

Resolution on Lifeline Service Verification

WHEREAS, The Federal Universal Service Fund (USF) was initiated to ensure universal access to telecommunications services for all consumers; *and*

WHEREAS, The National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners (NARUC) fully supports making telephone service more affordable for low-income consumers and passed a resolution in July 2009 declaring that, annually, the first full week following Labor Day as Lifeline Awareness Week; *and*

WHEREAS, The USF-supported Lifeline Program is intended to provide applications for USF-supported Lifeline service access to telecommunication services including the public benefit of easily and reliably reaching emergency services by dialing 911; *and*

WHEREAS, Applicants for Lifeline services may misunderstand eligibility requirements including the limitation of one subsidy per household and other matters; *and*

WHEREAS, Some States are developing real-time access to information necessary to verify household eligibility and ensure that a household receives only one Lifeline subsidy; *and*

WHEREAS, Current Lifeline policies do not address the need for assistance demonstrated by low-income consumers who live in facilities where multiple eligible applicants reside; *and*

WHEREAS, All Eligible Telecommunications Carriers (ETCs) should be required to provide a means to submit surcharges to State and local authorities that deliver and support E 911 and all other telecommunications obligations under State and federal law; *and*

WHEREAS, Many States estimate that less than 25% of eligible applicants currently subscribe to Lifeline; *and*

WHEREAS, USF Disbursements for Lifeline significantly increased the USF contribution factor from approximately 9.4% in the First Quarter of 2009 to 14.2% in the First Quarter of 2010; *and*

WHEREAS, Members of Congress have expressed concern regarding the size of the USF and have requested additional information regarding the health of the USF, specifically the contribution factor; *now, therefore be it*

RESOLVED, That the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners, convened at its 2009 Annual Convention in Chicago, Illinois, calls upon the FCC and the States to review existing processes to verify eligibility and, if necessary, develop and implement best practices and suggestions, including consideration of real-time verification, for all Lifeline applicants to ensure eligibility for support to verify applicant eligibility; *and be it further*

RESOLVED, That the FCC and the States develop and implement Best Practices to ensure that all ETC carriers are required to provide a means to submit surcharges to State and local authorities that deliver and support E 911 and all other telecommunications obligations under State and federal law; *and be it further*

RESOLVED, That NARUC directs its General Counsel to communicate this resolution to Congress and to all relevant federal and State agencies and policymakers.

Sponsored by the Committees on Consumer Affairs and Telecommunications

Recommended by the NARUC Board of Directors November 17, 2009

Adopted by the Committee of the Whole, November 18, 2009