



LYNN S. HORTON, Mayor

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EX PARTE OR LATE FILED

June 18, 1998

Chairman William Kennard
Federal Communications Commission
1919 M Street NW, Room 814
Washington, DC 20554

RECEIVED
JUL 22 1998
FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

RE: *Ex Parte Filing* in cases FO 91-171; FO 91-301 /

Dear Chairman Kennard:

Please reject the proposed change to the Emergency Alert System (EAS) rules. It would prevent people watching local TV stations on a cable system from receiving emergency announcements from their local public safety authorities.

Municipalities are charged with protecting the public safety. They have trained public safety officers on duty 24 hours a day with an obligation and duty to notify the public of emergencies. Where necessary (such as TV station announcements being inadequate or needing supplementing) municipalities require all channel local alert systems in their cable franchises. It would be a mistake to turn this vital public safety function over to a private party who has no obligation, training or authority on public safety matters.

Alert systems deal with emergencies where public safety authorities have determined that the public needs to be informed immediately. The fact that emergency alerts from public safety authorities may occasionally overlap those of private parties (such as broadcasters) is a minor problem, if it is a problem at all. The NAB's proposed rule is unacceptable because it guarantees a substantial reduction in the number of people receiving emergency announcements from their local public safety authority.

Emergency information on TV stations can be helpful but typically apply to weather. Local emergency alerts are also used for other types of emergencies, such as hazardous material spills, gas leaks, prison escapes, street and bridge closings and local snow emergencies. Bremerton does not have local origination television and the Seattle stations do not provide the local coverage necessary in an emergency. Cable systems are often the best or only means for municipalities to alert their residents to local emergencies which reflect local conditions.



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The Cable Act allows communities in renewals to require cable systems to meet community needs. Local emergency alert systems are a part of meeting such needs. All viewers of cable channels should be able to get emergency announcements from their local public safety authority. Without that notice the local community may be at risk. Please reject the proposed change, including any proposal to preempt franchise provisions on local emergency alerts.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lynn S. Horton".

Lynn S. Horton
Mayor

LH:ch

cc: Commissioner Harold Furchtgott-Roth
Commissioner Michael Powell
Commissioner Gloria Tristani
Commissioner Susan Ness
Mr. John Logan
Ms. Magalie Roman Salas (2)