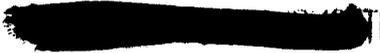


97-197



Federal Communications Commission
Washington, D.C. 20554

JAN 29 1998

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DOCKET FILE COPY ORIGINAL **RECEIVED**

The Honorable Richard J. Durbin
United States Senate
364 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

JAN 29 1998

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

Dear Senator Durbin:

Thank you for your letter dated December 8, 1997, on behalf of your constituent, Mayor Duane Laska, of Libertyville, Illinois, concerning the placement and construction of facilities for the provision of personal wireless services and radio and television broadcast services in his community. Your constituent's letter refers to issues being considered in three proceedings that are pending before the Commission. In MM Docket No. 97-182, the Commission has sought comments on a Petition for Further Notice of Proposed Rule Making filed by the National Association for Broadcasters and the Association for Maximum Service Television. In this proceeding, the petitioners ask the Commission to adopt a rule limiting the exercise of State and local zoning authority with respect to broadcast transmission facilities in order to facilitate the rapid build-out of digital television facilities, as required by the Commission's rules to fulfill Congress' mandate. In WT Docket No. 97-192, the Commission has sought comment on proposed procedures for reviewing requests for relief from State and local regulations that are alleged to impermissibly regulate the siting of personal wireless service facilities based on the environmental effects of radio frequency emissions, and related matters. Finally, in DA 96-2140 and FCC 97-264, the Commission twice sought comments on a Petition for Declaratory Ruling filed by the Cellular Telecommunications Industry Association seeking relief from certain State and local moratoria that have been imposed on the siting of commercial mobile radio service facilities.

Because all of these proceedings are still pending, we cannot comment on the merits of the issues at this time. However, I can assure you that the Commission is committed to providing a full opportunity for all interested parties to participate. The Commission has formally sought public comment in all three proceedings and, as a result, has received numerous comments from State and local governments, service providers, and the public at large. Your letter and your constituent's letter, as well as this response, will be placed in the record of all three proceedings and will be given full consideration.

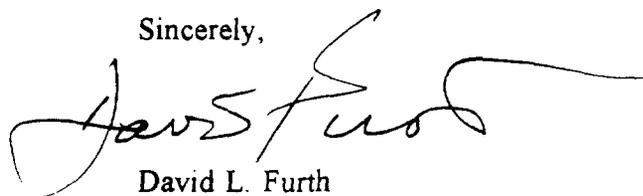
The Honorable Richard J. Durbin

2.

Further information regarding the Commission's policies toward personal wireless service facilities siting, including many of the comments in the two proceedings involving personal wireless service facilities, is available on the Commission's internet site at <http://www.fcc.gov/wtb/siting>.

Thank you for your inquiry.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David L. Furth". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

David L. Furth
Chief, Commercial Wireless Division
Wireless Telecommunications Bureau

RICHARD J. DURBIN
U.S. SENATOR
COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS
U.S. SENATE
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20540

United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510-1504

December 8, 1997

WTD
97-182
113

Ms. Karen Kornbluh
Acting Director
Office of Legislative Affairs
Federal Communications Commission
Room 808
1919 M Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Ms. Kornbluh:

Enclosed are several letters from my constituents regarding the Federal Communications Commission's (FCC) proposed rulemakings on broadcast and cellular towers.

I would appreciate it if you would keep these individuals' concerns about zoning and land use laws in mind as you review these proposals.

Thank you for your time and attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator

RJD/ks

Enc.



KS

Village of Libertyville

118 West Cook Avenue • Libertyville, Illinois 60048-1874 • 847/362-2430

October 23, 1997

The Honorable Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator
267 Russell Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

435074

Katie

Dear Senator Durbin:

We are writing you regarding the Federal Communications Commission (FCC)'s attempts to preempt local zoning of cellular, radio and TV towers by making the FCC the "Federal Zoning Commission" for all cellular telephone and broadcast towers. Both Congress and the courts have long recognized that zoning is a peculiarly local function. In the 1996 Telecommunications Act, Congress expressly reaffirmed local zoning authority over cellular towers. It told the FCC to stop all rulemakings where the FCC was attempting to become a federal zoning commission for such towers. Despite this instruction from Congress, the FCC is now attempting to preempt local zoning authority in three different rulemakings.

Cellular Towers - Radiation: Congress expressly preserved local zoning authority over cellular towers in the 1996 Telecommunications Acts with the sole exception that municipalities cannot regulate the radiation from cellular antennas if it is within the limits set by the FCC. The FCC is attempting to have the "exception swallow the rule" by using the limited authority Congress gave it over cellular tower radiation to review and reverse any cellular zoning decision in the US which it finds is "tainted" by radiation concerns, even if the decision is otherwise perfectly permissible. In fact, the FCC is saying that it can "second guess" what the true reasons for a municipality's decision are, need not be bound by the stated reasons given by a municipality and does not need to wait until a local planning decision is final before the FCC acts.

Some citizens are concerned about the radiation from cellular towers, and we cannot prevent them from mentioning their concerns in a public hearing. In its rulemaking, the FCC is saying that if any citizen raises this issue it is sufficient basis for a cellular zoning decision to immediately be taken over by the FCC and potentially reversed, even if the municipality expressly says it is not considering such statements and the decision is completely valid on other grounds, such as the impact of the tower on property values or aesthetics.

Cellular Towers - Moratoria: The FCC is proposing a rule banning the moratoria that some municipalities impose on cellular towers while they revise their zoning ordinances to accommodate the increase in the numbers of these towers. Again, this violates the Constitution and the directive from Congress preventing the FCC from becoming a federal zoning commission.



Radio/TV Towers: The FCC's proposed rule on radio and TV towers sets an artificial limit of 21 to 45 days for municipalities to act on any local permit (environmental, building, zoning or other). Any permit is automatically deemed granted if the municipality does not act in this time frame, even if the application is incomplete or clearly violates local law. The FCC's proposed rule would prevent municipalities from considering the impacts of such towers have on property values, the environment or aesthetics. Even safety requirements could be overridden by the FCC. All appeals of zoning and permit denials would go to the FCC, not to the local courts.

The FCC claims these changes are needed to allow TV stations to switch to High Definition Television quickly. The Wall Street Journal and trade magazines state there is no way the FCC and broadcasters will meet the current schedule so there is no need to violate the rights of municipalities and their residents to meet an artificial deadline.

These actions appear to represent a power grab by the FCC to become the Federal Zoning Commission for cellular towers and broadcast towers. They violate the intent of Congress, the Constitution and principles of federalism. This is particularly true given that the FCC is a single purpose agency with no zoning expertise.

On behalf of the Village of Libertyville, I ask that you: 1) contact new FCC Chairman William Kennar and FCC Commissioners Ness, Furchtgott-Roth, Power and Tristant to request that they stop this intrusion on local zoning authority (cases WR 97-197, MM Docket 97-182 and DA 96-2149); and 2) join the "Dear Colleague letter" currently being prepared to go to the FCC from many members of Congress; and 3) oppose any effort by Congress to grant the FCC the power to act as a "Federal Zoning Commission" and preempt local zoning authority.

The following people at national municipal organizations are familiar with the FCC's proposed rules and municipalities' objections to them: Barrie Tabin at the National League of Cities; Eileen Huggard at the National Association of Telecommunications Officers and Advisors; Robert Fogel at the National Association of Counties; Kevin McCarty at the US Conference of Mayors; and Cheryl Maynard at the American Planning Association. Please call them if you have any questions. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Duane Laska
Mayor

DL/nb

cc: Village Board, Administrative Staff, Village Attorney