

Resolution Honoring Dr. William Johnston (CA)

Whereas Dr. William (Bill) Johnston served with distinction as a member of the Telecommunications Staff Subcommittee from 2011-2016, sharing his insights and experience as a staff member of the California Public Utilities Commission (“CPUC”) for more than twenty years and as Telecommunications advisor to Commissioner Catherine J.K. Sandoval;

Whereas Dr. Johnston brought to his public service his academic expertise, including his doctorate awarded by the Government Department of the Claremont Graduate School where he studied political philosophy, American history, statistics, German, and Greek; his university teaching experience at Claremont College and California State University at Northridge; a year of seminary study; and his private sector experience;

Whereas Dr. Johnston played a prominent role at National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners (“NARUC”) Committee Meetings, serving as a panelist, moderator, organizer, and behind the scenes researcher, briefer, and cheerleader;

Whereas Dr. Johnston diligently attended NARUC Telecommunications Staff Subcommittee and NARUC Telecommunications Committee meetings, listening to each speaker with rapt attention, and offering helpful suggestions during Staff Subcommittee discussions to ensure that resolutions captured the spirit of the author’s intention and NARUC’s commitment to safe, reliable, accessible, and affordable telecommunications service;

Whereas Dr. Johnston always said “yes” to ideas, assignments, proceedings, and trips to the most remote parts of California, and had a talent for driving on winding mountain roads while throwing metaphorical spaghetti against the windshield to see what policy ideas would stick;

Whereas Dr. Johnston worked tirelessly to increase access to communications and electrical infrastructure for Native American tribes, rural communities, and the people of other underserved areas, and traveled up, down, and across California to organize and attend meetings and encourage people to express their voices in CPUC proceedings and at NARUC meetings;

Whereas Dr. Johnston made friends wherever he went, forged by common interests in thriving communities, due process, respect for culture, inclusion, nature, and cameras;

Whereas Dr. Johnston used his camera—a serious camera, not just the one in his government-issued cell phone—to document utility pole safety violations, public participation hearings, conditions in unserved and underserved communities, and photograph the people he met and befriended along the way;

Whereas Dr. Johnston’s photographs contributed greatly to Commissioner Sandoval’s reports to CPUC Commission meetings that helped the Commissioners, staff, parties, and the public understand the status of California’s communications and electric infrastructure, and supported policies to promote safe and reliable service through sound facilities;

Whereas Dr. Johnston befriended cats, including feral cats in rural communities, making the mightiest cat purr, though he avoided bears and ensured all stayed safe from bears and other hazards near the public hearings Commissioner Sandoval convened in rural communities;

Whereas Dr. Johnston was generous to his friends, who received yearly calendars with his photographs of California vistas, and to all with whom he shared a laugh, smile, and a deep commitment to public service;

Whereas Dr. Johnston often worked late into the night, and could be found in his office with his light and computer on, chewing on the stem of his glasses while editing reports, proposals, and draft resolutions;

Whereas Dr. Johnston was instrumental in modernizing the California Lifeline program to include wireless phone and data services, making it the nation's largest state Lifeline program;

Whereas Dr. Johnston generously supported Commissioner Sandoval's service as the Co-Vice Chair of NARUC's Telecommunications Committee, and State Chair and Policy Chair of the Federal Communications Commission's Federal-State Joint Conference on Advanced Telecommunications Services, and helped organize many conferences and panels, conduct research, and draft filings that service entailed;

Whereas Dr. Johnston retired from the CPUC staff and the NARUC Telecommunications Staff Subcommittee on December 30, 2016, and is enjoying friends, photography, reading, cats, and monitoring telecommunications service during the rainy season after years of drought; *and*

Whereas all who worked with or know Dr. Johnston are lucky to be his friend and to learn from his deep knowledge and commitment to public service that includes all peoples, and we salute Dr. Johnston for a job well done; *now therefore be it*

Resolved, that the NARUC Board of Directors, convened at its 2017 Summer Policy Summit in San Diego, California, extends congratulations and thanks to Dr. Bill Johnston for his years of dedicated public service to NARUC, the citizens of California and the United States, along with best wishes for a happy retirement and success in the future.

Sponsored by the Committee on Telecommunications on July 18, 2017
Adopted by the NARUC Board of Directors on July 19, 2017