Commissioner Susan Ness
Federal Communications Commission
1919 M Street
Washington, D.C. 20554

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OFFICE OF COMMISSIONER SUSAN NESS
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August 29, 1998

EX PARTE OR LATE FILED

Re: Notice of Proposed Rulemaking No. 98-143, RM-9148, RM-9150, RM-9196.

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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

Dear Commissioner Ness:

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Concerning NPRM 98-143, I fail to understand of Tech Plus licensees in paragraph 13 in conjunction with that of Novice licensees in paragraph 12. Both license holders had to pass the 5wpm code test to obtain their respective licenses. There is no difference. Therefore, both license class holders should receive the same [illegible]. If not, this is a blatant case of discrimination.

Secondly, Amateur Radio involves ongoing learning beyond testing. There's not an Amateur I know that doesn't know the rules, regulations, and radio theory covering all HF that has any HF privileges at all. Based upon this, I see no reason for any written testing of any current Novices or Tech Plusses in moving them into the same class with the Generals.

Concerning the Morse Code (CW) requirements, the International Treaty only requires a knowledge of the code, with no set speed. As such, a single 5wpm test meets the Treaty requirement. Higher speed additional tests, in this day and age, serve no purpose other than discouraging many from upgrading and allowing some higher-class license holders an excuse for discriminatory behavior toward other licensees.

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I urge the adoption of a single 5 wpm code test only requirement for upgrading from the VHF-and-Up license to any license with HF privileges.

The combining of the Novice, Tech Plus, and General classes into one, as I have suggested, will also save the Commission valuable time and money. Any higher speed code tests should be conducted by the ARRL or another Amateur organization at hamfests. I have suggested this to the ARRL previously. In this way, people could test at whatever speed they would and certificates could be awarded in the same way as a DXCC is. It starts at 100 countries for instance, and graduates up to the full [illegible] country total (over 300). In other words, for those interested it would be a personal achievement recognition outside the constraints of the license testing structure — an award. I know a fellow in town that can copy code at 55 wpm. You see my point?

Lastly on NPRM 98-143, I do think four classes is not reduction enough. Most other countries in the World get along quite well with two classes or just one. I see no reason why we can't cut our current 6 classes in half to three. As follows:

Class C — Current Technician.
Class B — Current Novice, Tech Plus, & General.
Class A — Current Advanced & Extra.

This would save the Commission further funding. Also, per my previous arguement of Amateur Radio being an ongoing learning experience, the Advanced should be grandfathered in with the Extras just as the Novice and Tech Pluses would be in with the Generals. This eliminates these three classes. This is more efficient yet still allows for upgrading. Please consider this strongly.

Concerning RM-9148 and RM-9150, it states that these are granted in paragraph 41. However, paragraph 18 states "Its specific proposal [illegible] however, appears to be inconsistent with the statutory provisions governing the role of administrative law judges". Why was this granted if it is inconsistent. This makes no sense to me and should be rescinded and redone.

Concerning RM-9196, there has already been a comment period opened and closed on this. Why is this being opened to an unofficial reconsideration? I thought this was already settled?

I trust you will consider all the points I've made here. I thank you for your time and consideration on all these points. Thank you very much.

Sincerely:

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