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 jurisdiction. As transportation enforcement officers were empowered to enforce the rules and regulations of the Commission, similarly, the Commission’s 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.

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.

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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 Commissioner President in 2016. Twinkle has a by-passes approach to regulating utilities. She insists on reasonable rates and reliable utilities for consumers, which facilitates recruiting jobs in 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 elimination of wasteful spending.
- Demonstrating her commitment to reducing the size of government by reducing the size of the Commission by about 30% and streamlining the staff within the agency.
- Suing the power companies for refusing to appeal a state order and other abuses associated with the office.
- Acting as a leader with Alabama Power companies to keep their utility costs down.
- Promoting business incentives that help small businesses thrive and encourage development of new businesses in Alabama.
- Paving the way for a 50-50 split of the cost of acquiring a state preparedness plan.
- Opening opportunities to residents of the devastating events that have occurred in Alabama.

Twinkle brings to the PSC 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 bold leadership positions with key national policy organizations.

Comissioner Jeremy H. Oden

Jeremy H. Oden was appointed to serve as Commissioner for Place 1 on the Alabama Public Service Commission by Governor Robert Bentley beginning December 2012. After completing his 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 in District 11, covering portions of Cullman, Blount and Morgan Counties.

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

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.