



Policy Resolution 01.2020

Adopted Unanimously on September 29, 2020

## **Broadband for Grid Modernization**

### **Sponsor**

Representative Rocky Miller, Missouri

**WHEREAS**, at its 59<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting in Louisville, Kentucky, the Southern States Energy Board on September 24, 2019, unanimously adopted Policy Resolution 4.2019 entitled “Modernization of the Electric Grid”; and

**WHEREAS**, in Resolution 4.2019, the Southern States Energy Board recognized that “intelligent and communicative energy infrastructure is a critical part of today’s modern households, businesses, communities and the 21st century economy” and that “investments by companies to deploy new technologies and smarter energy infrastructure contribute to maintaining the reliability of the electric grid and improved operations by electricity providers to the benefit of all consumers”; and

**WHEREAS**, the Southern States Energy Board resolved in Resolution 4.2019 that it “supports utility investments in advanced energy infrastructure, energy storage, and other non-wires alternatives to help ensure all citizens have access to, and may take part in the benefits of, a smarter electric grid, as well as spur innovation and technology deployment”; and

**WHEREAS**, private, reliable, purpose-built, cyber-secure broadband communications networks can be isolated from the public Internet and thus provide a more secure foundation for new technologies required to modernize the electric grid; and

**WHEREAS**, electric utilities will require both wired and wireless broadband connectivity to serve the communications needs of their modernized grids; and

**WHEREAS**, electric utilities that build broadband networks for grid operations in rural areas could leverage the infrastructure that is deployed as part of this intelligent integrated smart grid evolution, including the wireless towers and backhaul, to support broadband service for consumers in unserved and underserved rural communities, thereby fostering economic development; and

**WHEREAS**, private wireless broadband networks deployed by electric utilities using the same spectrum and the same technology could interoperate with each other, improving electric distribution service

efficiency, safety, and resiliency across utility service areas, to the benefit of both the utilities and their customers; and

**WHEREAS**, by broadly selecting the same spectrum and the same technology for private wireless broadband networks, utilities across the region would also enjoy cost savings driven by economies of scale and scope in the deployment and operation of such networks.

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, the Southern States Energy Board encourages the region’s utilities to deploy private, cyber-secure broadband communications networks to support the “new technologies and smarter energy infrastructure” of the modern electric grid envisioned in Resolution 4.2019; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, the Southern States Energy Board urges the region’s utilities and Public Utility Commissions to encourage the use of infrastructure deployed for grid-management communications to also support consumer broadband services to rural homes and businesses; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, the Southern States Energy Board encourages the region’s utilities that deploy private wireless broadband networks for grid-management communications to coordinate their planning, and Public Utility Commissions to facilitate such planning, to adopt a common spectrum band and technology for such networks to enable wireless network interoperability, increased functionality, and cost savings across the region.

