

HAROLD ROGERS
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JUSTICE AND SCIENCE



87

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-1705

January 26, 2018

The Honorable Ajit Pai
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street SW
Washington, D.C. 20554

Dear Chairman Pai:

I write today to express my strong support for the petition WYMT-TV(CBS), and its parent company Gray Television, filed with the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) on January 16, 2018 under proceeding number 18-8 to be carried by satellite television providers. As WYMT is the primary local news station in eastern Kentucky, it is my sincere hope that you will favorably consider this petition and allow those in our communities to view their local news via satellite.

WYMT is of vital importance to residents of eastern Kentucky for several reasons, both practically and culturally. The letters of the station, "W-Y-M-T" stand for "We're Your Mountain Television." These letters are well-known within the community and represent ownership and unity. They are a constant reminder to viewers of WYMT's mission to serve Kentucky's Appalachian region. Unfortunately, many satellite carriers in the region have opted to not carry WYMT, and viewers are forced to instead receive programming from stations based in West Virginia and central Kentucky. This is to the great detriment of our region, as there are great differences between the Lexington region and eastern Kentucky. Main Street in downtown Hazard does not have the same issues as Main Street in Lexington—neither culturally nor economically. WYMT allows citizens of the most rural counties to view and understand the issues faced by similar, neighboring counties, and provides a sense of unity and regionalism that news stations in Louisville, Lexington, West Virginia, and Tennessee simply cannot provide.

Additionally, there are public safety concerns associated with keeping WYMT off satellite offerings. For instance, WYMT is the only station that reports weather from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) Jackson County location, rather than stations who report weather from NOAA's location in Louisville. This is problematic because our communities are left in the dark as to storm progression, warnings, and damage when tragic storms hit our region. Further, stations based in Lexington generally stop storm coverage once they pass through Fayette County, which is more than two hours away from many eastern Kentucky communities. The region I represent is prone to significant flood risk and other weather threats, and this is a serious public safety issue. If WYMT were carried by satellite

PLEASE RESPOND TO:

WASHINGTON OFFICE:

☐ 2406 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-1705
(202) 225-4601

DISTRICT OFFICES:

☐ 551 CLIFTY STREET
SOMERSET, KY 42503
(606) 679-8346 OR
1-800-632-8588

☐ 48 SOUTH KENTUCKY HIGHWAY 15
HAZARD, KY 41701
(606) 439-0794

☐ 110 RESOURCE COURT
SUITE A
PRESTONSBURG, KY 41653
(606) 886-0844

providers, those in eastern Kentucky would be able to learn of weather systems that are impacting them in real-time, instead of relying on distant stations.

I have been very pleased by the FCC's proactive steps to help rural communities, especially in the area of broadband telecommunications. Nationwide, over 2 million households are unable to receive their local channels when subscribing to satellite service. Most of these households are in rural areas, like parts of eastern Kentucky, where satellite is the only option for television service. Approving this petition will be another positive step for the administration, and will show that Americans in the rural areas of eastern Kentucky are not forgotten. Thank you for your consideration of WYMT's petition, as it is a unique and terrific opportunity to ensure a vital asset of the region is available to the communities of eastern Kentucky.

Sincerely,


HAROLD ROGERS
Member of Congress



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

February 6, 2018

The Honorable Harold Rogers
U.S. House of Representatives
2406 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Rogers:

Thank you for your letter regarding the pending petition filed by Gray Television seeking a market modification under FCC rules that would allow WYMT-TV to be carried by satellite television providers in additional "orphan" counties beyond its current designated market area. I understand the importance of local broadcast stations to the communities they serve.

The Media Bureau sought comment on Gray Television's request on January 16, 2018. Per Commission rules, the Bureau staff will review the record developed, including any data provided by the satellite television providers regarding the technical and economic feasibility of the market modification request. Under the statute, the Commission will make a final determination on the pending Petition no later than May 16, 2018.

I appreciate your interest in this matter. Your views are very important and will be entered into the record of the proceeding and considered as part of the Commission's review. Please let me know if I can be of any further assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Ajit V. Pai".

Ajit V. Pai