

Town of Jamaica



P.O. Box 173
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Jamaica, VT 05343

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December 11, 2018

The Honorable Ajit Pai, Chairman
The Honorable Michael O'Rielly, Commissioner
The Honorable Brendan Carr, Commissioner
The Honorable Jessica Rosenworcel, Commissioner

Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
455 12th Street, Southwest
Washington, DC, 20544

Dear Chairman Pai,

We write to support the Comments of Brattleboro Community Television, Inc. (File ID 1113560010350) and to disapprove of the proposals and tentative conclusions set forth in the FCC's September 25 Further Notice of Proposed Rule Making in *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 05-311.

The significance of the service that Brattleboro Community Television provides to those of us living in our rural Jamaica environment cannot be over-stated. While reporting on the events happening in our area is important, BCTV's impact is far greater than that. This type of Local Access gives many of our citizens the opportunity to PARTICIPATE in the governance of their communities. Advancing age, illness, weather, geography, or simple job or family responsibilities, can make attending important events impossible for some of our citizens. (This is especially true for the large percentage of our second-home owners who live out of state.) By observing the actual dialogue recorded during the Selectboard's deliberations, a sense of the mood of the Board can be appreciated by the citizens far more accurately than merely reading minutes. It is common for the Town Office, and individual Selectboard Members, to be contacted by a citizen to provide his or her input on an issue discussed in a televised meeting.

Should the proposed changes to the funding scheme be implemented, it could result in the effective DISENFRANCHISEMENT of many of our rural Vermont citizens. And, given the very tight budgets of small town Vermont, it is highly unlikely that the service provided by BCTV can be duplicated.

This local presence enables the residents of our town to create and watch uniquely local programming about their community and local events and issues of interest to them. And that was the intent of the PEG provisions of the 1984 Cable Act – to enhance local voices, serve local community needs and interests, and strengthen our local democracy. By defining “franchise fee” in an overly broad fashion to include “in-kind” support, the FCC's proposals will shift the fair balance between cable franchising authorities and cable operators – something that was never the

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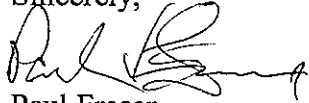
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intent of the Act – and could ultimately result in such reduction in franchise fees as to defund PEG Access in our state.

We appreciate your consideration and hope you will protect PEG Access in our community and others by choosing not to adopt many of the proposals in the Further Notice.

Sincerely,



Paul Fraser
Chair,
Selectboard,
Jamaica, Vermont