Dear FCC:

I am writing in regards to the proceedings RM – 11831, RM-11828, RM-11708 and WTB 16-239 and also recent comments filed by individuals and associations concerned here.

As an elected official of Skagit County Washington as a Fire Commissioner and serve on the advisory board to the DEM of this County. I am also a long-term amateur radio operator kc7okl. I am very concerned about emergency communications not only for what has been stated about me because I’m also a volunteer firefighter in the safety officer for the department I’m with.

It is my opinion and observation through the years of serving our country in the military in communications billet, the number one reason for friendly fire accidents has always been a communication problem. And I see the potential that without the current digital communication that we have now, and what will be developed in the future as saving lives because without it. people will die.

I am strongly opposed to RM-11831 and the other rules that a been proposed that will set back communications and endanger our fellow American lives that we are there to protect and serve.

As stated by others WinLink traffic and other digital modes can be intercepted and with the new generation of radios in the free software that’s out there on the Internet one can read what’s going on now should I file a complaint with the FCC as my helliacrafter S38A cannot intercept and decode was been out there the very first radio that my grandfather showed me how to operate late one night in a root cellar in Salina Kansas and on the way out he said now you boys get some sleep. I still had that receiver.

And I do not know of anybody who sends any long-winded emails over the Internet to family friends or businesses using WinLink it’s not practical but it is practical for doing ICS forms that are desperately needed by emergency managers and what these digital modes allow us to do is to send information very quickly even though the transmission rate may be slow it will be a lot faster than everybody trying to get on the air and try to talk to DEM or anyone else involved in emergency through voice only.(I could tell you some true horror stories in the military when all the nets were down except one and digital communication had not made it down to battalion level and company level operators and all he had to go along with his voice and then the military a flash message (( I had a stack of them)) has 15 minutes from the time it’s written to make it all away to the Pentagon so they could notify the White House if necessary I won’t say anything more about that operation except my net was the only one that was up and it took me and another operator about 12 hours to clear out all those messages on voice only).

In our community we were upgraded from dialup and copper telephone lines to fiber optics we have now gone from never having outages to our outages or 4% a year now that may not seem like much but because of our location they route fire dispatch is over fiber optics for simulcast and that 4% meant that one time we were down in one of our fellow fighter officers have a stroke and we had 2 feet of snow on the ground and nobody knew that he needed help because the fiber optics was down which means radios were down and the phones were down! We are building a secondary communication system based upon the current digital modes for our community as a backup.

I also believe in some of the statements made to you the FCC that some people have a vested interest financially in taking away the current digital modes that are out there all I care about is serving my constituents and saving lives.

Let’s not make someone else’s emergency become our emergency because we have handicapped ourselves.

Respectfully Submitted

The Honorable

Lawrence R Hawk

Fire Commissioner Skagit County Washington

KC7OKL