

Resolution Opposing the Plan to Centralize Regional U.S. DOE Offices

WHEREAS, Energy, its generation, transmission, distribution and use are vital to the national, regional and State's economic growth and security; *and*

WHEREAS, Recently enacted and proposed federal statutes, regulations and policies will effect the overall fuel diversity, environmental impacts and reliability of current and future energy systems; *and*

WHEREAS, State utility and energy offices, either as mandated in some cases, or in partnership in others, assist in the implementation of these energy statutes, regulations or policies; *and*

WHEREAS, There is a proposal in the Senate Energy & Water bill, to eliminate the six United States Department of Energy (DOE) Regional Offices and consolidate them into two regional Offices, one at the National Energy Technologies Laboratory (NETL) in Morgantown, West Virginia, representing the States of the eastern United States, and the other one at the U.S. DOE Golden Field Office in Golden, Colorado, representing the States of the western United States, for implementing State coordination of energy policies and programs; *and*

WHEREAS, The six DOE Regional Offices currently serve as the contact point for the coordination between State agencies and the DOE regarding the development and implementation of these regulations and policies; *and*

WHEREAS, In addition the six DOE Regional Offices serve as the ombudsman for regional, State and local interests with the DOE and serve the important function as the only federal "feedback loop" for these interests with the DOE on programs; *and*

WHEREAS, The six DOE Regional Offices have an expertise in understanding the differences between States within their region and how best to efficiently and effective implement federal programs with the States within their region; *and*

WHEREAS, The six DOE Regional Offices have a broad expertise in all aspects of the various U.S. DOE energy programs including energy efficiency, renewable energy, and fossil fuel technologies; *and*

WHEREAS, The six DOE Regional Offices have played a vital and critical role in connecting the research and development technology specific activities of the energy laboratories to deployment of these technologies to the States; *and*

WHEREAS, The main focus and mission of the NETL in Morgantown, West Virginia, and the DOE Golden Field Office in Golden, Colorado, is research - not development, deployment, and implementation of State energy programs and policies; *and*

WHEREAS, NETL's major focus and mission is the advancement of fossil fuel energy technologies and the DOE Golden Field Office's major focus and mission is the advancement of renewable energy and energy efficiency; neither has cross technology expertise nor a substantive understanding of the underlying State programs; *and*

WHEREAS, Without cross training of these activities and other State coordination and deployment activities, the proposal to eliminate the six DOE regional offices and consolidate them into two regional offices, one in Morgantown, WV and the other in Golden, CO, will in effect set up two separate and distinct State coordination energy offices with set and specific technology areas; *and*

WHEREAS, Specific responsibilities required of the various federal energy programs, which require national consistency such as in the Weatherization Programs, could not be easily met under the proposed reorganization; *and*

WHEREAS, A key objective of our energy policies and programs should be to make the State and local efforts complementary with the DOE efforts, in order to ensure that neither the States nor the federal government are duplicating efforts or wasting money since the States spend as much on energy polices and programs as the federal government programs each year; *and*

WHEREAS, Key objectives of this proposed plan to consolidate the six DOE Regional Offices into two locations, one at NETL and one the DOE Golden Field office - to save monies and increase operational efficiency, may not be achieved because of the lack of current understanding of the State's programs by NETL and the DOE Golden Field Office and the increased travel time and cost by the States to participate in regional policing planning and training meetings currently held by the six DOE regional Offices; *and*

WHEREAS, A DOE Inspector General's report, issued in May 2005, was critical of the DOE Golden Field Office and NETL regarding their overall project management activities; *now therefore be it*

RESOLVED, That the Board of Directors of the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners (NARUC), convened in its July 2005 Summer Committee Meeting in Austin, Texas, for the above reasons, opposes the proposal to eliminate the six DOE Regional Offices that currently implement State coordination activities to be consolidated into two regional offices, one for the eastern States and one for the western States, as contained in the Senate version of the FY'06 Energy and Water Development Appropriations Bill.

*Proposed by Committee on Energy Resources and Environment
Adopted by the NARUC Board of Directors July 27, 2005*