

Resolution Regarding the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)

WHEREAS, The National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners (NARUC) has consistently supported a Resolution calling for all commissions to continue to actively support the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) as well as adequate funding for it; *and*

WHEREAS, LIHEAP is a vital lifeline to low income families, working poor households, senior citizens, and persons with disabilities in meeting their energy needs; *and*

WHEREAS, Low income families, the elderly and many working poor Americans face a continuing energy crisis with energy burdens that well exceed 15% of their household incomes; *and*

WHEREAS, The federal LIHEAP program funding significantly eases the home energy affordability crisis faced by millions of Americans; *and*

WHEREAS, The LIHEAP program is an important part of a two-part energy assistance strategy designed by States to provide energy assistance payments to low income households through LIHEAP while promoting energy efficiency through the DOE weatherization program; *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 and many gas and electric companies and community service organizations, which assist low-income customers:

- To meet their bill payment obligations through direct assistance, arrearage forgiveness, an reduction of bills to more affordable levels;
- To prevent service terminations in winter as well as during heat emergencies;
- To help keep working poor households self-sustainable;
- To help households make the transition from public assistance;
- To weatherize homes, to repair defective heating equipment, and reduce usage;

WHEREAS, Many low income Americans do not have sufficient income to pay for the basic necessities of life and are experiencing a crisis in paying home energy bills, thereby contributing to a health and safety crisis which is a national, not a local crisis; *and*

WHEREAS, The recent heat wave in the southwest has significantly raised the energy costs of the low-income and elderly residents in those states, thereby contributing to a health and safety crisis which is a national, not a local crisis; *and*

WHEREAS, Last week President Clinton released \$100 million in LIHEAP funds to assist low-income consumers in the heat-stricken states with purchases of fans and air-conditioners and with the payment of their electric bills; *and*

WHEREAS, The House of Representatives Committee on Appropriations is now considering a bill that does not include any funding for LIHEAP in FY 1999; *and*

WHEREAS, The total elimination of funding for LIHEAP will threaten the continuation of a number of State initiatives that have relied on the LIHEAP program to be the foundation for providing a modest amount of energy security for low-income Americans; *now, therefore, be it*

RESOLVED, That the Executive Committee of the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners (“NARUC”) convened at its 1998 Summer Meetings in Seattle, Washington, supports the appropriation of at least \$1.3 billion level for FY 1999 and an advance appropriation of at least \$1.3 billion for FY 2000; *and be it further*

RESOLVED, That NARUC supports the reauthorization of the LIHEAP program at authorization levels enacted in the Human Services Amendments of 1994, P.L. 103-252, to ensure that this program more adequately meets the needs of low-income households.

*Sponsored by the Committees on Energy Resources and Electricity
Adopted July 1998*