

Resolution Regarding Federal Funding of 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 State public utility commissions to continue to actively support adequate funding of the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP); *and*

WHEREAS, LIHEAP is a vital lifeline to low income households in meeting their energy needs; *and*

WHEREAS, In FY 1996, LIHEAP funding has been cut by nearly one-third from FY 1995 levels; *and*

WHEREAS, Low-income households face a continuing energy crisis with energy burdens that often exceed 15% of their household income; *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 while promoting energy efficiency in these households; *and*

WHEREAS, The 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 cash grants, arrearage forgiveness, and reduction of bills to more affordable levels;
- to weatherize their homes and reduce energy consumption;
- to repair defective heating equipment;
- to prevent service terminations in winter as well as during heat emergencies; *and*

WHEREAS, In FY 1995 approximately 6 million households received assistance under this program, however due to Federal funding cuts in LIHEAP in FY 1996, nearly 1.5 million households have lost essential benefits; *and*

WHEREAS, Further reductions in or the total elimination of funding for the 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 1996 Winter Meeting in Washington, D.C., urges the full release of the \$100 million in "advance appropriations" for FY 1996 that has been enacted by the Congress; *and be it further*

RESOLVED, That NARUC supports release of the \$300 million contingency fund due to the severe weather conditions experienced throughout the country; *and be it further*

RESOLVED, That NARUC strongly urges the Administration and Congress to reject any further cuts in or rescissions to LIHEAP funding and to appropriate at least \$1.3 billion for FY 1997 and at least \$1.3 billion for FY 1998 and to continue to provide advance appropriations for LIHEAP in FY 1998.

Sponsored by the Committee on Energy Conservation
Adopted February 28, 1996