

Resolution Supporting a Low-Income Broadband Service Adoption Program

WHEREAS, The Federal Communications Commission's (FCC) 2010 Broadband Consumer Survey found that about one-third of Americans do not use broadband Internet access service at home; and that a variety of factors drive non-adoption, including initial costs of equipment, monthly service costs, digital literacy, and relevance; *and*

WHEREAS, As stated in the FCC's Notice of Proposed Rulemaking on Lifeline and Link-Up Reform and Modernization (Released: March 4, 2011; FCC 11-32; "Lifeline NPRM"), the Pew Internet Research Center's "Home Broadband 2010 Report" found that the rate of broadband service adoption has slowed dramatically; *and*

WHEREAS, The Lifeline NPRM proposes to launch multiple Lifeline/Link-Up Broadband Service Pilot Program projects supported by the \$1.2 billion federal Universal Service Fund's Low-Income Program, and suggests that these pilot program projects may be able to play an important, if limited role, in enabling public-private partnerships to help address the national broadband service adoption challenge; *and*

WHEREAS, The Lifeline/Link-Up Broadband Service Pilot Program participants may incur additional costs or otherwise be penalized if required to obtain local telephone service from the Pilot Program-eligible broadband service providers; *and*

WHEREAS, The FCC sought comment in a Notice of Inquiry (Released: March 4, 2011; FCC 11-30; "Native Nations Broadband Fund NOI") about whether the FCC, pursuant to existing statutory authority, should implement a recommendation (#8.18) from the 2010 National Broadband Plan that called on Congress to establish a Tribal Broadband Fund to be used for a variety of purposes, including "to provide small, targeted grants on an expedited basis for Internet access and adoption programs;" *and*

WHEREAS, The FCC did not propose in the Native Nations Broadband Fund NOI a means to finance the Native Nations Broadband Fund, however, some NOI commenters have assumed that the FCC intends to draw financial support for the new Fund from the federal Universal Service Fund; *and*

WHEREAS, The Board of Directors of the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners, convened at its 2009 Winter Committee Meetings in Washington, D.C., adopted a Resolution that fully supports increasing broadband service adoption among low-income consumers through "the establishment of a three-year federal Lifeline and Link-Up Pilot Program for broadband Internet access services and enabling access devices;" *now, therefore be it*

RESOLVED, That the Board of Directors of the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners, convened at its 2011 Summer Committee Meetings in Los Angeles, California, urges the FCC, on behalf of the Native Nations, and the States to work within the existing federal Universal Service Fund's budget in order to improve broadband service adoption in urban and rural areas and for Native Nations communities located on Tribal lands through coordinated Lifeline and Link-Up Broadband Service Pilot Program projects; *and be it further*

RESOLVED, That the FCC should require that Lifeline/Link-Up Broadband Service Pilot Program participants are not required to change local telephone service providers, purchase bundled broadband and voice services or otherwise are penalized in order to obtain Lifeline and Link-Up broadband services and enabling access devices; *and be it further*

RESOLVED, That the FCC, on behalf of the Native Nations, and the States jointly establish at least one Lifeline/Link-Up Broadband Service Pilot Program project in each of the five NARUC affiliated regulatory conference regions that will include digital literacy and outreach components and that will defray a meaningful amount of the program participants' average cost for the installation/activation and monthly charges for broadband service and acquisition of enabling access devices; *and be it further*

RESOLVED, That the Lifeline/Link-Up Broadband Service Pilot Program will distribute Universal Service Fund financial support to service providers in a similar manner to the distribution procedures of the current Lifeline/Link-Up Program for local telephone service, recognizing that such approach should be technologically neutral and provide similar consumer protections as those provided currently to participants in the Lifeline/Link-Up Program for local telephone service.

*Sponsored by the Committee on Telecommunications
Adopted by the NARUC Board of Directors July 20, 2011*