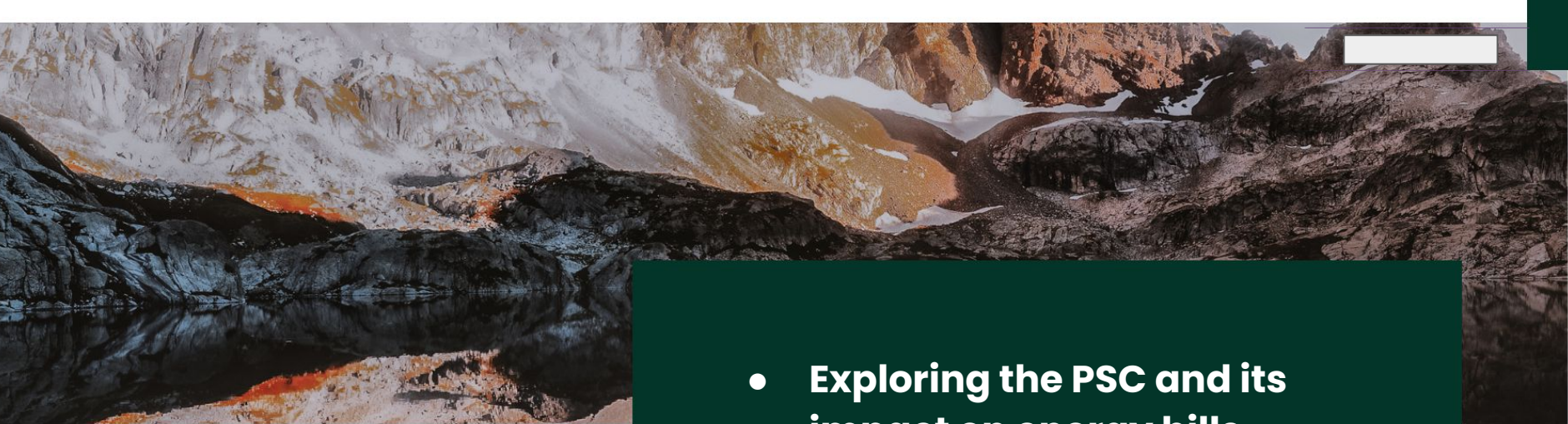


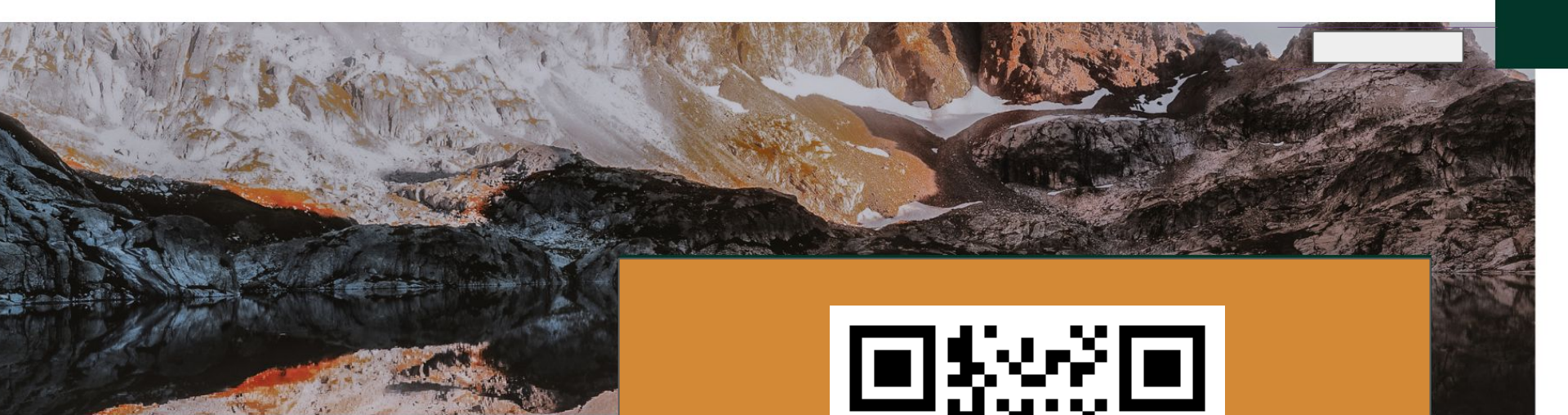
Understanding The Power of Your Vote: Energy Justice and Georgia's Public Service Commission

FreAsia Young & Andrea Young Jones



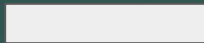
Key Points of Today's Session

- **Exploring the PSC and its impact on energy bills**
- **The significance of voter participation in shaping PSC policies**



Please scan the code and complete
the survey before the session
begins.





Georgia Public Service Commission Regulates

Utilities: energy, natural gas

**Transportation: railroads
passenger and freight rates
services and operations**

Telecommunication

What is the Georgia Public Service Commission?

The Public Service Commission (PSC) is a body of 5 elected officials who regulate electricity, natural gas, and telecommunications across Georgia.

This body makes decisions about how Georgia Power should generate electricity; how much Georgia Power customers should pay for it and how much profit the company should make.

The PSC does not regulate EMCs - Electric Member Cooperatives.

Why is the PSC critical for Georgians?

- The mission of the Georgia Public Service Commission is to exercise its authority and influence to ensure that consumers receive safe, reliable, and reasonably priced telecommunications, electric and natural gas services.
- The PSC regulates the services provided by investor-owned telecommunications, natural gas, and electric utilities, and directly regulate the rates charged by Atlanta Gas Light and Georgia Power.
- The most important things the commission does for electricity is the Integrated Resource Plan, where they make decisions about how Georgia Power should generate energy; the Rate Case, where they decide how much Georgia Power customers should pay for it and how much profit the company should make; and host additional hearings such as the Plant Vogtle cost overrun and fuel charge hearings that typically result in power bill increases.

PSC Functions and Commissioners

PSC Commissioners are elected statewide and must live in the district they were elected from. The five members of the commission are determined by statewide election and serve six year terms.



**Tricia
Pridemore, PSC
Chairman,
District 5**



**Tim Echols,
Vice-Chairman,
District 2**



**Fitz Johnson,
District 3**

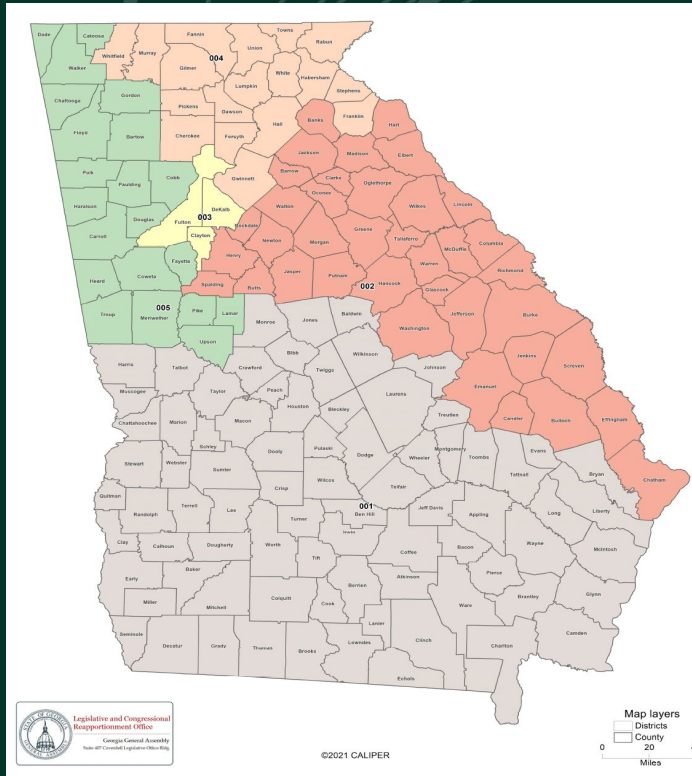


**Lauren
"Bubba"
McDonald,
District 4**

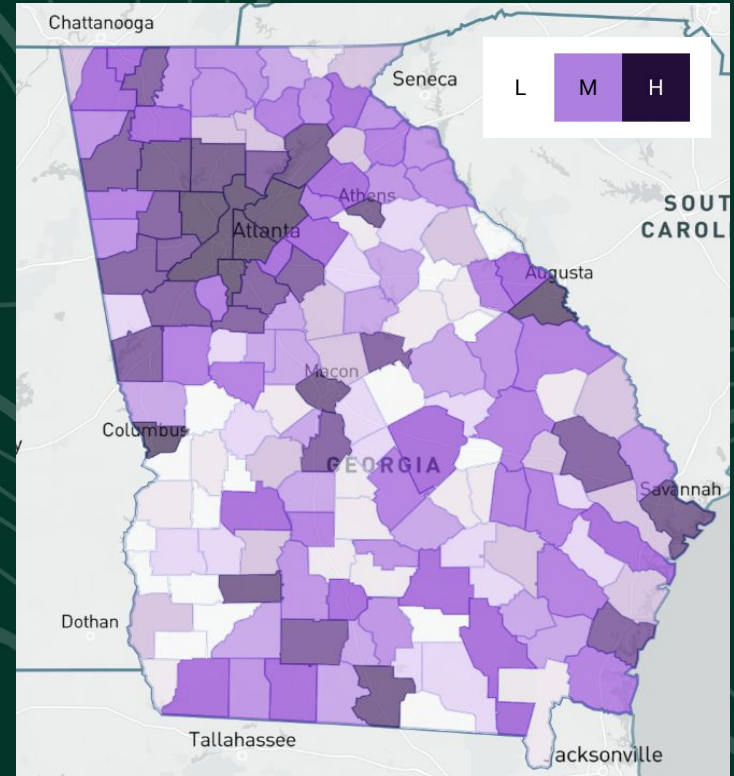


**Jason Shaw,
District 1**

Georgia PSC District Map



HOUSEHOLDS WITH ENERGY BURDEN ABOVE 10%



All of the 5 PSC Commissioners are not Georgia Power Customers

Not Georgia Power customers

Cobb EMC

Jackson
EMC

Cobb EMC

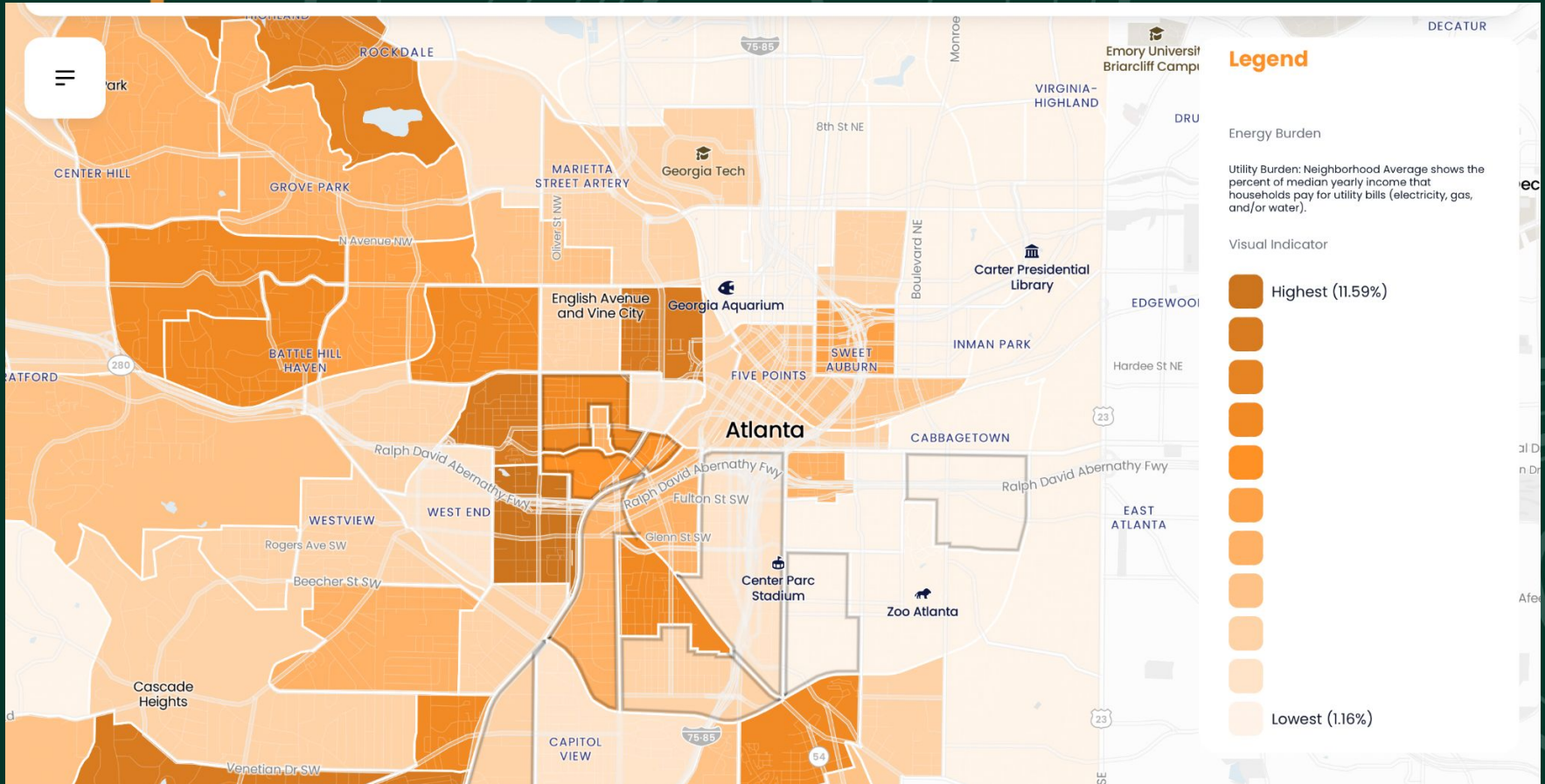
Habersham
EMC

Pine EMC

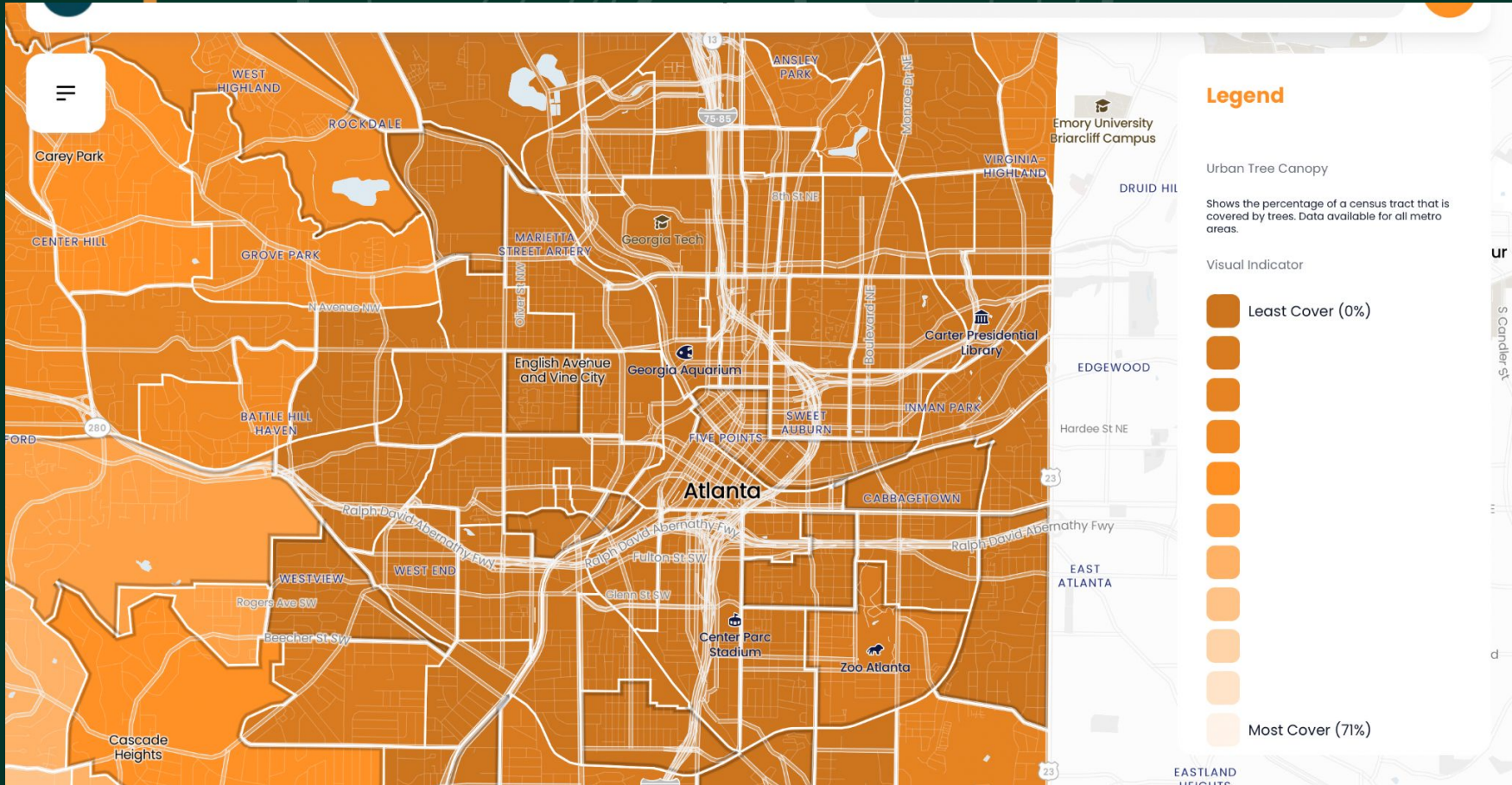
Georgia Public Service Commission

What Does It Mean To Be Energy Burdened?

Being "energy burdened" means that a household spends a high percentage of its income on energy costs, such as electricity and heating. We use this term to describe the financial strain that excessive energy bills place on families, particularly those with lower incomes. When a household is energy burdened, it often has to make difficult trade-offs between paying energy bills and other essential expenses, like food or healthcare. Addressing energy burden involves policies and practices that aim to reduce these costs relative to household income, promoting affordability and financial stability.



Courtesy of Greenlink Analytics Equity Map

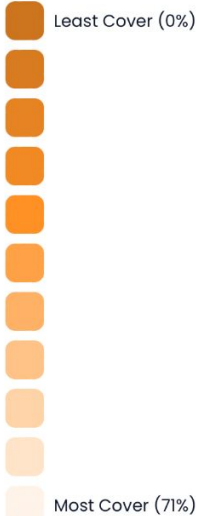


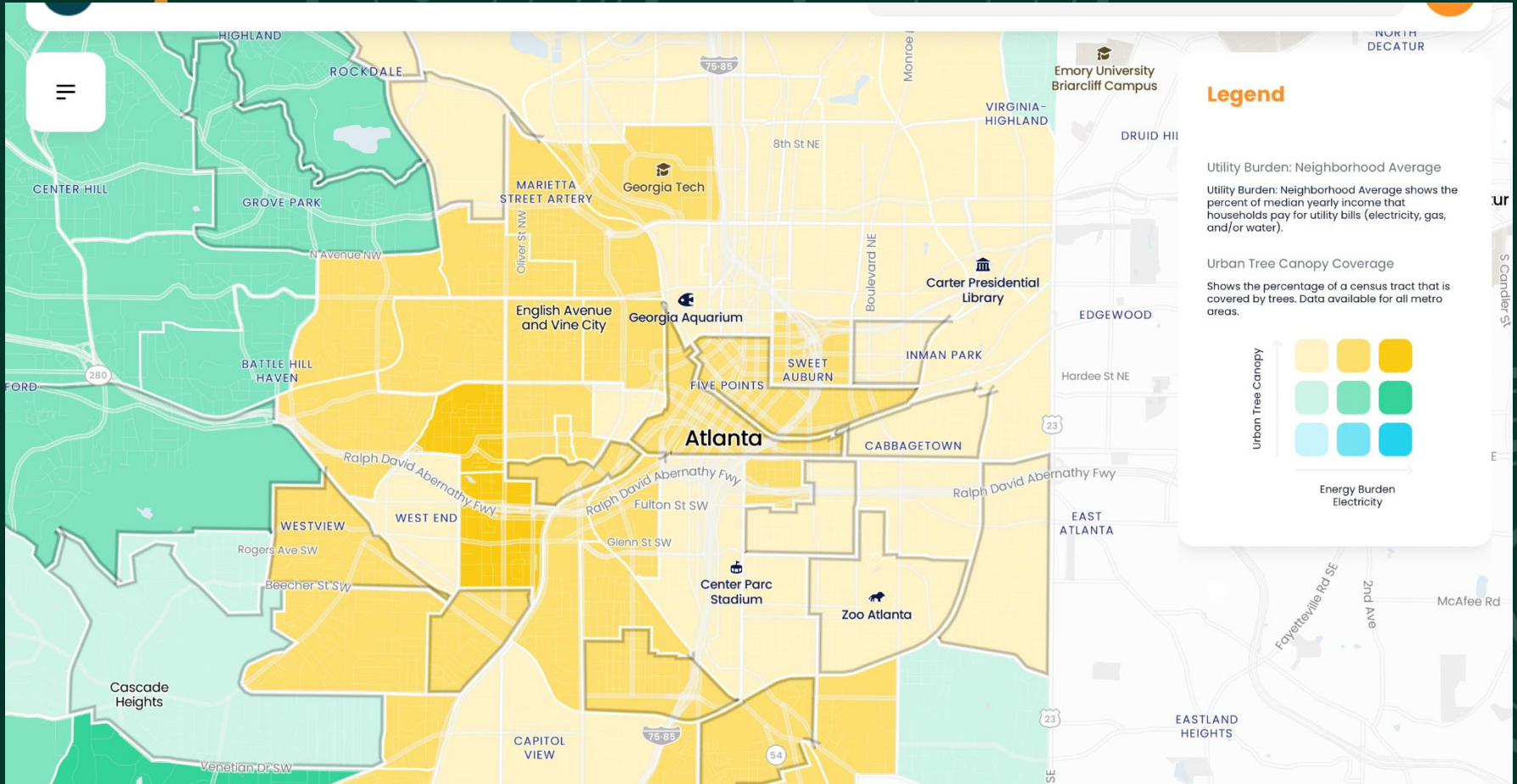
Legend

Urban Tree Canopy

Shows the percentage of a census tract that is covered by trees. Data available for all metro areas.

Visual Indicator






Courtesy of Greenlink Analytics Equity Map

Impact of PSC Decisions on Your Utility Bill

- Break out into four groups
- Each group will have a different utility bill
- Analyze bill with group based on hypothetical policies implemented by the PSC
- Report out: How will these policies affect this customer? What kind of legislation can be created to make energy more affordable? What kind of programs/initiatives can the state implement to mitigate the burdens faced by residents throughout the state?

- 
1. Georgia Power proposed a rate increase, PSC approved it. The new rate will add roughly \$45 to your monthly utility bill.
 2. Legislation passed that requires the PSC to collect data on neighborhood level energy burdens/disconnections. With the help of the data PSC is able to implement programs to mitigate the energy crisis in those areas. Residents may be eligible for 40% utility coverage. A family of two is capped at \$43, 205, a family of three is capped at \$54, 266, and a family of four is capped at \$63, 536.
 3. Eliminate all fees except customer fees and taxes because Georgia Power has enough money to cover their only pollution!!
 4. Cap Georgia Power profits to meet industry standards.

Policies to Improve Energy Affordability

California: SB1020 (Clean Energy, Jobs, & Affordability Act 2022)- PUC to define energy affordability and use metrics to guide development of necessary protections and programs for residents facing hardships or disconnections due to energy burdens.

Massachusetts: H.3221 (An Act Relative To Energy Bill Equity)- Establishes a study for the Department of Energy Resources to investigate energy burdens throughout the state as well as policies and regulatory mechanisms to improve energy affordability.

New York: S2432 (An Act to Amend the Public Service Law....)- requires consideration of the economic impact of increased utility rates or charges on consumers and the areas affected by the increase.

Your Vote Matters!

Influence Policies

Voting allows you to influence the commissioners who make decisions on utility rates and energy policies

Impact on Bills

Their decisions directly affect your energy bills, making voting crucial for managing costs and promoting fair pricing.

Representation of Community Interests

It ensures that commissioners represent your community's needs and concerns regarding energy affordability and access.

Accountability

Voter participation holds commissioners accountable for their decisions.

Rose vs. Raffensperger

2020 July - Complaint filed in the United States District Court in the Northern District of Georgia Atlanta Division alleging that the Secretary of State administers Public Service Commission elections using an at-large election method, which violates Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

2022 August - Judge rules Georgia must end statewide PSC elections. The State refiles its appeal that is heard by the 11th Circuit Court of Appeals in December of 2022.

2023 November - The 11th Circuit Court of Appeals' rules that the PSC elections can go forward under the existing at-large structure. Elections for Districts 2, 3, and 5 using the at-large selection method in 2024.

Georgia General Assembly

HB 1312 - A Senate Sponsored Amendment to delay the elections of commissioners for districts 2 and 3 on the Georgia Public Services Commission was passed in the 2024 legislative session.

- It extended the terms from 6-years to 8-years, including the terms of current commissioners whose terms have expired to 2025.
- And in some cases to 2028
 - ◆ Chairman Jason Shaw's next race set for November 2028, which would up in 2026.



Q&A





Please scan the code and complete the survey now that the session has concluded.





Thank You

