

I Russell E. Furry, ARS K5GF, file these comments on Nov. 29, 1998 in the FCC's Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, WT Docket No. 98-143. I have been an active amateur radio operator for over 25 years and have spent many years operating CW as well as voice. I never had a Novice Class license, but instead chose to enter the amateur ranks as a General Class. The fact that I never had a Novice license has not in any way effected my desire or ability to advance. I had a General and later an Advanced license for five years before deciding to upgrade to Extra Class. During my first five years my primary mode of operation was SSB. Even though I had little CW experience, I found the transition to 20 WPM relatively easy.

My comments on the applicable items are as follows:

I. Number of Amateur Service License Classes: I would support a reduction to four classes, Technician, General, Advanced, and Extra. I support the designations of these classes to be named as they are now.

II. Importance and Disposition of Novice Class: I do not really have an opinion on the novice class, but if it is replaced with Technician, with no code requirement, and VHF only operating frequencies then I have no problem.

III. Advanced Class VE's for the general class: I am in favor of this change.

IV. Phasing out RACES Station Callsigns: I support the phasing out of RACES Callsigns.

V. Enforcement in the Amateur Radio Service: I would support paying a license fee for my Amateur License provided that the fees go directly to the FCC for a vigorous enforcement program.

VI. Telegraphy Examination Requirements: Now I have a lot to say. I do not support the reduction of code requirements in any way. After all, we are called Amateur Radio Operators and the ONLY requirement for demonstrating skill as an operator in the code requirement. I feel that a little pain in acquiring any license gives the recipient a little respect for the license he or she acquires. In all my years of operating I have never come across more Gentlemen and Ladies than I have found in the CW bands. It is not really a big deal to learn and progress with CW in my opinion, and if this little requirement makes us all more respectful of our licenses, then I approve. I must admit that in my early days I understood

nothing about radio theory. I, like many others, simply memorized theory in order to pass the license exam and the learning all came later. I do not care at all about what the rest of the world is doing. After all, no other countries have been to the moon, so lowering our standards to simply "fit in" is not an option.

I also believe that amateur radio is not for everyone, and should not be. If one is not willing to learn some form of skill and demonstrate it to obtain a license, then I say move on to Citizens Band or the Family Radio Service.

I am in favor of a one minute solid copy, out of five for CW examinations.

VII. Written Examination Requirements: No comment.

Conclusion: I hope that the FCC does not participate in the dumbing down of our amateur ranks in the same way the NEA has dumbed down our public schools. Making the job of the FCC easier will benefit all Citizens of this country, but making an Amateur Radio License easier to obtain will not benefit anyone except new licensees, equipment manufacturers, and the ARRL budget. I am a VE and a long time member of the ARRL and I am seriously considering quitting the ARRL and their VEC because I feel like I have been sold out. I just want to make it clear that I do not support their proposal to make it easier to obtain an Amateur License. I feel that government officials should do what they are hired to do, Govern. If that means making the Amateur Radio Service more in step with Quality, rather than Quantity, then so be it. After all, if we don't have quality, then we have nothing.

Sincerly,  
R.E. "Gene" Furry, K5GF