

WA-1 Resolution Endorsing Consideration of Alternative Regulation that Supports Capital Investment in the 21st Century for Water and Wastewater Utilities

WHEREAS, Through the *Resolution Supporting Consideration of Regulatory Policies Deemed as “Best Practices”* (2005), the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners (NARUC) has previously recognized the important role of innovative regulatory policies and mechanisms in facilitating the efforts of water and wastewater utilities to address their significant infrastructure investment challenges; *and*

WHEREAS, Traditional cost of service ratemaking, which has worked reasonably well in the past for water and wastewater utilities, no longer adequately addresses the challenges of today and tomorrow. Revenue, driven by declining use per customer, is flat to decreasing, while the nature of investment (rate base) has shifted largely from plant needed for serving new customers to non-revenue producing infrastructure replacement and compliance with new drinking water standards; *and*

WHEREAS, The traditional cost of service model is not well adapted to a no/low growth, high investment utility environment and is unlikely to encourage the necessary future investment in infrastructure replacement; *and*

WHEREAS, Compared to the water and wastewater industry, the electric and natural gas delivery industries have in place a larger number and a greater variety of alternative regulation policies, such as multiyear rate plans and rate stabilization programs, and those set forth in the 2005 Resolution; *and*

WHEREAS, The U.S. water industry is the most capital intensive sector of regulated utilities and faces critical investment needs that are expected to total \$335 billion to \$1 trillion over the next quarter century, as noted in the *American Society of Civil Engineers 2013 Report Card for America’s Infrastructure*; *and*

WHEREAS, Tap water is physically ingested and the quality of the service must be maintained to protect the health and economic well-being of communities across our Nation and comply with current and future regulations covering the control of a number of contaminants from nitrosamines to chromium, at a cost estimated at \$42 billion by the EPA as part of their April 2013 Report to Congress; *and*

WHEREAS, Alternative regulatory mechanisms can enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of water and wastewater utility regulation by reducing regulatory costs, increasing rates for customers, when necessary, on a more gradual basis; and providing the predictability and regulatory certainty that supports the attraction of debt and equity capital at reasonable costs and maintains that access at all times; *now, therefore be it*

RESOLVED, That the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners, convened at its 125th Annual Meeting in Orlando, Florida, supports consideration of alternative regulation plans and mechanisms along with and in addition to the policies and mechanisms outlined in the

Resolution Supporting Consideration of Regulatory Policies Deemed as “Best Practices”
adopted by the NARUC Board of Directors on July 27, 2005; *and be it further*

RESOLVED, That the Committee on Water stands ready to assist economic regulators with implementation of alternative regulatory approaches that support water companies’ capital investment needs of the 21st century.

Sponsored by the Committee on Water

Recommended by the NARUC Board of Directors November 19, 2013

Adopted by the NARUC Committee of the Whole November 20, 2013.