

Resolution of NARUC To Support The Adequate Funding of the Low Income Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)

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**WHEREAS**, The National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners (NARUC) recognizes adequate utility service to be a necessity, key to the health and safety of American households; and

**WHEREAS**, The severe constraints on State budgets and the increased strain on the nation's support system provided by nonprofit, faith-based, and other community organizations, have limited the resources available for energy assistance; and

**WHEREAS**, The Energy Information Agency (EIA) has found that compared to last year, this year's energy prices are 30 percent higher for natural gas, 60 percent higher for heating oil, 25 percent higher for propane and 11 percent higher for electricity. The high-energy prices are due in large part to the unusually cold winter experienced in various regions of the county this year, increasing demand for home heating. As a result, natural gas storage inventories are significantly below the five-year average, and at their lowest levels at this time of the year; and

**WHEREAS**, An estimated 4.6 million families received LIHEAP assistance in FY 2002, and the requests for assistance have increased substantially this year; and

**WHEREAS**, LIHEAP provides vital heating and cooling assistance to low-income families, including working poor households, senior citizens, and persons with disabilities; and

**WHEREAS**, LIHEAP is a targeted block grant program, which

provides built-in flexibility in Federal-State partnerships, and is the foundation for many programs authorized by State public utility commissions to assist low-income customers:

- To meet their bill payment obligations through direct assistance, arrearage forgiveness, and reduction of bills to more affordable levels,
- To prevent service terminations in winter as well as during heat emergencies,
- To make the transition from public assistance to economic self-reliance,
- To help working poor households remain economically self-sufficient, and
- To weatherize their homes, repair defective heating equipment, and reduce energy usage; now therefore be it

**RESOLVED**, That the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners (NARUC), convened in its July 2003 Summer Committee Meetings in Denver, Colorado supports increased funding and advance appropriation for LIHEAP; and be it further

**RESOLVED**, That the NARUC urges the Congress to appropriate LIHEAP funding of at least \$3.4 billion for FY 2004, and an advance appropriation for FY 2005 of at least \$3 billion; and be it further

**RESOLVED**, That the NARUC also urges the Congress to appropriate such funding prior to the commencement of the winter heating season.

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Sponsored by the Committee on Consumer Affairs and Gas Committee

Adopted by the NARUC Board of Directors July 30, 2003