

My name is Matthew Pitts. My Amateur Radio call is N8OHU. Up front I will state that I am somewhat of an acquaintance of the petitioner, though I do not agree with him on much of this current petition. I also respect him for having the courage to submit it.

I will start with the point of agreement and add a major point that several commenting parties have missed. I agree that we should have a means to monitor all transmissions sent over Amateur Radio frequencies, since this is expected by the ITU and is what the FCC refers to as self-policing. The ITU also does not expect, to the best of my understanding of the International Radio Regulations, that this is applied to all bands, but only to those that are international in scope. This is why the FCC rules that govern the Amateur Radio Service make a distinction between what is allowed on HF versus what is allowed on VHF and higher bands. I also agree that making such a monitoring software tool open source would be good, as that would allow it to be extended to support newer data modes in the future and would not require the developers of these modes to do so, unless they choose to provide such a function for other uses.

Having said the above, I also believe that this will ultimately not work as expected, as only the signals that are strong enough at the point of reception to have the Forward Error Correction used by the various digital modes correct sufficient errors that a full and complete over the air capture will display what is sent. Instead, as proposed by the ARSFI, I believe access to their database would be a more effective means of accomplishing his goal of catching any content that may in fact be against the rules. I also find it strange that no one, in the time that Winlink has existed and publicly stated what compression was being used, has taken the time to write such a decoder and made it available.

I also do not believe that mandatorily limiting Amateur Radio in the US to only using Open Source software is good for the hobby. As with the current data rate limit, this quite likely would hinder those that might be interested in experimenting, but not being comfortable with releasing the code they develop. It would also result in us not being able to use software being developed by hams in other countries that was only available in a compiled form.

As for the removal of the 500 Hz ACDS, as others have stated, these stations are often used in conjunction with the wider bandwidth ones to enable as many messages to be moved out of an area affected by a disaster as possible. Forcing them to be shut down would cut down on the effectiveness of our efforts.

Thank you for your time, and please consider all of the ramifications carefully. I would hope to see this be denied, at least in the respect of the 500 Hz ACDS and the mandatory Open Source use, but would accept the decoder part.