

RM-9267

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Thursday, May 21, 1998

Office Of The Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
Room 222
1919 M Street NW
Washington, DC 20554

Dear FCC,

I am writing to comment on RM-9267. The amateur community is very active on the amateur bands in question especially the 420-450 MHz band. This band is especially important as this is the band where vital links between repeaters have formed many wide coverage repeater systems that are extremely important in weather watching. The amateur community continues to provide important information to the National Weather Service during severe weather. We are basically the eyes and ears in the different counties that are affected during severe weather outbreaks. The information that we provide is important to help provide an early warning system that can save lives and prevent property damage.

Most of the linking between repeaters is done in the 420-450 MHz band. Many repeaters also operate independantly and as links in this band. I am a repeater owner and control operator here in Hamilton, TX. My 147.20MHz repeater is linked via the 420-450 band to a repeater 40 miles away that operates on 444.775MHz. This repeater is in turn

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linked to a large system of repeaters that covers numerous counties in a more than 10,000 square mile area including West Texas, North Texas , and East Texas. The National Weather Service links up to this system during severe weather and talks directly to hams in the affected counties.

Almost all of the links in our system are in the 420-450 MHz band. Loss of this band would completely disable this important system. There are at least 15 similar linked systems that I know of and (some that I am not aware of) that are located all across various regions of the state of Texas. In these systems the 420-450MHz band is the most important linking band. The loss of even a few MHz of this band would completely disable many of these systems and greatly limit the coverage of all of the systems. The result would be less information available to the Weather Service during severe weather and less warning time for those in the direct path of life threatening weather cells.

These systems have proven extremely essential in the aftermath of disasters caused by tornadoes, fires, floods, etc... as the only means of communication into and out of the affected areas. These linked systems can carry communications quickly and easily for hundreds of miles to help coordinate search and rescue operations, the mobilization of food, clothing, and medical supplies when all other forms of communication are down.

During the Tornado that hit Jarrell, Texas a year ago almost to the day (this is still tornado season in Texas), the repeater tower in Jarrell was left intact and proved to be a vital communication link for the rescue and relief effort that followed. Amateur communications on the 420 -450 bands have been vital in all of the hurricaines that have

hit the east coast and gulf coast over the recent years.

Please consider the tremendous impact that the loss of these frequencies from the amateur bands will have on the nation in general and especially those parts of the country prone to severe weather. Taking these frequencies away from the amateur service is a mistake that will result in lost lives and costly property damage.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,

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