December 14, 2018

The Honorable Ajit V. Pai  
Chairman  
Federal Communications Commission

455 12th Street, Southwest  
Washington, DC, 20544

Dear Chairman Pai,

We write to express our 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.

I am the chair of the Trustees of the Village of North Bennington, Vermont. Here, we have many residents who are unable to attend our public meetings due to age, disability and/or that they have very busy lives (work second shift, have children, etc.). It is essential that our public meetings be available to all members of the community so that they can participate in their local democracy. Our local community access television provides this essential service in a non-partisan way and they are not beholden to corporate or private donors. This is important to maintain the neutrality of the coverage.

While we may not be a large community the United States is full of communities of our size. Federal regulations will affect us all. We insist that passing of this legislation limits democracy because it restricts public access to it.

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,

John B. Lamson, Esq., Chair Village Trustees of North Bennington, VT

CC: The Honorable Michael O’Rielly, Commissioner

The Honorable Brendan Carr, Commissioner  
The Honorable Jessica Rosenworcel, Commissioner