

Resolution in Support of a Study on Identifying Best Practices for Energy Assistance Programs

WHEREAS, Electric and gas utilities throughout the country have implemented energy assistance (EA) programs targeted at low-income households; *and*

WHEREAS, State public utility commissions have long attached importance to utilities providing affordable service to all their customers, including low-income households; *and*

WHEREAS, The need for EA programs is expected to grow in the coming years as Federal, State and Local governments in addition to non-governmental organizations will undergo severe financial challenges in continuing their past support for energy assistance to low-income; *and*

WHEREAS, The public interest dictates that EA programs should achieve the most favorable benefit-cost ratio; that is, the highest benefits to recipients given the dollars funded by utility customers; *and*

WHEREAS, Benefit-cost measurements require comprehensive data and analyses of the data, which include: (1) program participation rate, (2) the dollar benefits per program recipient, (3) the reduction in the energy burden of program recipients, and (4) the reductions in total utility arrearages, collection costs, debt write-offs, and disconnections attributable to EA programs; *and*

WHEREAS, In creating new EA programs or improving or expanding existing ones, State public utility commissions and utilities will benefit from information on the economic impact of households at risk and the various goals of States; *and*

WHEREAS, State public utility commissions and utilities will benefit from having information on the development, structure and implementation of EA programs; *and*

WHEREAS, State public utility commissions and utilities will benefit from information that identifies the features of EA programs that seem most crucial for their effectiveness or reflect best practices; *now, therefore be it*

RESOLVED, That the Board of Directors of the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners, convened at its 2010 Summer Committee Meetings in Sacramento, California, urges a study to identify best practices for energy assistance programs; *and be it further*

RESOLVED, That the study furnish comprehensive information on utility and governmental EA programs and the various rationales and objectives that led to their formation; *and be it further*

RESOLVED, That the study build on relevant work previously done by industry groups such as the Edison Electric Institute and the American Gas Association, in addition to other organizations such as the Applied Public Policy Research Institute for Study and Evaluation (APPRISE) and Fisher, Sheehan, and Colton;¹ *and be it further*

¹ See, for example, APPRISE and Fisher, Sheehan, and Colton, *Ratepayer-Funded Low-Income Energy Programs: Performance and Possibilities, Final Report*, July 2007.

RESOLVED, That the study serve the low-income community by providing a publicly available report that includes comprehensive data and other information on past and existing EA programs; *and be it further*

RESOLVED, That the study, among other things, contain information on EA programs across the country that includes: (1) EA program design, (2) EA program purpose and objective, (3) the underlying legal and regulatory support for the EA programs, and (4) the methodologies applied to the measurement of EA program benefits and costs; *and be it further*

RESOLVED, That the study include the major lessons learned from existing and past EA programs and identify best practices that State public utility commissions and utilities can apply in the future.

*Sponsored by the Committee on Consumer Affairs
Adopted by the NARUC Board of Directors July 26, 2010*