



December 12, 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 12<sup>th</sup> Street, Southwest  
Washington, DC, 20544

Dear Chairman Pai,

As a regional Chamber of Commerce we rely heavily on our local access television partners.

We, the executive director and 23 directors of the Bennington Area Chamber of Commerce, write to support the Comments of the Cable Act Preservation Alliance ("CAPA," File ID 1114050901562) 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 Bennington Regional Chamber has won multiple awards including two national Telly awards because of our partnership with local access television. We have produced 3 show series with our regional television partners including "Bennington Made," a behind-the-scenes tv series that showcases unique Bennington businesses. Similar in format to Discovery Science's "How It's Made" and ABC News' "Made in America," the production is both modern and intriguing. Additionally, we've filmed "Bennington Tomorrow," a series that focused on the future of the our region, as well as "Shirenomics" which looks at the economics and development of our region, The Shires of Vermont.

Perhaps the most impressive thing about these access stations is their transformation of the democratic voice. We have all watched as local government select boards, town initiatives and elections have dwindled in audience and attention. It is with great pride that I mention that because of access television and their commitment to understanding new tools like Facebook Live and YouTube, and their ability to adapt and pivot, that the democratic voice of Vermont has not been snuffed out, but has grown. What once saw 20 people at a weekly select board meeting now boasts an audience of 100's if not 1,000's online and watching on the television because of the broadcast that is happening single handedly by access television. I have noticed as citizens have become more educated about the issues and where new partnerships have grown because of access television.

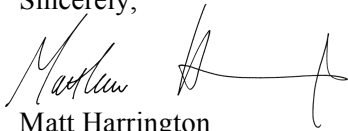
It is with no hesitation that I say that these great shows would not have happened if not for the access, availability and talent that is with our local television stations.

This local presence enables the residents of Bennington County to 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 and will force communities to choose between franchise fees and PEG channels – something that was never the intent of the Act.

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,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Matt Harrington". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Matt Harrington  
Executive Director

The Bennington Regional Chamber of Commerce Serving The Shires of Vermont