



N A R U C
National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners

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NARUC Responds to Proposed Lifeline Reform Order

NARUC issues the statement below in response to the Fact Sheet released today on the proposed Lifeline Reform Order set for the Federal Communications Commission's March 31, 2016, agenda meeting:

State Commissions have an important role in determining whether a company should be eligible to receive public subsidies. Chairman Wheeler's proposal would strip States of that role, contrary to the intent of Congress. This step can only increase the abuse of the Lifeline program. There are certain positive notes in Chairman Wheeler's proposal, such as possible compensation for the efforts States have already undertaken in establishing eligibility databases, but improvements are necessary. Fortunately, there is still time for the agency to revise its approach before the vote later this month.

—NARUC President Travis Kavulla of Montana.

We appreciate the FCC's response to NARUC's February resolution on eligibility and access to State databases. However, even if it can be justified on appeal, the proposal to trade State oversight, which assures service quality for Lifeline subscribers, to lure non-State certified carriers into the Broadband Lifeline business seems a poorly reasoned policy choice. It can only lead to more fraud and abuse, reduced service quality and protection for Lifeline recipients, and the slow demise of State matching programs. We hope to work closely with the FCC and industry on a better solution.

—NARUC Committee on Telecommunications Chair Chris Nelson of South Dakota

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NARUC is a non-profit organization founded in 1889 whose members include the governmental agencies that are engaged in the regulation of utilities and carriers in the fifty States, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. NARUC's member agencies regulate telecommunications, energy, and water utilities. NARUC represents the interests of State public utility commissions before the three branches of the Federal government.