

May 16, 2019

Federal Communications Commission
Washington, D.C.

Docket RM-11828

Dear FCC:

Being a technician class licensee, I am opposed to increasing high frequency privileges to technician class operators -- Docket RM-11828.

Having been licensed for three years, I have taken my time to learn the ins and outs of amateur radio without rushing into areas I am not acquainted with.

When I took my exam, I can say I really did not understand all the material since radio was new to me, and in many ways it was unfamiliar that I had to study even harder.

I feel if I want more high frequency privileges, I will study, learn and earn the right to operate consistently in the HF segment of the amateur allocations.

Giving people something for absolutely doing nothing degrades the inherent integrity of the testing structure. I still do not know enough to get on HF even if the rules were amended or changed.

I have been reading the reasons or excuses as to why the American Radio Relay League feels a need to change the rules, but their argument is not persuasive.

Let's look at some facts:

1) The ARRL consistently indicates and reports that the U.S.A. amateur population grows at one (1) percent per year.

Well, that is certainly higher than the current population growth of the U.S. which grows at a rate of 0.6 percent according to the United States Census Bureau.

The growth of amateur radio is 66.67 percent greater than that of the non-amateur population.

2) The ARRL contends that giving technician class operators more HF privileges would assist getting more classes of operators on the air because of the current solar minimum.

When I started studying for my technician class test, I understood the bands I could and could not use, including the limitations of the bands during the solar minimum.

The ARRL seems to not get the message that solar minimum has been a fact of life from the beginning, ever since radio was invented a little over 100 years ago.

If this was such an obstacle or problem, I would not have taken the technician class test and would not have become a licensed amateur radio operator.

3) The ARRL seems to be changing their position on why this proposal is needed by continuing to update their stance.

One month it is to encourage licensees to get a feel of HF, and then it is to encourage so called growth, according to what the ARRL continues to write in publications and online.

The ARRL cites their own survey as reason, and then veers off, talking about new modes as the new reason.

The fact is that no matter what their analysis is, you can not get someone into radio unless they have an interest. And then, that person must take the initiative to advance their skill, knowledge and yearning. The ARRL proposal alone cannot provide this substance.

Summary—

Amateur radio worldwide, and in the U.S. is healthy and growing. This is seen by analyzing the mode numbers at <https://la8aja.com/modestats/index3.php> .

Even with solar minimum, the yearly contact numbers are increasing in part to digital amateur radio modes, and there just being more interest.

In 2014, around solar maximum, there were reported about 46,471,000 contacts, before the FT8 mode.

In 2018, during solar minimum, there were reported about 43,681,000 contacts, and this included the FT8 mode.

With the ARRL attempting to argue that technician class operators need more privileges on the basis of solar minimum and having a growth rate far above the U.S. population gains, simply does not provide for a compelling reason to change the current license structure and privileges.

The ARRL reported on May 15, 2019, in the ARRL Contest Update, “The absolute number of licensed Amateurs is the highest EVER in the U.S.”

“Over half the U.S. population of Amateurs are Technicians. So something is attracting new people to Amateur Radio, but they're not necessarily making it to HF contesting,” said the ARRL.

A reason why amateur radio licensees do not upgrade is priorities and not putting in the time to study and learn more.

It is not the FCC obligation or responsibility to encourage people to upgrade or even bring people into amateur radio.

Again, as a technician class operator who worked hard to achieve my license, I urge the FCC to disregard and dismiss the ARRL proposal. I WILL upgrade when I have the initiative and time. Simply giving me more HF privileges will not persuade me to upgrade.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Cynthia Thompson
KE8DPC