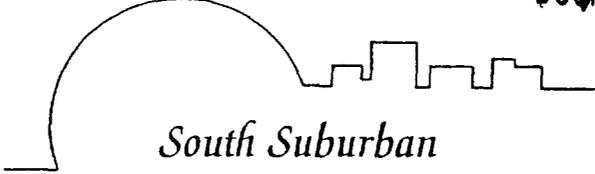


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*South Suburban
Mayors and Managers
Association*

William J. Asselborn, Jr.
President

Beth Ruyle
Executive Director

June 30, 1998

William Kennard, Chair
Federal Communications Commission
1919 M Street, NW, Room 814
Washington, D.C. 20554

Ex Parte Filing in cases FO91-171; FO 91-301 ✓

Dear Mr. Kennard:

You are currently considering a change in the Emergency Alert System (EAS) rules. On behalf of the South Suburban Mayors and Managers Association, an organization representing 38 municipalities in Cook and Will counties with a total population of nearly 600,000 people, we ask that you reject the proposed change.

All viewers of cable channels should get emergency announcements from their local public safety authority. Franchise provisions on local emergency alerts should not be pre-empted by franchisees. They were negotiated on behalf of residents with community interest in mind; it is unlikely that private parties (i.e., cable companies) will be as responsive to community interests as duly-appointed and duly-elected local government officials will be.

Municipalities are responsible for protecting the public safety. Their trained public safety officials are on duty 24 hours each day with an obligation and duty to notify the public of emergencies. Where they have felt it necessary, they have negotiated cable franchise agreements that require all-channel local alert systems. The alert system should not be weakened, and the appropriate powers of municipalities should not be compromised by the needs of private businesses (e.g., broadcasters).

CHICAGO SOUTHLAND

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William Kennard, Chair
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It is important that the emergency alert system be used to notify the public not only of weather emergencies, but also of threats to public safety such as hazardous waste spills, prison escapes, street and bridge closings, gas leaks, snow emergencies, water main breaks, etc. Television stations may not adequately cover these non-weather types of emergencies. In addition, television markets cover large areas and their programming may not be tailored for local needs. Cable emergency alert systems are often the only way municipalities can alert their residents to local emergencies. Local emergency alert systems meet community needs, an express provision of the Cable Act. The FCC should not (and cannot) pre-empt those provisions.

Sincerely,

Beth Ruyle
Executive Director

Cc: Magalie Roman Salas, FCC
Harold Furchtgott-Roth, FCC
Michael Powell, FCC
Gloria Tristani, FCC
Susan Ness, FCC
Deborah Klein and Steve Broeckaert, FCC
Barrie Tabin, National League of Cities
Eileen Huggard, NATOA
Robert Fogel, National League of Counties
Kevin McCarty, U.S. Conference of Mayors