

MURRAY STATE UNIVERSITY AMATEUR RADIO CLUB
Box 2740 University Station
Murray, KY 42071
November 28, 1998

COMMENTS SUBMITTED TO THE FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS
COMMISSION CONCERNING RESTRUCTURING OF THE AMATEUR RADIO
SERVICE: WT DOCKET NO. 98-143

The members of the Murray State University Amateur Radio Club have studied with interest the various proposals to restructure the Amateur Radio Service. Our club is a general-interest, well-balanced club of approximately 60 members, ranging from newcomers to veteran hams of many years; we include university students and staff, and associate members in the surrounding community. We provide license classes and examinations, and a large number of Amateur-radio activities.

Members of our club have discussed the proposals put forward by the FCC, the ARRL, and others in WT Docket No. 98-143 at club meetings, small gatherings, and over the air. In our monthly meeting of November 3, we voted unanimously to support the positions that follow.

For the most part, we agree with the positions advocated by the ARRL. Specifically, we likewise feel that:

- The number of license classes in the Amateur Radio Service should be reduced from 6 to 4, to be named Technician, General, Advanced, and Amateur Extra.
- No currently licensed Amateur should lose privileges as a result of the restructuring.
- The Morse code examination should be retained for the higher-level licenses, but speed requirements reduced to 5wpm for General class and to 12wpm for Advanced and Extra class. We feel that it is correct, in view of decreasing Morse reliance in other communications services, to reduce the speeds in this manner, but given the historical usage of Morse in the Amateur service to continue examinations at these two levels.
- With the end of the issuance of the Novice class license and the minimal use of the current Novice subbands, those frequencies should be made available for use by other license classes.
- It would be helpful to allow Advanced class operators to prepare and administer examinations for the General class license.
- In regards to high-speed telegraphy waivers for the disabled, we agree that the current system is easily abused. A sympathetic doctor will, without much consideration or understanding of the situation, agree with a patient that a code waiver should be granted and will sign the required statement, whether or not the applicant is truly unable to learn the code due to a genuine disability. On the other hand, we are aware of a number of truly disabled applicants to whom this process has been helpful, and justifiably so. Therefore we would like to see some improved review process established, to improve screening of the applicants for the telegraphy waiver. Local Volunteer Examiners may often have personal knowledge of an applicant's disability

condition (or lack thereof), and/or perhaps a national panel of volunteer experts could be arranged to review applications.

In regards to telegraphy examinations, we disagree with the ARRL that the multiple-choice examination should be eliminated. Using multiple-choice answers eliminates misunderstandings about a question being asked, does away with the interpretive reading of poor handwriting, and is more appropriate for the handicapped. Well-crafted multiple-choice exams provide an accurate test of knowledge. To assure that the exams are being prepared in a rigorous manner, it might be appropriate to require that the complete exam be submitted to the VEC for his review.

(Signed) William L. Call, KJ4W; Trustee, Murray State University Amateur Radio Club