

**Before the
FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
Washington, D.C. 20554**

In the Matter of)
)
Establishment of Public Service Radio) RM-9405
Pool in the Private Mobile Frequencies)
Below 800 MHz)

COMMENTS OF NATIONAL FUEL GAS COMPANY

Pursuant to Section 1.405 of the FCC's Rules, National Fuel Gas Company hereby submits its Comments in support of the above-referenced "Petition for Rulemaking" filed on August 14, 1998, by UTC, The Telecommunications Association (UTC), the American Petroleum Institute (API), and the Association of American Railroads (AAR).

Introduction

National Fuel Gas Company is a diversified energy company with its headquarters in Buffalo, New York. The Company's primary business is divided among the following business segments: Pipeline and Storage, Utility, Exploration and Production.

National Fuel Supply Corporation transports and stores natural gas for National Fuel's local distribution area, as well as for utilities, pipelines and other companies in the northeastern United States. It owns and operates a 3,144 mile pipeline network and 30 underground natural gas storage areas in northwestern Pennsylvania and western New York. Most of its operations are regulated by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission.

National Fuel Distribution Corporation sells and transports natural gas to nearly 731,300 customers in New York and Pennsylvania. Its operations are regulated by a state Commission in each state.

The radio network is critical to the safe, reliable and efficient operation of its natural gas system.

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Comments

National Fuel's land mobile radio network includes 53 base stations and more than 700 mobile radios operating on 10 different frequencies. This system is the backbone of our field voice communication network and provides a critical link in our SCADA operation.

This private radio system allows us to manage the communications and give priority to leak and service interruptions. The system is also designed to provide emergency communications when electrical power and telephone systems are not operating. During these periods our radio network is vital to the continued safe uninterrupted flow of natural gas in our 11,490 square mile territory.

We have experienced two instances of interference on our frequencies, both were eventually traced to Canada but both were extremely difficult to track down and resolve. In both cases the interfering radio traffic showed no regard for our operation, caused numerous delays and severely interrupted our normal operation. We cannot tolerate this interference during an emergency when the safety of our operation and the public is placed in jeopardy. These instances of interference have made us aware of the importance our radio system and the need to protect it from any further interference.

National Fuel Gas is concerned that the present competitive frequency coordination is not in the best interest of our company or our customers. We do not believe that the sensitive and important nature of the utility industry's private radio systems are fully understood and appreciated by the open coordination process. The coordination of any additional users on our channels would be detrimental to our operation.

We believe that the UTC Petition for Rulemaking proposes a reasonable solution that will assist in assuring reliable infrastructures for utilities who provide critical public services.

Conclusion

In conclusion, National Fuel Gas supports the Petition for Rulemaking, and urges the FCC to promptly issue a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking looking toward the creation of a Public Service Radio Service as described in the Petition.

Respectfully submitted,

NATIONAL FUEL GAS COMPANY

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "John A. Rimlinger".

By: John A. Rimlinger
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Dated: December 21, 1998

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I hereby certify that a copy of the foregoing "Comments of National Fuel Gas Company" was sent by first-class mail, postage prepaid, to the following persons this 21 day of December, 1998.

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A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "John A. Rimlinger". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned below the printed name.