

I herewith respectfully submit my comments on the proposed amateur radio license restructuring which I support 100%.

NUMBER OF LICENSE CLASSES: I feel the number of license classes should be reduced from six to three. The Novice and the Tech Plus Classes should be phased out and the current licensees in those classes should be upgraded to General Class without having to take any additional examinations which I base on their already having sufficient operating experience and exposure to amateur radio. To require further examinations, some licensees may upgrade but some may not which would leave a mixture of Novice and Tech Plus licenses in existence for an indefinite period of time. On the other hand, to upgrade these licensees to General Class and place restrictions on their operating privileges until they pass an examination would almost create chaos in policing the General Class bands. The Novice bands should be made a part of the frequencies available to General and Extra Class licensees with the elimination of current power restrictions on those frequencies.

ADVANCED CLASS: I do not see any useful purpose in retaining the Advanced Class license as there is very little difference between the privileges for that class and the Extra Class. Advanced Class licensees have sufficient operating experience and knowledge of amateur radio to be upgraded to Extra Class without any further examination. If all the changes were made that I have outlined above, it would leave the following active classes: CLASS A - Extra; CLASS B - General; and CLASS C - No Code Tech.

RACES: I favor phasing out RACES station licenses as proposed by 98-143.

TELEGRAPHY EXAMINATION REQUIREMENTS: I feel all amateur radio operators operating in the HF bands below 30 MHz should have a knowledge of the Morse Code, however, I believe only one code speed of 5 words per minute for the General Class examination would fulfill that requirement. I do not see where any additional requirement for a faster code speed to advance to Extra Class would in itself make an individual a better operator. The Morse Code test should be administered requiring one minute of solid copy out of five minutes. The written examinations should have additional elements to cover the newer digital technologies.

WRITTEN EXAMINATIONS: Written examination requirements should be modified to provide VEs and VECs additional flexibility in determining the specific contents of the written examinations. One advantage would be that newer technologies pertinent to amateur radio could be incorporated in examinations as the examinations are rewritten periodically.

I have held an amateur radio license continuously since 1958 and I believe now more than ever that we are going thru a period of time which demands that certain appropriate changes be made in the Amateur Radio Service. Years ago amateur radio was a hobby that attracted many young people but that is not so in today's world where there are too many things competing with this hobby especially computers. I believe the Morse Code has lost its significance due to newer digital technologies and I do not believe the faster code speeds should be retained which in today's world scares some people away from the amateur radio hobby. Also, it is obvious that we do not need the many classes of license that exist today which require so many examinations to advance from one class to the other. I know whatever changes are made will be for the better. Thank you, Herb.