



Town of Ashland

Center of the Universe

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The Honorable Ajit V. Pai
Chairman
455 12th Street, Southwest
Washington D.C. 205444

Dear Chairman Pai,

On behalf of the Town Council of the Town of Ashland, VA I write regarding the Federal Communications Commission's (FCC) recent vote to proceed with the item, "Implementation of Section 621(a)(1) of the Cable Communications Policy Act of 1984 as Amended by the Cable Television Consumer Protection and Competition Act of 1992" (MB Docket No. 05-311). This proposal would potentially alter, at cable operators' discretion, the terms of the governing agreements between Local Franchising Authorities (LFA) and cable operators. In its current form, the proposal puts at risk critical funding for public, educational, or governmental (PEG) stations as well as broadband connections to public buildings. Our constituents watch PEG channels to monitor local government proceedings, and consume locally produced programming including emergency alerts and directives. Your proposal may jeopardize these important functions. We encourage you and your colleagues on the Commission to ensure that any final decision will not threaten the sustainability of PEG stations.

Under the Communications Act, towns across the country are permitted to require as part of cable franchise agreements that cable operators meet demonstrated community needs by setting aside channels for PEG stations. Yet the FCC's current proposal would allow cable operators to assign a value to these channels, and then subtract that amount, and the value the operator places on any other in-kind contributions from the franchise fees the cable operator owes. If this order is eventually adopted in its current form, cities and towns across the country may soon have to decide between supporting local PEG channels and supporting other critical institutions serving the public good. This is a lose-lose choice for LFAs and the residents we serve. We fear this proposal will result in a dire drop in resources for PEG channels.

PEG access stations continue to give viewers critical information about our communities and offer an important platform for local voices. They catalyze civic

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REYNAL
CLERK OF COUNCIL

engagement and they provide invaluable public services. As the Commission proceeds on this issue, we urge you to consider the potential impact on PEG stations.

Thank you for your attention to this issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Joshua Farrar". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Joshua S. Farrar, Town Manager