As a licensed amateur radio operator volunteering in emergency response communications, I’m strongly opposed to RM-11831 for the following reasons:

Winlink, as one example, is an open source digital communication tool that is widely documented and has been effectively used in disaster recovery situations. As in all digital modes, third parties with the proper equipment and software can read all the WinLink traffic and identify the transmitting stations. Transparency is NOT compromised and is also the case in numerous other digital transmission modes present and evolving on the HAM radio bands. Secondly, digital communications are also becoming more important with the low propagation conditions we continue to face. I do support the transparency concerns sited in 11831 but feel there are far better ways to address them than what is proposed therein. Please reject RM-11831 and instead work with ARRL and The Amateur Radio Safety Foundation (among others) to document their digital transmission modes in use along with newer modes that continue to develop as radio technology improves.

Our county is in the coastal region of the Pacific Northwest and we are preparing for and have experienced several emergency events.  We have implemented digital communications in our EOC's and in several fire stations and Community centers and evacuation sites.  In the event of existing communications failures including power, telephone, cell and internet, we have the capability to use our digital Winlink stations to communicate with the state EOC at Camp Murray in the Olympia area and other EOC's in the pacific NW.  Amateur digital communications are a vital link to support the operations of the EOC.  We also have the ability to send Press Release situation reports to the state, our fire stations, media stations and other parties via Winlink digital operations.  During a major emergency exercise simulating a major earthquake and tsunami called Cascade Rising, our use of the amateur digital modes was instrumental in our ability to communicate with the required agencies.

In the event of a disaster we expect that standard communications will be severely degraded or even cut off. Our primary backup for emergency communications is Ham Radio and in particular Winlink digital email.

Please disapprove RM-11831.