

## Resolution for the Prevention of CYBER DIALER ATTACKS

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**WHEREAS**, Consumers across the country are receiving telephone bills that include one or more calls made to another country; and

**WHEREAS**, Consumers did not always place the call, despite its detail on the telephone bill; and

**WHEREAS**, Bills vary in size from a few dollars to hundreds of dollars in just one month; and

**WHEREAS**, Customers do not always realize the call was placed over their telephone line using their computer modem doing the dialing as a result of software commands provided by a third party; and

**WHEREAS**, State Commissions and Consumer Protection groups are seeing an increase in the number of complaints involving calls to international sites at very high rates; and

**WHEREAS**, Some deceptive websites are tricking consumers (often minors) into downloading a computer "dialer" program that automatically disconnects the user's internet connection and dials an international long distance telephone number; and

**WHEREAS**, Unsolicited e-mail (spam) is also being used to trick consumers into placing international calls; and

**WHEREAS**, Calling rates for these calls can be as high as \$10.00 or more per minute, and

**WHEREAS**, Consumers are getting very large telephone bills

which may cause them to have their telephone service disconnected due to the high unauthorized charges; and

**WHEREAS**, The Federal Trade Commission has taken actions against some providers of these sites, but the problem has not been resolved; *now therefore be it*

**RESOLVED**, That the Board of Directors of the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners (NARUC) convened in its 2001 Winter Committee Meetings in Washington D.C. urges the Federal Communications Commission to open a rule-making proceeding to deal with cyber dialer attacks; *and be it further*

**RESOLVED**, That carriers should offer blocking of international calls or provide ID and PIN protection to make long distance and international calls; *and be it further*

**RESOLVED**, Long distance carriers should discontinue passing through dial it rate charges for these countries if they do not have a contract with the customer being billed; *and be it further*

**RESOLVED**, That when long distance carriers get complaints concerning these cyber dialer attacks, they should not bill for these entities; *and be it further*

**RESOLVED**, Customers should not have their local service or credit rating affected if they have one of these charges in dispute; *and be it further*

**RESOLVED**, The FCC should initiate a rulemaking docket prohibiting the transfer of dialing programs via the Internet or email to dial a customer's computer to international locations

without prior written contracts; *and be it further*

**RESOLVED**, That all carriers make available to all customers' information explaining this problem and how to protect from cyber dialing attacks occurring.

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Sponsored by the Committee on Consumer Affairs

Adopted by the NARUC Board of Directors, February 28, 2001.