

Resolution on Recommendations for Use of TSP and GETS in State
Emergency and Contingency Planning

WHEREAS, In 2001, NARUC created the Ad Hoc Critical Infrastructure Protection Committee to examine potential recommendations to States and municipalities to, among other things, address national security and emergency preparedness (NS/EP) measures; and

WHEREAS, Telecommunications plays a vital role in ensuring the NS/EP capabilities of a State or municipality to respond to a crisis, all governmental entities should undertake a review of the Telecommunications Service Priority (TSP) and Government Emergency Telecommunications System (GETS) programs as a critical part of any State and local emergency and contingency planning efforts; and

WHEREAS, The TSP and GETS programs are recognized as potentially critical components of a State or local emergency or disaster response plan; and

WHEREAS, TSP provides a means for emergency responders to obtain priority provisioning or restoration of telecommunications circuits in the event of an emergency, thus connecting the vital communications links necessary to run critical services responding to emergencies; and

WHEREAS, In the days following the September 11 attacks, over 598 TSP provisioning requests were received from 46 different federal and State organizations, which were assigned priority emergency codes that allowed TSP circuits to be repaired or installed before any non-TSP related requests, thus

leading to the success of TSP in rapidly reconstituting telecommunications services to Wall Street and lower Manhattan, and provisioning of new circuits for responders, which would have been limited significantly without prior membership in the TSP program; and

WHEREAS, The TSP Program is available to provide priority provisioning or restoration of telecommunications circuits used to support national security or emergency preparedness functions at the federal, State, and local level, yet only 22 States participate in the TSP program; of the 22 States that have TSP circuits, 4 States have 66 percent of all TSP circuits, 11 States have less than 100 TSP circuits to support the State's disaster planning and emergency response capabilities, and three States have fewer than 5 TSP circuits; and

WHEREAS, The GETS program provides a significantly increased capability to NS/EP personnel, including first responders, to complete emergency communications when they are otherwise unable to complete those calls through regular telecommunications means, as well as to provide voice and data transmission via clear and secure telephone, facsimile, modem, or other emergency response equipment, within and between all 50 States; and

WHEREAS, Despite the heavy telephone congestion occurring immediately following the September 11 attacks and during the first week, 95 percent of the 4,000 GETS calls to and from Manhattan successfully got through, and another 3,000 GETS calls were made in Arlington, Virginia and around the Pentagon during the same time period, with similar success rates; and

WHEREAS, the GETS program is available for individuals in Federal, State, and local government, as well as private sector organizations performing NS/EP functions, and key industry organizations, such as utility companies with emergency responsibilities, banks, medical facilities, and transportation companies such as airlines and railroads, and non-profit organizations which have emergency response and support missions, such as the American Red Cross; now therefore be it

RESOLVED, That the Board of Directors of the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners (NARUC) convened in its February 2003 Winter Meetings in Washington, D.C. believes that the Telecommunications Service Priority (TSP) program can be a useful tool to restore critical communications circuits needed to respond or recover from an emergency or natural disaster; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the Government Emergency Telecommunications System (GETS) program can be a useful tool to provide increased capability to complete emergency communications; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners recommends that State public utility commissions coordinate with their State emergency management agency to learn more about eligibility and enrollment in the TSP and GETS programs and to determine appropriate participation in these programs.

Sponsored by the Ad Hoc Committee on Critical Infrastructure

and the Committee on Telecommunications

Adopted by the NARUC Board of Directors February 26, 2003