

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

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 forecasted another consecutive winter with high residential heating bills following severe weather across the country; *and*

WHEREAS, An estimated 4.9 million households have received LIHEAP assistance this winter, which is a 7% increase over the number of households served in 2003 and a 15% increase over the number of households receiving LIHEAP in 2002; *and*

WHEREAS, In 2003 states served only about 15% of the 30 million households eligible for assistance; *and*

WHEREAS, LIHEAP would need to be funded at over \$3 billion simply to equal the purchasing power it had in 1982; *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,
- To weatherize their homes, repair defective heating equipment, and reduce energy usage; *now therefore be it*

RESOLVED, That the Board of Directors of the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners (NARUC), convened at its March 2004 Winter Meetings in Washington D.C., supports increased funding for both the regular and emergency programs, and advance appropriation for LIHEAP; *and be it further*

RESOLVED, That NARUC urges the Congress to appropriate LIHEAP funding of at least \$3.4 billion for FY 2005, and an advance appropriation for FY 2006 of at least \$3.4 billion; *and be it further*

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

Sponsored by the Consumer Affairs Committee and Gas Committee
Adopted by the NARUC Board of Directors March 10, 2004