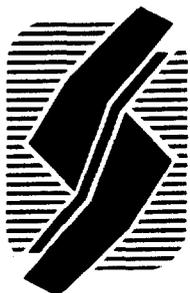


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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

ECC - MAIL ROOM

February 5, 1993

Office of the Secretary, FCC
1919 M St. N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20554

Re: MM Docket No. 92-265, Program Access

I am writing you to express my concern about the Notice of Proposed Rule Making that was released on December 24, specifically as it pertains to the Section 19 programming access provisions of the recently-passed cable bill.

I am the TV Division Supervisor of Souris River Telecommunications, a consumer-owned, not-for-profit rural utility that provides telephone service to approximately 12000 farmers, ranchers and small town residents in a 10,000 square mile rural area in northwest North Dakota. We also provide cable TV service to approximately 1000 customers in 14 of these small communities and provide sales, service and signal authorization for about 2000 satellite TV system owners throughout rural northwest North Dakota.

The only access most of our rural area consumers have to the educational and entertainment services offered on cable TV systems is by using a home satellite dish. Until now, these home satellite dish owners have been paying discriminatorily high rates for much of the programming they receive over their dish. The cost for this programming to home satellite dish distributors is considerably more than what cable operators pay for it - a difference in price that is completely unjustifiable.

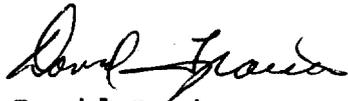
My utility, along with hundreds of utilities like it around the country, worked long and hard to secure the inclusion of the cable bill's Section 19 programming access provisions in order to protect our consumers from the cable industry's price-gouging. When the bill passed, we were understandably pleased and hopeful that the discrimination would stop.

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A B C D E

This is why we are concerned by the tone of your NPRM on the subject. By writing this letter, I hope to impress upon you the reality of this price discrimination. Our rural consumers really have no choice and it is completely unnecessary; it costs cable-owned programmers and satellite carriers no more to serve the rural home dish market than the urban cable market. In your NPRM, you indicated that harm against the dish market would have to be established before the FCC could issue regulations to correct it. I assure you that this harm not only exists, but that it is also an ongoing problem which robs hundreds of dollars per year from each of my satellite TV watching neighbors and consumers.

I urge you to once again review the duty the U.S. Congress charged you with: namely, to issue regulations which will encourage competition in the video marketplace and bring an end to the unjustifiable discrimination against the non-cable video marketplace by cable-owned programmers. On behalf of the thousands of home satellite dish owners living in rural North Dakota, I hope your final rule fulfills this obligation.

Sincerely,



David Traiser
TV Division Supervisor