



N A R U C
National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners

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NARUC Statement on the FCC Order on Lifeline Reform Waivers

WASHINGTON—The National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners supports the Federal Communications Commission’s decision to extend waivers for its Lifeline & Link Up Reform Order. Issued on April 27, 2016, the order standardized and streamlined eligibility criteria for the Federal Lifeline Program and included a deadline of December 2016 for state programs to comply with the new criteria.

NARUC, state commissions and stakeholder groups filed petitions requesting waivers, as the new FCC rules will require that some state commissions revise their regulations to update state Lifeline laws and make significant technological upgrades. Also, a [Resolution on Requested Waivers to Implement the FCC’s Lifeline Reform Order](#) was adopted at NARUC’s Annual Meeting in November 2016. The resolution outlines the reasons why the waivers are necessary.

This afternoon, the FCC issued an order granting the bulk of the state waiver requests.

“NARUC is pleased that the FCC recognizes the challenges faced by state commissions to effectively implement and administer the new process. As we noted in our recent resolution on this issue, these waivers are needed to help resolve eligibility differences between state and federal Lifeline programs, obtain answers to several questions that still remain and most importantly, to ensure a smooth, efficient and effective transition.

“Although obviously NARUC would have preferred favorable action on all the requests, I want to commend the FCC, and in particular its staff, for their concentrated outreach and receptivity to the valid concerns to making this December deadline filed by 12 State commissions. FCC staffers Ryan Palmer, Garnet Hanley, Jodie Griffin, along with Lisa Hone, the Chairman’s Legal Advisor, Matt DelNero, Trent Harkrader, and Elizabeth Mumaw were crucial components of the FCC’s outreach effort. Similarly, at the USAC, NARUC alumnus Jessica Zufolo, along with Michelle Garber and Tiffany Brady deserve NARUC’s thanks.”

—NARUC President Robert Powelson of Pennsylvania

“Our state commissions and other stakeholders need sufficient time to ensure that these Lifeline changes are rolled out in a manner that does not cause confusion, errors or delays in service for consumers. A rushed process does not serve the public interest. The FCC’s granting states more time to efficiently change their statutes, rules and technological processes is a good example of cooperative federalism, which is commendable.”

—Hon. Chris Nelson of South Dakota, Chair of NARUC’s Committee on Telecommunications

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NARUC is a non-profit organization founded in 1889 whose members include the governmental agencies that are engaged in the regulation of utilities and carriers in the fifty States, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. NARUC’s member agencies regulate telecommunications, energy, and water utilities. NARUC represents the interests of State public utility commissions before the three branches of the Federal government.