



N A R U C
National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners

August 31, 2023

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Senate Majority Leader

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Senate Minority Leader

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Speaker of the House

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries
Democratic Leader of the House

The Honorable Patty Murray
Chair
Senate Committee on Appropriations

The Honorable Susan Collins
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Appropriations

The Honorable Kay Granger
Chair
House Committee on Appropriations

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member
House Committee on Appropriations

The Honorable Maria Cantwell
Chair
Senate Commerce, Science & Transp. Committee

The Honorable Cathy McMorris Rodgers
Chair
House Committee on Energy & Commerce

The Honorable Ted Cruz
Ranking Member
Senate Commerce, Science & Transp. Committee

The Honorable Frank Pallone
Ranking Member
House Committee on Energy & Commerce

RE: Action Is Needed Now to Continue to Help Many of Your Most Vulnerable Constituents - NARUC urges each of you to support additional funding for the Affordable Connectivity Act – which subsidizes broadband access for qualifying families.

Dear Majority Leader Schumer, Minority Leader McConnell, Chair Murry, Ranking Member Collins, Chair Cantwell and Ranking Member Cruz, Speaker McCarthy, Democratic Leader Jeffries, Chair Granger, Ranking Member DeLauro, Chair McMorris Rodgers and Ranking Member Pallone:

The Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) is a Federal Communications Commission benefit program that provides households with a discount of up to \$30 per month toward Internet service, and up to \$75 per month for households on qualifying tribal lands. To qualify, a household is required to earn less than 200% of the federal poverty rate or participate in any number of public assistance programs. To date, the ACP has helped more than 19 million households in the United States, which represents approximately 41% of the estimated 46.3 million households eligible under the current screening criteria. The program has allowed at least 3 million low-income seniors, 400,000 veterans, and more than 3 million students remain online.

Currently, the program is expected to run out of funds no later than second quarter 2024 and very likely much earlier.

Universal high-speed internet access is essential for a well-functioning economy.

That's why at our most recent meeting last month on July 19th in Austin, Texas, the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners passed a [Resolution Supporting Permanent Funding for the Affordable Connectivity Program](#). The resolution specifically asked Congress to “provide permanent annual funding for a federal Low-Income Affordable Connectivity Program.”

If you have any questions about the resolution, which is appended to this letter, or other NARUC positions, please do not hesitate to contact the undersigned or Brad Ramsay at 202.257.0568 or jramsay@naruc.org.

Respectfully submitted

Michael Caron
NARUC President

Tim Schram
Chair, Committee on Telecommunications

Resolution Supporting Permanent Funding for the Affordable Connectivity Program

Whereas the federal government has made a historic investment in the Affordable Connectivity Program (“ACP” or “Program”) implemented by the Federal Communications Commission (“FCC”) to increase access to affordable high-speed broadband for eligible low-income families;

Whereas the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (“Infrastructure Act”) funded the \$14.2 billion budget for the ACP, including specifically designated funds to administer and promote the Program;

Whereas the Infrastructure Act reflects that the federal government and states have been long-term partners in jointly implementing and promoting programs that increase access to broadband;

Whereas the Infrastructure Act provides eligibility for ACP to all households that are currently enrolled in Lifeline; the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program and the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children; and the Medicaid Program implemented by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services;

Whereas in July 2022, NARUC passed a resolution urging state commissions, the FCC, and the Universal Service Administrative Company (“USAC”) to work collaboratively with federal and state agencies that implement programs whose target participants are eligible for Lifeline and ACP to promote awareness of the Program among eligible households;

Whereas as of June 2023, approximately 19 million eligible households are enrolled in ACP, which represents 41 percent of the estimated 46.3 million households eligible for ACP;

Whereas ACP is a temporary program that runs from April 2022 until the program expends all of its funds;

Whereas as of June 2023, there are \$8.6 billion of remaining ACP appropriations available for disbursement;

Whereas ACP is expected to disburse all remaining appropriations by the second quarter of 2024;

Whereas establishing a new federal assistance program was a complex process at the federal, state, territory, tribal and local levels. It required an extensive amount of effort by the FCC, USAC, states, internet service providers, and community organizations to get the program up and running, ensure that customers were aware of the program, review applications, and verify eligibility;

Whereas the lack of a permanent low-income broadband assistance program with government oversight is troubling because universal high-speed internet access is essential for a well-functioning economy; *and*

Whereas should the ACP expire without establishing a permanent fund, broadband customers who have relied on ACP to help pay their bills will suffer without this assistance; *now, therefore be it*

Resolved that the Board of Directors of the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners, convened at its 2023 Summer Policy Summit in Austin, Texas, urges Congress to provide permanent annual funding for a federal Low-Income Affordable Connectivity Program.

Passed by the Committee on Telecommunications on July 18, 2023

Passed by the NARUC Board of Directors on July 19, 2023