

Resolution to Expedite Availability of Remote Areas Funding and Connect America Funding to Unserved and Underserved Areas Where Carriers Have Not Accepted Funding

WHEREAS, In 2011, the FCC created the Connect America Fund within the Universal Service Fund high-cost program; *and*

WHEREAS, The Connect America Fund is intended to ensure that advanced voice and broadband services are available throughout the nation, with a special focus on high-cost areas; *and*

WHEREAS, In the same 2011 *Report and Order* which launched the Connect America Fund, the FCC also created a Remote Areas Fund for extremely high-cost areas, with a targeted initial amount of \$100 million annually; *and*

WHEREAS, Both Funds are designed to ensure that consumers in rural, insular, high-cost, and extremely high-cost areas have access to modern communications facilities providing voice and broadband services, both fixed and mobile, at rates reasonably comparable to those in urban areas; *and*

WHEREAS, As of this writing, the FCC has authorized ten telecommunications carriers to receive nearly \$9 billion in support over six years to deploy rural broadband; *and*

WHEREAS, Together with designated carrier contributions, the Connect America Fund will support extension of broadband facilities and service over the duration of the program to nearly 7.3 million rural consumers in 45 States nationwide and one U.S. territory; *and*

WHEREAS, FCC Chairman Wheeler has recognized the urgent need to address the challenges of providing next generation telecommunications services to the most remote regions of the country, and has pledged that the FCC will develop rules by the end of 2015 for competitive bidding for those areas where the incumbent carrier has declined to accept Connect America Funding; *now, therefore be it*

RESOLVED, That the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners, convened at its 127th Annual Meeting in Austin, Texas, strongly supports the objectives of the Connect America Fund and its Remote Areas Fund component, and urges the FCC to move as quickly as possible to implement the competitive bidding process for the Connect America Fund Phase II (CAF II) and Remote Area Fund in order to ensure the timely availability of broadband facilities and services to the CAF II defined and more remote areas of the nation, including tribal regions, where incumbent carriers have declined support from the CAF II, and in remotes areas.

Sponsored by the Committee on Telecommunications

Recommended by the NARUC Board of Directors November 10, 2015

Adopted by the NARUC Committee of the Whole November 11, 2015