

Resolution Regarding the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)

WHEREAS, The National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners (NARUC) has consistently supported resolutions 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 exceed 15% of their household income; *and*

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

WHEREAS, The LIHEAP program is an important part of a two-part energy assistance strategy designed by States to provide energy assistance payments to low income households through LIHEAP while promoting energy efficiency through the DOE weatherization program; *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, and 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, Many low income Americans do not have sufficient income to pay for the basic necessities of life and are experiencing a crisis in paying home energy bills, thereby contributing to a health and safety crisis which is a national not a local crisis; *and*

WHEREAS, LIHEAP works in tandem with 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 Board of Directors of the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners, convened at its 1999 Winter Meeting in Washington D.C., supports the appropriation of at least \$1.3 billion level for FY 2000 and an advance appropriation of at least \$1.3 billion for FY 2001; *and be it further*

RESOLVED, That NARUC is pleased that LIHEAP was reauthorized and urges the Congress to appropriate funds closer to the authorization levels in order to ensure that this program more adequately meets the needs of low-income households; *and be it further*

RESOLVED, That NARUC recommends that Congress enact \$300 million in emergency contingency funding for FY 2000.

*Sponsored by the Ad Hoc Committee on Consumer Affairs and the Committee on Energy Resources and the Environment
Adopted February 24, 1999*