

Resolution Regarding the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program

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 exceeded 15% of their household income, before recent increases in energy prices; *and*

WHEREAS, Recent large increases in wellhead natural gas costs and electricity generation prices pose great risks to the ability of low income families, the elderly and many working poor Americans to afford essential electricity or gas services; *and*

WHEREAS, The 106th Congress is presently considering appropriations for LIHEAP for the present federal fiscal year, and has before it proposals not to adopt advance funding of LIHEAP for the next fiscal year; *and*

WHEREAS, The Administration and the Congress have not agreed on funding for LIHEAP for the winter of 2000-2001, and many areas of the country have already experienced

dangerously cold weather; *and*

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

WHEREAS, When LIHEAP funding is not determined by the Congress until close to or even after the winter heating season has begun, and when state and local LIHEAP administrators are unable to plan in advance for the basic level of LIHEAP

funds they may anticipate in the upcoming year, state and local LIHEAP administrators face difficulties in ensuring that assistance is provided when needed and in sufficient amounts to prevent hardship to many households; *and*

WHEREAS, Insufficient funding for LIHEAP will undermine and 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 National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners (NARUC), assembled in its November 2000 Annual Convention in San Diego, California, supports the appropriation of at least \$1.4 billion in regular funding for FY 2001 and an advance appropriation of at least \$1.5 billion for FY 2002; *and be it further*

RESOLVED, That NARUC urges the Congress to determine the funding for FY 2001 and advance funding for FY 2002 as soon as possible; *and be it further*

RESOLVED, That NARUC recommends that Congress enact \$300 million in emergency contingency funding for FY 2001.

Sponsored by the Committee on Consumer Affairs

Recommended by the Board of Directors.

Adopted in Convention November 15, 2000.