



**UTC 2020 Resolution: Resolution on Utilities Empowering Broadband Deployment,
Supporting Federal Broadband Funding**

WHEREAS, The deployment of internet and broadband connectivity services throughout the U.S. is one of the most important and critical challenges facing our country; and,

WHEREAS, Many of the challenges the country faced when electrifying the country over the last 100 years are the same for deploying broadband, particularly in rural, less-populated areas; and,

WHEREAS, In order to electrify these locations, the federal government provided loans to establish public power and cooperatively owned utilities, recognizing that the chief barrier to serving these areas was cost; and

WHEREAS, The electrification of the U.S. remains one of the most important accomplishments in the 1900s, providing rural and less-populated areas the same quality of electric service as found in urban and suburban locations and powering our nation's economy; and,

WHEREAS, Similar to the electrification of the U.S., the chief obstacle to providing broadband service in rural and remote areas is cost; and,

WHEREAS, because of the high cost to provide broadband services in certain locations, many of these cities, towns, and communities lack the job, education, health care, and economic opportunities in highly connected areas; and,

WHEREAS, the Federal Communications Commission and Rural Utilities Service have acknowledged the need to fund entities seeking to provide broadband services to these unserved and underserved communities, providing several grant/loan opportunities to assist in the rollout of broadband; and,

WHEREAS, Electric, water, and natural gas utilities deploy sophisticated communications networks which underpin the critical infrastructure delivering life-sustaining electricity, water, and natural gas services across the U.S.; and,

WHEREAS, These utilities deploy infrastructure and communications networks throughout their service territories, including locations unserved and underserved by broadband providers; and

WHEREAS, Many cooperatively and publicly owned utilities are using their infrastructure and communications systems to provide competitive broadband services to their communities; and

WHEREAS, While many of these utilities have won vital funding opportunities from the federal government to expand their broadband capabilities, the federal government should do more to ensure their funding programs do not unnecessarily inhibit utilities from participating; and,

WHEREAS, In addition, where permitted by their state economic regulator, some investor-owned utilities in rural areas are also supporting broadband deployment by providing middle-middle services or leasing communications services from local or regional broadband providers;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That the Utilities Technology Council supports and encourages the federal government's funding opportunities to expand broadband deployment throughout the U.S.; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That all barriers to electric utilities accessing funding opportunities be eliminated; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That state public utility commissions should support programs which permit their regulated investor-owned utilities to provide appropriate measures to assist the expansion of broadband in their service territories; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That electric utilities of all ownership types and sizes, regardless of location, empower broadband deployment. The Utilities Technology Council encourages its members to consider the ways in which they can assist in bridging the Digital Divide.

Approved by the UTC Board of Directors, Aug. 24, 2020