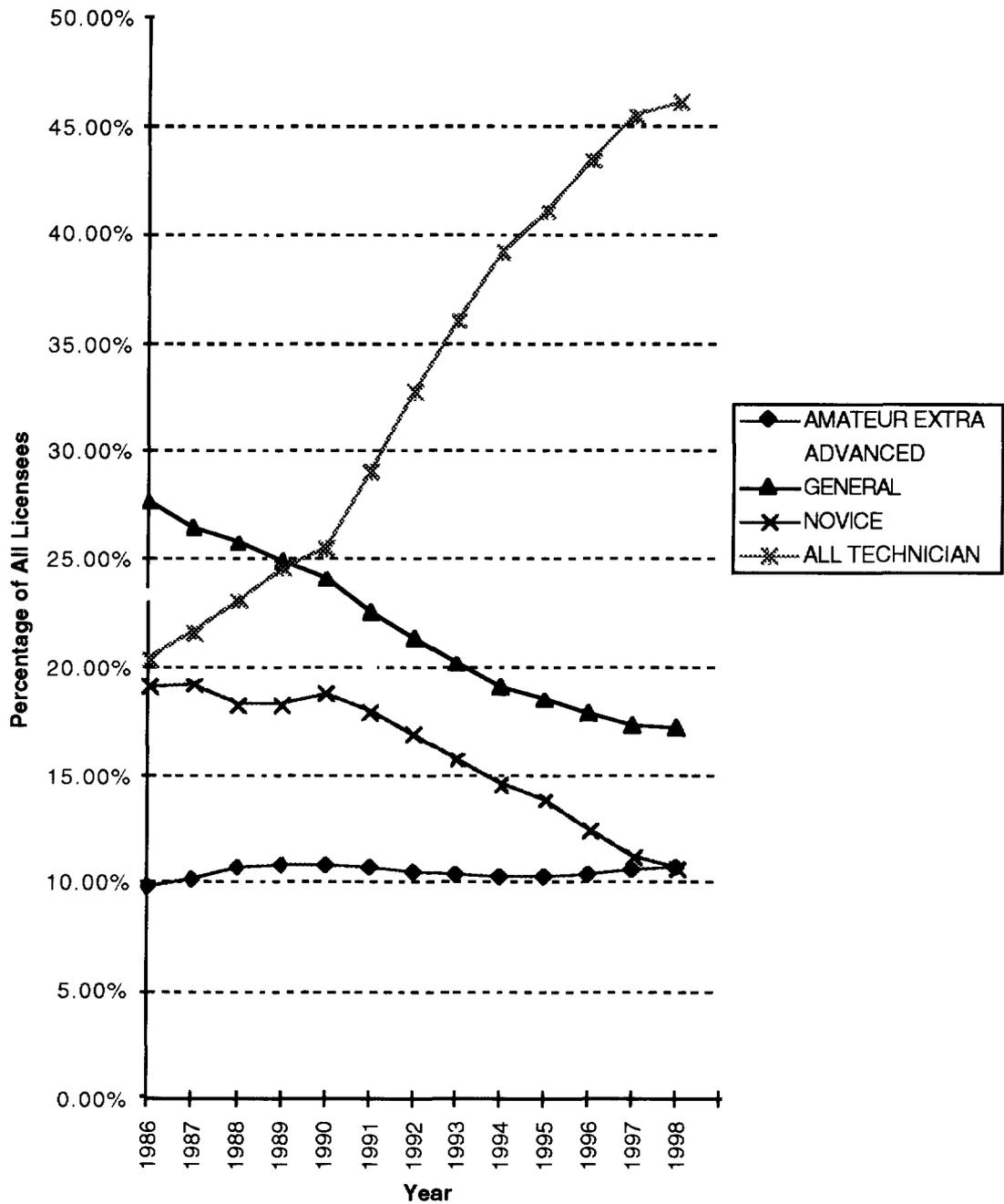


**Before the Federal Communications Commission
Washington, D.C. 20554**

Reply Comments of)	WT Docket No. <u>98-143</u>
)	
Courtney B. Duncan)	RM-9148
)	RM-9150
and)	RM-9196
)	
Jan A. Tarsala)	
)	
In the Matter of)	
1998 Biennial Regulatory Review --)	
Amendment of Part 97 of the Commission's)	
Amateur Service Rules.)	

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The central problem presented by the pyramidal Amateur Radio Service licensing structure of today is shown in Figure 1 on the next page, reprinted herein for the sake of completeness from our original *Comments*. Put bluntly, people are entering the Amateur Radio Service at the bottom of the licensing pyramid, and they are staying at the bottom, failing to progress to higher licenses, failing to master the art and science of radio. Any party who seeks to improve the Amateur Radio Service licensing structure but fails to understand the data within Figure 1 and their implication is missing the whole point; any proposal not correcting this central problem is ultimately irrelevant.



**Figure 1: Amateur Radio Licensing Statistics
Showing the Failure of Current Licensing Incentives**

Sadly, of the many comments we have read, few really understand what is wrong with the current Amateur Radio Service licensing structure. Standing apart as particularly thought provoking, however, were the *Comments* filed by Mr. Edward E. Mitchell, as well as the *Comments* filed by Mr. Joseph Speroni, particularly when coupled with the supplementary statistical information mounted on the Internet web site of Mr. Speroni referenced on the first page of his text. All the other, numerous, passionate arguments focusing solely on combining current license classes or concerning the required speed of any testing in the International Morse Code, *et cetera*, were and are just so much blather. Unless the situation documented by Figure 1 is redressed, nothing else -- absolutely nothing -- matters.

One commentator, whom we shall not identify so as to spare further embarrassment, incorrectly asserted that operating privileges could only be conveyed by the action of the federal government. If this claim were true, the entire concept of the privatization of the Amateur Radio Service licensing process contained within our original *Comments* would be foreclosed. This is simply not the case, even today. When a successful applicant for a license upgrade is issued a Certificate of Successful Completion of an Examination by the Volunteer Examiner team indicating that an upgrade has been earned, the applicant may immediately begin using the additional frequencies, emissions, and power levels of the new license class (47 CFR 97.9 (b)). It is the action of the private sector, the Volunteer Examiner team, that grants the expanded privileges, which are only later ratified by the issuance of a new paper license by the Gettysburg

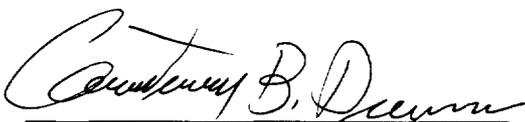
processing facility. Privatization of the Amateur Radio Service licensing process has already begun; the licensing process described by our *Comments* leverages these concepts.

Mr. Michael P. Deignan, in Section 5 of his *Comments*, argues for the periodic recertification of existing licensees, pointing to the periodic revisions made to the Amateur Radio Service rules and to the accelerating pace of technological change. We would point out that periodic recertification blends harmoniously with our proposal for license Endorsements issued by the private sector, and could be implemented with no additional burdens on the government. Additionally, it could be applied selectively and with great flexibility amongst the various Endorsements.

We have considered the question posed by the Commission in FCC WT Docket 98-143 concerning the number of Amateur Radio Service license classes. We have identified and documented in Figure 1 the greatest problem to be remedied by any revised licensing structure, namely, that meaningful incentives towards personal mastery of the radio art and science have been lost. We have responded to this situation creatively, unfettered by past paradigms, and have proposed a radically simplified licensing system consisting solely of a core Amateur Radio Operator and Station License, and six Endorsements which are crafted to expand the skills and knowledge of the licensee. The core license is to be issued by the government, while the endorsements are to be issued by the private sector and recorded electronically in the government database. In so doing, we have reduced the processing burdens on the Commission, emphasized

privatization of the process, and minimized burdensome governmental involvement. Since Incentive Licensing was introduced by the Commission into the Amateur Radio Service in the late Sixties, the whole point of the licensing structure was to motivate individuals to license classes higher in the traditional pyramid. Figure 1 shows this is no longer happening, and has not been for at least a decade. If the goals of Incentive Licensing are now being rejected by the Commission, then let your *Report and Order* so state. Conversely, if individual mastery of the radio art and science by amateur radio operators is still a worthy goal, then the data of Figure 1 demand that fundamental structural changes in the licensing of operators in the Amateur Radio Service must be made, changes embracing an incentive structure relevant to the technology and operating styles of today, and of tomorrow. We urge the Commission to have courage, to exercise vision, and to act boldly to ensure the vitality of the Amateur Radio Service in the next century.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED THIS FOURTEENTH DAY OF JANUARY, 1999 BY:



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