

Resolution Concerning Wireless Handset Proliferation and the Environment

WHEREAS, Certain components of wireless telephone handsets, including batteries, contain toxic materials; and

WHEREAS, A recent Associated Press article reports that over the next three years it is expected there will be, annually, 130 million cellular phones discarded resulting in significant amounts of toxic waste released into the environment in the United States; and

WHEREAS, Each wireless phone does not operate with all major air interfaces and frequency bands so that when consumers switch wireless carriers, they often must abandon their current handset and purchase a different handset; and

WHEREAS, If wireless phones were fully "interoperable" consumers would continue to use their existing wireless phone rather than having to incur the expense of purchasing a new phone, and this would greatly reduce the amount of toxic waste released into the environment; and

WHEREAS, Even customers continuing with the same wireless service provider oftentimes will purchase a new phone to receive more convenient phone features; and

WHEREAS, The existence of recycling and take-back programs would reduce the amount of old cell phones discarded and thus reduce the amount of waste released into the environment; now therefore be it

RESOLVED, That the Board of Directors of the National

Association of Regulatory Commissioners (NARUC), convened at its July 2002 Summer Meetings in Portland, Oregon, calls upon all wireless carriers and their equipment providers to expeditiously address universal interoperability to reduce customer need to change instruments; and be it further

RESOLVED, That NARUC alerts Congress and the wireless industry to the environmental impact of the proliferation of wireless phones; and be it further

RESOLVED, That NARUC urges all wireless carriers to immediately explore "take-back" programs so that cellular phones and batteries can be recycled.

Sponsored by the Committee on Consumer Affairs

Adopted by the NARUC Board of Directors July 31, 2002