December 14, 2018

The Honorable AjitPai, 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,

I am writing 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.

Vermont is recognized as a place where democracy flourishes, a state in which entire well-informed communities actively and enthusiastically participate in the decision-making processes that impact their lives. These processes take place in the context of regularly scheduled Town, Selectboard and School Board Meetings, Planning Commissions, Woodlands Associations, Advisory Panels and press conferences, to name just a few of the many civic events to which the citizens of Vermont devote their time and attention. Participatory democracy requires that people be kept up-to-date about the status of such government functions, and remain current on the issues informing the debates therein. Vermonters attend these events when possible, but when they can’t do so, they can always rely on Brattleboro Community Television to provide them with a recorded transcription of what took place. Consequently, the station has become an essential ingredient of democracy for the towns which it serves -- and this is true for public access television outlets throughout the state. Any policy that might limit the extent to which the stations can provide these services risks impairing the exercise of participatory democracy statewide.

This local media presence enables the residents of towns in the Brattleboro area to create and view uniquely local programming which is focused on their communities and the local events and issues that are of interest to them. In fact, this was clearly the intent of the PEG provisions in the 1984 Cable Act -- to enhance local voices, serve local community needs and interests, strengthen local democracy and reinforce community identity. 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.

I 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 above-referenced Further Notice.

Sincerely,

Alan Podber

Community Program Sponsor

Brattleboro Community Television