

## History of The Alabama Public Service Commission

The Alabama Public Service Commission was designated as such in 1915 by the Alabama Legislature. The Commission evolved from the Railroad Commission of Alabama, that was created in 1881 to regulate railroads. The Commission has always been composed of three elected members: a president and two associate commissioners.

Between 1881 and 1915, the Legislature broadened the Commission's jurisdiction to include the regulation of telephone and telegraph companies, transportation companies operating as common carriers over water, and operators of toll bridges, toll ferries, and toll roads. The Commission was also charged with the regulation of utilities providing electricity, gas, water, and steam. The Commission's authority was broadened again in 1920 when the Legislature made the Commission responsible for regulating utility rates.



As Alabama's highway system developed in the late 1920's, the operation of trucks and buses as common carriers increased. In 1927, the Legislature placed all motor transportation companies operating as common carriers of freight and/or passengers over regular routes on Alabama highways under the Commission's regulatory authority. The Legislature broadened the Commission's authority over transportation companies in 1931 and 1932 by including motor carriers not operating over regular routes. Intrastate air carriers were made subject to the Commission's jurisdiction in 1945.

Natural gas transmission and distribution systems were placed under the Commission's jurisdiction for safety purposes in 1968.



Additionally, the Minimum Safety Standards outlined in the Natural Gas Pipeline Safety Act were adopted.

In 1971, the Commission's authority over motor carriers was broadened yet again as transportation enforcement officers were empowered to enforce the rules and regulations of the Commission. Similarly, the Commission's safety jurisdiction was extended to include railroad tracks and equipment in 1976 under the State Participation Program of the Federal Railroad Safety Act of 1970. In recent years, sweeping federal and state statutory changes have significantly altered the Commission's jurisdiction and authority over transportation and telecommunications utilities. Title IV in the Federal Aviation Administration Act of 1994 provides for federal preemption of the states in matters of motor carrier



pricing, routes, and services for all but household goods carriers. The Commission continues to regulate carriers of passengers and household goods, ensures all motor carriers maintain appropriate cargo and liability insurance, and ensures that all regulated carriers comply with applicable safety standards.

With the passage of the Telecommunications Act of 1996, Congress opened up the local exchange telephone markets to competition. The introduction of local competition forced the Commission to set utility prices for retail telecommunication services using market-based rather than cost-based methodology. In 2005, the Alabama Legislature passed the Communications Reform Act. That Act, citing the competition that exists in the local telephone market, eliminated much of the Commission's authority over retail telecommunication services. Additionally, Commission jurisdiction was eliminated for all broadband services used for Internet delivery. The Commission did, however, retain full jurisdiction over wholesale telecommunications services and matters concerning Universal Service.



## Divisions of the Alabama Public Service Commission

### Executive Director

**John A. Garner, Chief Administrative Law Judge**

Responsible for the overall management of the Commission's daily functions per the direction of the Commissioners with each division director within the Commission reporting to the Executive Director.

### Legal Division

**John A. Garner, Chief Administrative Law Judge**

The Legal Division's Administrative Law Judges preside over all the legal proceedings before the Commission and make recommendations for the disposition of the cases they hear.

### Administrative Division

**Walter Thomas, Jr., Director**

Receives all filings made to the Commission and distributes them to the appropriate division. This office is responsible for assigning dockets to matters that come before the Commission.

### Electricity Policy Division

**John D. Free, Director**

Oversees the regulation of investor-owned electric utilities in Alabama while also monitoring and participating in federal policy. Also responsible for the Public Affairs functions of the Commission.

### Utility Services Division

**Darrell Baker, Director**

Responsible for the regulation of telecommunications, natural gas, water, and wastewater utilities. Also receives and attempts to resolve consumer complaints, disputes, and inquiries related to these utilities.

### Utility Enforcement Division

**Janice M. Hamilton, Director**

Responsible for providing engineering and other technical regulatory support to the Commission on matters relating to the plant, infrastructure, and facilities of all investor-owned electric, telecommunications, water utilities, and wastewater management entities serving consumers of the State.

### Gas Pipeline Safety Division

**Wallace Jones, Director**

Responsible for conducting inspections and monitoring of all natural gas and hazardous liquid intrastate pipeline systems operating in Alabama, including offshore and state waters.

## Structure of The Commission

The Alabama Public Service Commission (“the Commission”) is comprised of the Commission President and two Associate Commissioners. Each Commissioner is elected statewide to a four-year term, with the President elected in a Presidential election year and the two Associate Commissioners elected in a Gubernatorial election year. The Commission meets on the first Tuesday of each month depending on intervening holidays which may affect the schedule.



President of The Commission

### TWINKLE ANDRESS CAVANAUGH

Twinkle Andress Cavanaugh was elected Commissioner for Place 1 in 2010 and was elected President of the Commission in 2012. She was re-elected as Commission President in 2016. Twinkle has a three-pronged approach to regulating utilities. She insists on reasonable rates and reliable utilities for consumers, which facilitates recruiting jobs to our great state. During her time at the Commission, some of her notable accomplishments for the people of our state include:

- Guiding the Commission to reduce expenses by \$3.1 million per year through streamlining of operations and reduction of wasteful spending;
- Demonstrating her commitment to reducing the size of government by reducing the size of the Commission by about 37% and concentrating the talent within the agency;
- Saving tax payers money by refusing a state car and all other perks associated with the office;
- Actively working with Alabama’s farmers to keep their utility costs down;
- Promoting business incentives that help small businesses thrive and encourage development of new businesses in Alabama;
- Passing time-of-use rates which allow customers an additional way to achieve savings on their utility bills; and
- Offering encouragement to residents of the devastating events that have occurred in Alabama.

Twinkle brings to the APSC a diverse background in public service, conservative policy-making, and small business. Twinkle has been active in public service for many years. She served in the Governor’s cabinet and also developed extensive experience in dealing with national issues while working for former Congressman Sonny Callahan. A deep-rooted commitment to conservative causes and policy is prevalent throughout Twinkle’s work experience. She became the first female to chair the Alabama Republican Party. Twinkle is a graduate of Auburn University. She and her husband have three children and two grandchildren. They are active members of First Baptist Church.



Commissioner, Place 1

### JEREMY H. ODEN

Jeremy H. Oden was appointed to serve as the Commissioner for Place 1 on the Alabama Public Service Commission by Governor Robert Bentley beginning December 2012. After completing his first term, Commissioner Oden was elected by the people of Alabama in 2014 to continue serving the state through 2018. Commissioner Oden is a proven public servant evidenced through his 14 year tenure of service in the House of Representatives for District 11, covering portions of Cullman, Blount and Morgan Counties.

Upon his arrival at the Commission, Commissioner Oden immediately began participating in national energy policy discussions and holds leadership positions with key national policy organizations.

Commissioner Oden currently serves as Vice President of the South Eastern Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners, or SEARUC. He also serves on several committees of the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners (NARUC), including Chairman of the Clean Coal and Carbon Management Committee, The National Council on Electricity Policy, and previously served on the Transportation Task Force Committee. Along with SEARUC and NARUC, Commissioner Oden is involved with the Southern States Energy Board where he serves on the Clean Coal Committee and serves as a participating member on the Nuclear Waste Strategy Coalition, a national leadership organization which is working to help the Federal Government formulate a fair and long-term plan to dispose of nuclear waste.

Commissioner Oden and his staff are widely involved with statewide policy and education organizations. This comprehensive approach helps keep his finger on the pulse of issues facing Alabama. Whether it be the Alabama Emergency Response Commission, the Governor’s One-Call Study Commission or Operation Lifesaver, Commissioner Oden’s active participation demonstrates his commitment to maintaining an accurate and balanced regulatory policy perspective. With the help of Commissioner Oden’s leadership, the Alabama Public Service Commission continues to make significant efforts to keep utility rates stable and will continue to do so in the coming years.



Commissioner, Place 2

### CHRIS “CHIP” BEEKER, JR.

Commissioner Chris “Chip” Beeker, Jr. was elected to the Alabama Public Service Commission in November 2014. The Greene County native brings a lifelong commitment to service and a successful business record to the Commission. Following graduation from Greene County High School, he served in the National Guard for eight years. Commissioner Beeker attended the University of West Alabama where he was a member of Phi Kappa Phi and graduated with a degree in Commerce and Business. He worked at the James M. Barry Steam Plant and the William Crawford Gorgas Electric Generating Plant. Working at these plants afforded

him the opportunity to see first-hand how vital reliable energy is to our state’s economy. From 1986 through 2006 Commissioner Beeker served as a member of the Greene County Commission; for ten of those years he was the Chairman. During Commissioner Beeker’s tenure, the Greene County Commission achieved great success in economic development.

In addition to serving on the county commission, Commissioner Beeker has been an integral part of his community over the years. He served on numerous advisory boards throughout the Black Belt of Alabama. At Warrior Academy, Commissioner Beeker coached basketball and, for several years, was the head baseball coach. In 2012, the Community Foundation of West Alabama selected him as a Pillar of West Alabama.

He has been married to Teresa Beeker for more than forty years. They have three children: Diana Beeker Browning (Brandon), Inge Beeker (Elizabeth), and Chris Beeker, III (Carley). Commissioner and Mrs. Beeker have been blessed with eleven grandchildren.

## Mission Of The Alabama Public Service Commission

*To ensure a balance between regulated companies and consumers in order to provide consumers with safe, adequate, and reliable services at affordable rates.*

### President Twinkle Andress Cavanaugh

twinkle.cavanaugh@psc.alabama.gov  
(334) 242-5207

### Commissioner Jeremy H. Oden

jeremy.oden@psc.alabama.gov  
(334) 242-5203

### Commissioner Chris “Chip” Beeker, Jr.

chip.beeker@psc.alabama.gov  
(334) 242-5191

## ALABAMA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

Post Office Box 304260  
Montgomery, Alabama 36130-4260

Visit Us On The Web: [www.psc.alabama.gov](http://www.psc.alabama.gov)

*Connect With Us!!!*

**Telephone: (334) 242-5218**

**Consumer Service Hotline:  
1-800-392-8050**

# Alabama

Public  
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