

Filing in response to Utility opposition to proposed LF allocation.

Regulatory reference:

"As a general condition of operation, Part 15 devices may not cause any harmful interference to authorized services and must accept any interference that may be received."

(In the Matter of Amendment of Part 15 of the Commission's Rules Regarding Spread Spectrum Devices Wi-LAN, Inc. , ET Docket No. 99-231, May 11, 2001)

Goodman Response

With regard to FCC Docket 02-98, the number of power company filings opposing a part of the spectrum opening proposed for amateur use has been an eye opener -- at least for me. A number of power companies apparently use Part 15 Power Line Communications (PLC) devices to protect their high voltage lines. The frequencies used by the PLCs occupy those now proposed for amateur use, 135.7 to 137.8 kHz.

When stripped of the footnotes, technical specifications and arguments/pleas of fiscal exigency and efficiency entered into the docket by the various power companies and their associations, to this individual, the matter of whether use of the above-referenced frequencies should be granted to the amateur radio service comes down to Part 15. Power transmission entities began using Part 15 PLC devices knowing that if legitimate radio signals interfered with them, or visa versa, too bad, they would have to leave the playing field. And if these entities did not know that, too bad. As any lawyer who filed a comment for a power generation entity under docket 02-98 would be the first to say, "Ignorance of the law is no excuse."

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Evidently we are to assume that the security of the nation's power grid rests upon devices operated under the same rules that oversee devices such as clap on/clap off lamps and baby monitors. Some of the power entities who have filed Comments and Replies under this docket heading have enjoyed, without security of license or legal protection, the usage of the subject frequencies for lo these fifty years. Now they ask that their unlicensed, unprotected Part 15 devices be granted special protection because the U.S. amateur service, which was granted some experimental licenses by the FCC for operation within that same bandwidth, supports the granting of these frequencies to the amateur community.

The obvious question is, if PLC devices are so vital to the security of the power grid, why has the power generation community waited until now to seek protection for them? More importantly, as has been pointed out in other Replies herein, if PLCs are so vulnerable to weak signal amateur transmissions, how vulnerable would they be to a higher powered carrier generated by an unlicensed transmitter operated by individuals with nefarious purposes?

I believe the power generation entities' objections and protests lie more within the fiscal than the security realm. The remarks of Mark Simon of the IEEE, filed August 12, are replete with references to the prohibitive costs of implementing alternatives to PLCs. Will Mr. Simon be replaying those arguments to commercial and residential electric customers when service is disrupted by a transmitter which specifically targets a PLC?

It appears that the power generation community wishes to have it both ways. They want to continue to operate Part 15 devices, secure from a perceived threat of weak signal amateur stations. Yet having professed that their Part 15 devices are vulnerable to radio interference, they then say they do not wish to spend money to create a more secure system of protection for the nation's electrical power supply. To me, this smacks of penny wise, pound foolish thinking.

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Finally, I wish to thank the Federal Communications Commission for providing the opportunity for all voices to be heard in this matter.

Respectfully submitted,
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