Response to Proposed FCC Rulemaking, RM-11831

I worked as an Airport Emergency Manager in San Antonio, Texas. Our local amateur radio community helped support our hospitals and emergency operations center during incidents and emergencies. Weekly the radio equipment was tested. During Hurricane Harvey and several flooding events the amateur radios were activated. A notable strength of this resource is that the amateur radio community equipment is flexible and can meet many needs, including sending data. The ability to send lists of people in shelters, status reports for critical infrastructure such as hospitals and send pictures are a critical component that this proposed rulemaking would limit. The capabilities of amateur radio were so great that we trained our staff to operate a base station radio as a backup communication means for us to communicate with the hospitals and city EOC. It was a rare event that our city’s radio system failed, but when it did, we turned to simple, off the shelf solutions to temporarily provide communications. This included ham radio and simple walkie talkies.

I remember the most humbling lesson I was taught is that it doesn’t matter how complex your equipment is, but how well you can use it. At a communications exercise for central Texas many agencies responded with complex communications trailers, but a simple man with a horse trailer was able to show up, stick an antenna in the air and start communicating long distances in 5 minutes, significantly faster than anyone else. This flexibility in communications should be preserved to help out in events, incidents, emergencies and as a hobby.

Now as a hobbyist I am beginning to explore the digital modes of amateur radio myself. It is exciting and daunting that there are several different versions of digital software to learn. I know that having options is important if anything fails and don’t want additional restrictions on how the software is limited. Please do not further restrict the use of digital radio communication by implementing additional restrictions or limiting the bands that can be used. They are a resource for the community and hobbyists.

Thank you for supporting so many endeavors in communications.

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