



FIRE DEPARTMENT

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THOMAS VON ESSEN
Fire Commissioner

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
OCT 13 1996

October 18, 1996

The Honorable Reed F. Hundt
Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
1919 M Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20554

Re: The Development of Operational, Technical and Spectrum Requirements for Meeting Federal, State and Local Public Safety Agency Communication Requirements Through the Year 2010.

WT Docket No.96-86

Dear Chairman Hundt:

Public Safety agencies across the country are in desperate need of additional radio communications channels. The Public Safety Wireless Advisory Committee ("PSWAC") jointly sponsored by the FCC and NTIA, recently released its "Final Report" which concludes that public safety agencies need at least 2.5 MHz of additional spectrum right now for interoperability, at least 25 MHz within five (5) years, and an additional 70 MHz over the next fifteen (15) years.

The New York City Fire Department submits this letter in strong support of the PSWAC findings, and urges that the FCC take immediate action to allocate spectrum for safety use. Public safety agencies across the country face difficulty in addressing problems of congestion, lack of interoperability, and the inability to implement new communications technologies. The problems are mainly caused by a lack of available radio channels.

The New York City Fire Department's present radio system was configured in the early 1960s. Since that time, no additional channel capacity has been added. Due to channel scarcity, 5

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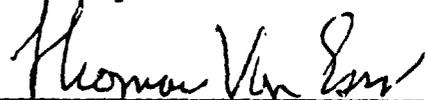
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boroughs (counties) must share 4 channels, with a severely overloaded channel capacity of 330 units per channel, far in excess of the FCC loading standard of 100 units per channel. The extreme overloading condition may be dangerous and potentially threaten property, public safety and firefighter safety.

Immediate Commission action allocating portions of current UHF television spectrum between channels 60-69 for public safety use could begin to alleviate the problems these agencies face. This was suggested in the digital television Docket 87-268. This block of spectrum is ideal for public safety use as it is adjacent to frequencies currently used for mobile radio operations by federal, state and local agencies.

The New York City Fire Department requests that the commission take expeditious action to meet the spectrum needs of public safety agencies nationwide.

Sincerely,



Thomas Von Essen
Fire Commissioner
New York City Fire Department

cc: S.M. Gregory
D.E. Stanton
A.G. Achille