



## TOWN OF CONWAY, MASSACHUSETTS

### Board of Selectmen

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**Before the Federal Communications Commission  
445 12<sup>th</sup> Street, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20554**

*RE: Second Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking. 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.*

### COMMENTS OF THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN, CONWAY, MA

On behalf of the residents of Conway, MA, the Board appreciates the opportunity to file comments on the Second Further Notice and Proposed Rulemaking ("FNPRM") in the above-referenced docket. Conway is a small town in Western Massachusetts. Together with our neighboring towns of Deerfield, Sunderland and Whately, we share our franchise fees to operate a small television studio, Frontier Community Access Television (FCAT) that broadcasts governmental meetings, town events (town meeting, elementary and high school plays and graduations, sports events, town festivals, etc) and other local events important to our population such as electoral campaigns, national and state legislator town halls, etc. These events are of great interest to our residents, and it is only through FCAT that our residents, many aging or busy with work and young children, can watch these events. FCAT is a critical resource for our rural community, operating three channels, one a simple bulletin board of local events, another of governmental meetings and the third with general programming including shows for young people when they get home from school, a lot of polka, faith programming by local clergy and wonderful movies on Saturday nights.

We are writing to formally express our grave concerns regarding the Federal Communication Commission's proposal that cable-related in-kind contributions, such as those that allow our programming to be viewed on the cable system, are franchise fees. This would cut and potentially eliminate the sole funding for our studio that generates these valuable programs. We also strongly

oppose the proposal's stripping of our power to control cable operators' use of the rights of way when providing non-cable services.

Cutting FCAT funding would likely mean FCAT would cease to exist, as our small rural towns are barely able to provide necessary town services already. A majority of our residents are on fixed incomes and a high percentage of our local taxes fund local schools. In our small Western Mass towns, there are few job opportunities, few commercial businesses to tax, and our town budgets are solely on the backs of our residents.

We invite the Commission to view for themselves several recent locally produced shows that are ONLY available through the hard work of our small studio staff at FCAT:

A recent Veterans Day Ceremony, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pyU6fG4os5c>

A locally produced music show:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KfcnksUOprw&index=1&list=PL97Cp8D5oEfns\\_\\_oh2G8Je50h4dSAKxoA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KfcnksUOprw&index=1&list=PL97Cp8D5oEfns__oh2G8Je50h4dSAKxoA)

High School Sports: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GU6d3PV4OP4>

Local history, the Four Ferries: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DHI9ejifdbk>

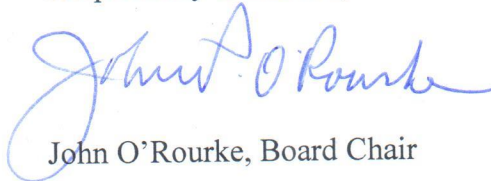
Conway's 250<sup>th</sup> Celebration: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b7ch9WG3dwM>

A typical local Selectboard meeting: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4cjLVP4aI\\_0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4cjLVP4aI_0)

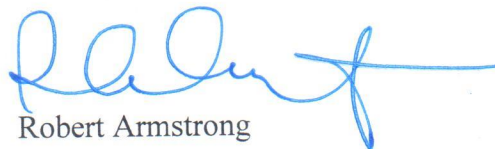
Without franchise fees, our FCAT studio could not survive, and without FCAT, none of this programming would be available to our residents.

We appreciate the opportunity to add to the record in this proceeding.

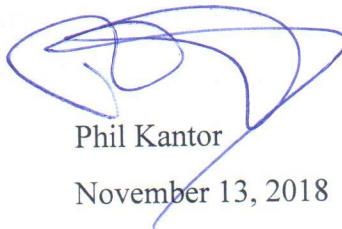
Respectfully submitted,



John O'Rourke, Board Chair



Robert Armstrong



Phil Kantor

November 13, 2018