

# SCRRBA

Southern California Repeater and  
Remote Base Association  
P.O. Box 5967  
Pasadena, California 91117

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In the Matter Of:

ARRL request for declaratory ruling

Compliance with applicable Voluntary  
Band Plans in the Amateur Radio Service

FCC MAIL ROOM  
)  
) RM 9259  
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Re: Comments of the Southern Californian  
Repeater and Remote Base Association

May 20, 1998

No. of Copies rec'd 07-10  
List A B C D E

The Southern California Repeater and Remote Base Association ( SCRRBA) is a voluntary association of owners and operators of Amateur Radio Service fixed and mobile relay stations operating primarily on the UHF and Microwave Frequency amateur bands. SCRRBA has provided frequency coordination for these activities since 1970. SCRRBA has actively participated in numerous Federal Communications Commission rule making proceedings pertinent to our activities.

SCRRBA currently maintains over 2,300 frequency coordination records. These data represent the activities of approximately 600 relay type amateur radio systems in Southern California. All of these systems operate on the UHF (420 MHz) and higher amateur frequency bands. These systems each have an average membership of about 50 amateurs. The largest of these systems has a membership exceeding 1,200.

SCRRBA is an active participant, usually the sponsor, in the amateur band planning processes applicable to our service area and service bands. We represent the fixed and mobile relay interests in regional band planning meetings. These meetings occur when the existing band plans do not cover a desired activity, or when the band plans need to be upgraded to match new or increased activities. These meetings are attended by representatives of ALL the amateur uses of the band. These band plans are adopted by unanimous consent of these representatives. These band plans cover activity in the SCRRBA service area, the

Southern California region. When we complete a new band plan for our region, we submit it to the ARRL for inclusion in the national band planning processes.

The ARRL now maintains a list of VHF and higher band plans from regions all around the country, and has done so for more than 20 years. The ARRL has formulated, adopted, and published, "national" band plans based on what consensus is possible from within these regional band plans<sup>1</sup>. The ARRL has stated, and continues to state that, in the case of conflict between regional band plans and the national plan, that the regional plan "...shall prevail and be considered good amateur operating practice in that region".<sup>2</sup> We concur, and support this statement and these processes.

The ARRL has petitioned the Commission to issue a Declaratory Ruling in the matter of recognition of amateur band plans. The ARRL has asked that the Commission formally recognize that amateur operations in conformance with these band plans is "... conforming to good amateur practice", and that amateur operations NOT in conformance with these band plans is "contrary to good amateur practice". We agree and support the ARRL request.

The ARRL has cited case and example where the regionally developed and adopted band plan has been cited as reference for several formal dispute cases

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<sup>1</sup> See ARRL repeater directory, 1997-98 Pages 36 through 59

<sup>2</sup> ARRL request for Declaratory ruling, RM 9259, at 6, and 15; ARRL repeater directory, 1997-98, page 36

over the last two decades. The Commissions rulings in these matters stated the Commissions support for the band plan concept.<sup>3</sup>

The ARRL suggests, and we strongly concur, that is desirable and necessary for the concept of adherence to a formal, published, regional band plan being "good amateur operating practice" to be more formally recognized by the Commission. The ARRL requests a formal declaratory ruling to use as a citable example of the Commissions position on these matters. We differ and suggest that while such ruling is very desirable, that formal inclusion in the applicable rules of necessary phrasing will be of more overall benefit to the Amateur Service. We strongly support the flexibility present in the Amateur service regulations, and do not wish to see restrictive, specific regulations implemented. We suggest, however, that willingness to comply with a "recommended practice" will be much improved if such recommendation is included in the basic regulations applicable to the Amateur service. We suggest that minor wording changes to 47 C.F.R. § 97.101(b) may be sufficient. The following is our suggestion for wording of 97.101(b):

47 C.F.R. §97.101(b) (modified) Each station licensee and each control operator must cooperate in selecting transmitting channels and in making the most effective use of the amateur service frequencies. No frequency will be assigned for the exclusive use of any station. Compliance with the applicable band plan is considered good amateur practice.

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<sup>3</sup> ARRL request for Declaratory ruling, RM 9259, at 10

Notwithstanding the Commissions decision to modify the Amateur service rules, the Amateur Service needs, and will significantly benefit from, a ruling formalizing, or "validating", the band plan concept of amateur spectrum management. The Amateur Service will benefit from such ruling in a number of ways not limited to the following:

- 1: Increased effectiveness of the "peer pressure" method of self policing
- 2: Increased awareness of the existence and value of band plans and band planning
- 3: Increased awareness will lead to increased participation in the band planning process
- 4: Increased participation in the band planning process will lead to better, more complete band plans
- 5: Better and more complete band plans will lead to better spectrum utilization, and fewer operating conflicts.
- 6: Formal recognition of the band plan concept will reduce the number of operating conflicts, and will result in even fewer conflicts rising to the attention of Commission personnel.

We respectfully submit these comments, and urge a ruling at an early date on this matter.



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