

Dec.11, 2018

The Honorable Ajit V. Pai
Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
455 12th Street, Southwest
Washington, DC, 20544

Dear Chairman Pai,

I am writing to express my concern about and disapproval 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.

As a current member of the Colchester Planning Commission, a newly elected Representative to the Vermont House of Representatives, and a Colchester citizen I am very concerned about the proposal by the FCC to allow cable operators (Comcast in our service area) to reclassify certain services and then proceed to charge those against the fees collected for Access Management Organizations. This action, if implemented, would potentially eliminate the operating fund for LCATV (Lake Champlain Access Television).

Support for Community Media and access to local and State programming is not only vital to providing Vermont citizens with insight and knowledge of how their local government and school boards operate but would deprive the viewers access to essential programming not available from another source.

This year alone LCATV provided access to Colchester's Town Select Board and Planning Commission meetings, organized and sponsored a Candidate's Forum, as well as filming School Board meetings and educational functions. This programming is vital to connecting community members with their municipal, educational, and cultural institutions. It is also essential to keep government transparent and accountable.

The presence of Vermont's 25 Community Access Centers enables the residents of Vermont 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 – something that was never the 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 channels in our community and others by choosing not to adopt many of the proposals in the Further Notice.

Sincerely,
Representative Elect Sarita Austin
CHI 9-2
285 Crooked Creek Road
Colchester, VT
05446
802-310-4658

CC: The Honorable Michael O'Rielly, Commissioner
The Honorable Brendan Carr, Commissioner
The Honorable Jessica Rosenworcel, Commissioner