



CITY OF HIGHLAND PARK

HIGHLAND PARK, ILLINOIS 60035 • (708) 432-0800

OFFICE OF CITY MANAGER

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August 5, 1998

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

FCC MAIL ROOM

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

Dear Chairman Kennard:

On behalf of the City of Highland Park, I respectfully request your support in opposition to the proposed change in the Emergency Alert System (EAS) rules. The change would prevent Highland Park residents who are watching local TV stations on a cable system from receiving emergency announcements from local public safety authorities.

There is no basis for such a preemption of state and local public safety authorities. All viewers of cable television channels should have the opportunity to receive emergency announcements from their local public safety authorities. To do otherwise would be detrimental to the safety of the public.

Local municipalities are responsible for protecting the public which they serve. Trained public safety professionals, on duty 24 hours per day, have an obligation and duty to notify the public of emergencies and necessary actions to insure resident safety. It is imprudent to allow a vital public safety function to be transferred from the municipal domain.

Broadcasters supporting the proposed rule changes claim they possess emergency alert systems superior to those of state and local public safety authorities. This is a decision for each municipal safety authority to determine on a case by case basis, as reflected in a cable television franchise.

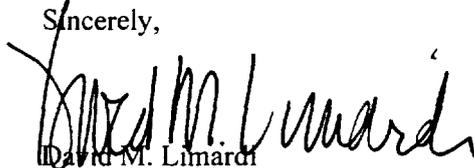
Local alert systems deal with emergencies where local public safety authorities have determined that the public needs to be informed immediately. The fact that emergency alerts from public safety authorities may occasionally overlap those of private parties (such as broadcasters) is a minor problem, 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 authorities.

Emergency information on TV stations can be helpful, but typically apply mainly to weather. Local emergency alerts are also used for other types of emergencies, such as hazardous material spills, gas leaks, floods, street and bridge closings and local snow emergencies. Cable systems are often the best or only means for municipalities to alert their residents to emergencies, which reflect local conditions.

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The Cable Act allows communities in franchise renewals to require cable systems to meet community needs. Local emergency alert systems are a part of meeting such needs. These provisions are protected by the Cable Act, and should be beyond preemption. Your opposition to the proposed change in rules is respectfully requested. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



David M. Limardi
City Manager

DML/vlj

c: Commissioner Harold Furchtgott-Roth
Federal Communications Commission
1919 M Street, Room 802
Washington, DC 20554

Commissioner Michael Powell
Federal Communications Commission
1919 M Street, Room 844
Washington, DC 20554

Commissioner Gloria Tristani
Federal Communications Commission
1919 M Street, Room 826
Washington, DC 20554

Commissioner Susan Ness
Federal Communications Commission
1919 M Street, Room 832
Washington, DC 20554

Mr. John Logan
Acting Chief
Cable Services Bureau
918 Empire Building
2033 M Street, NW
Washington, DC 20554

Ms. Magalie Roman Salas (two copies)
Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
1919 M Street, Room 222
Washington, DC 20554