



FIRE

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July 16, 1998

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

~~RECEIVED
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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY~~

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

Dear Chairman Kennard:

This letter is to request that you reject the proposed change to the Emergency Alert System (EAS) rules which would prevent cable companies from interrupting local TV stations carried on a cable system with an emergency alert. Approval and implementation of this change would not be in the public interest, in that it would serve to degrade the timeliness and the quality of life saving warning and information provided to our community. I can see no instance where this proposed change will save lives or property in the event of an emergency such as a hurricane, tornado, radiological or hazardous material incident, or other emergency in our community.

Cable television serves the majority of our community. It has proven to be the fastest, most reliable, and most direct way to notify the public of life threatening situations that provide only minutes of reaction time. For example, there will be only about 15 minutes of warning for a tornado or hazardous material incident. There could be a high price to pay for any delay in disseminating and warning. An outstanding working relationship has been established with the cable television operators. Procedures have been developed and are routinely exercised to ensure that our communities have the very best opportunity to preserve life and property. Our actions and decisions should build and enhance capabilities, not degrade them.

We have a joint responsibility as public servants to use the authority and resources placed under our trust for the best interest of the public. I suggest that you consider the following question and your personal answer when making your final decision. If there were a tornado approaching your neighborhood, would you and your family want the earliest and best warning that can be provided or would you want to place your family at more risk with a later warning that might not provide enough time for protective actions? I suggest that if your decision is the best for your family, it will also be the best decision for the public that has entrusted us.

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I appreciate your serious and thoughtful consideration of this matter and I look forward to learning of your decision rejecting the proposed rule.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Richard M. Miller". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent initial "R" and a long, sweeping tail.

Richard M. Miller