the same outcome are harder to ignore), providing alternatives to the standard proposal of the utility, encouraging diverse perspectives, making the Commissioners aware that citizens are interested in the outcomes of their decisions, and leveraging the media as a vehicle to raise awareness of issues.



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