December 13, 2018

The Honorable Ajit Pai, Chairman

The Honorable Michael O’Rielly, Commissioner

The Honorable Brendan Carr, Commissioner

The Honorable Jessica Rosenworcel,

Commissioner Federal Communications Commission

455 12th Street, Southwest

Washington, DC, 20544

RE: MB Docket No 05-311

*In the Matter of 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*

On behalf of the Easton School Committee, we are writing in support of the Comments of the Cable Act Preservation Alliance (“CAPA”) in the Second Further Notice of Proposed Rule Making (SFNPRM). We oppose the tentative conclusions the FCC reaches in the proceeding because of their impacts on our community.

Easton Community Access Television (ECAT) enables the residents of Easton to watch broadcasts of our elected and appointed board and committee meetings and our Town Meeting. Easton residents are not always able to attend these public meetings and having access to watch live or the on-demand service is a valuable tool. This level of transparency for local government would not be possible without having our public, educational and government access (PEG) channels available to our residents. In addition, our students and public school administrators use this service to create programming and educate our residents.

ECAT enables the residents of Easton to watch uniquely local programming about our community and local events.  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. PEG access does not solely benefit a local government or franchising authority; it benefits and strengthens the community as a whole. By allowing cable operators to reduce franchise fee support for local communities, the SFNPRM diminishes the ability of PEG channels to serve communities such as ours. We ask that it not be adopted.

Thank you.

Yours sincerely,

Jacqueline Weisman, Chair

Easton School Committee