



N A R U C  
National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners

**For Immediate Release**

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**NARUC Releases Consumer Guide on Natural Disasters and Utilities**

WASHINGTON (February 26, 2019)—When disasters threaten communities, consumers need immediate information on what to do, how to do it and when to do it. The National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners has released a guide to educate utility consumers on managing natural disasters and understanding the impact on their utility services.

*Consumers and Catastrophes: Understanding the Impact to You, Your Family, and Your Utilities*, prepared by NARUC's Committee on Consumers and the Public Interest, bridges the information gap that often occurs before, during and after weather emergencies and natural disasters.

"*The Consumers and Catastrophes Guide* is a resource for consumers, government and community agencies and other stakeholders who provide support to consumers as they prepare for and respond to emergencies. It is distinguishable from existing emergency preparedness resources in that it focuses on the impact natural disasters and emergencies have on utilities," said Maida Coleman of the Missouri Public Service Commission, who chairs the committee. "This guide will empower consumers by removing the uncertainty and sense of being overwhelmed as they make emergency preparedness plans for themselves and their loved ones."

Organized by disaster type, the guide features checklists for preparing before a disaster, safe action to take during the event and what to do after weather emergencies, such as blizzards, earthquakes, hurricanes, wildfires and pipeline explosions. Nine appendices provide additional resources, including information on how to shut off utilities, emergency alerts and warning systems, how to develop emergency plans, food safety and how to assemble emergency kits.

"Most people know it is important to be prepared for emergencies; the difficulty lies in knowing where and how to start emergency planning and knowing what to expect," said NARUC President Nick Wagner, a member of the Iowa Utilities Board. "Public safety is a concern for all utility regulators. I am pleased NARUC is helping to educate the public on preparedness and leading the discussion on the impact disasters have on utilities."

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State regulatory commissions, as well as stakeholders and other agencies, can select specific disaster sections from the guide to use for consumer education on particular weather emergencies when they are likely to threaten their communities or those most prone to certain regions.

The publication, released earlier this month at NARUC's Winter Policy Summit in Washington, D.C., can be downloaded at <http://bit.ly/ConsumerCatastropheGuide>.

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#### **About NARUC**

***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.***