



RESOLUTION ON TELECOMMUNICATIONS POLICY

- WHEREAS,** Congress and the Administration are considering removing barriers to competition in fields of communications policy in local phone service, long-distance calling, cable television, and manufacturing in order to achieve national goals of developing new technologies, creating jobs, and stimulating the economy; and
- WHEREAS,** The benefits from proposed changes must be weighed against the risks to the public's interests by incorporating checks and balances that would limit monopoly behavior, provide access to basic telecommunications services to all, and ensure necessary privacy; and
- WHEREAS,** The American Library Association has participated in identifying the critical policy issues through its development of its "Principles for the Development of the National Information Infrastructure"; and
- WHEREAS,** American libraries are performing a significant role in providing equitable access to information, and will be an important instrument in continuing that role in the evolution to the new National Information Infrastructure; and
- WHEREAS,** Assessing the impact of the changes in the basic regulatory and competitive framework of the telecommunications environment will be difficult because of the many and complex factors involved, and because the impact may vary depending on the sector of society; and
- WHEREAS,** Congress and regulatory agencies have employed strategies for stimulating public use, such as set-asides of frequencies, access to channels, preferential rates, universal service contributions, and others; and
- WHEREAS,** There has been widespread support, including recent reports from the Congressional Office of Technology Assessment and the National Research Council, for the concept of the open data network as a critical element of deregulatory changes that will help ensure equitable access to and economic development of new services; now, therefore be it
- RESOLVED,** That the American Library Association recommend to Congress and the Administration that any new telecommunications legislation include the following:

- 1) Ensuring public access to telecommunications services, both during the transition to the new technological environment and thereafter;
- 2) Reducing barriers by employing preferential rates, set-asides, least cost access, universal service contributions, and other approaches appropriate for the technology;
- 3) Including a process for assessment and review of the impact of the change in the regulatory environment on the public interests including libraries and all of education and state and local government; and
- 4) Ensuring that open data network standards are developed and used, which will allow open access and interoperability and avoid control of access to the new environment by only a few;

and, be it further

RESOLVED, That copies of this resolution be forwarded to the appropriate Administration officials and Congressional committees.

Adopted by the Council of the
American Library Association
Miami, Florida
June 29, 1994
(Council Document 21.13)