

Resolution Concerning the Reorganization of the Federal Communications Commission To Include An Office or Staff Solely Responsible For Rural Communications Policy, Which Reports Directly to the Commission.

WHEREAS, The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) will soon present a reorganization plan to Congress for its approval; and

WHEREAS, In implementing the provisions of the 1996 Act, policymakers have consistently recognized that rural telecommunications markets face diverse circumstances and that "one size does not fit all;" and

WHEREAS, The 1996 Act and evolving policy require that consumers in all regions of the Nation, including those in rural, insular, and high cost areas, should have access to telecommunications and information services, including interexchange services and advanced telecommunications and information services, that are reasonably comparable to those services provided in urban areas and that are available at rates that are reasonably comparable to rates charged for similar services in urban areas; and

WHEREAS, Access to affordable telecommunications services, including basic universal service, interexchange services, advanced telecommunications and information services is not only the pathway to opportunity, it is a key component of education, commerce, employment, health, government and entertainment; and

WHEREAS, Lack of affordable and reasonably comparable service in rural areas may lead to a chasm between rural and

non-rural areas of the Nation that would be much to the detriment of the public interest; now therefore be it

RESOLVED, That the Board of Directors of the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners (NARUC), convened in its February 2002 Winter Meetings in Washington, D.C., recommends the FCC reorganization include an office or staff solely responsible for rural communications policy which reports directly to the Commission. This Office or staff will be dedicated expressly to the responsibility within the FCC for addressing telecommunications services issues affecting rural customers; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the NARUC provide Congress and the FCC comments consistent with this resolution.

Sponsored by the Consumer Affairs Committee

Adopted by the NARUC Board of Directors February 13, 2002