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FAX MESSAGE

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Date: April 12, 2004

To: Federal Communications Commission
Electronic Comment Filing System

Fax Number: 1-866-418-0232

From: Walter T. Burton, KB 5 BM

Subject: Electronic Comment Filing System

Number of Pages, including this page: 3

I have been unable to enter your Electronic Comment Filing System by on-line techniques. I, therefore, respectfully request that you accept the attached comments on RM 10867, RM 10868, and RM 10869 as submitted.

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Response to The Federal Communications Restructuring Plans for Amateur Radio Designated as **RM 10867, RM 10868, RM 10869, and RM 10870**
From: Walter T. Burton, KB5BM

Though Amateur radio's importance to the technical advance of electronic communications has been somewhat reduced, by military, space, and commercial research, it still has significant value in some special segments of technology and, most particularly, in the development of fresh and innovative means of combining new technologies by engaging and focusing the considerable intellect of many amateurs of diverse interests and backgrounds

The delights of economical global communications with other nationalities and cultures, previously afforded only by amateur radio, have been somewhat reduced by the widespread use of the Internet, yet, as we all soon learn, the Internet is not without its problems and does not provide the varied and random access to the so very many people of such a diverse cultural and geographical origin as can be accomplished only by radio. Amateur radio, therefore, continues to be a valuable instrument in building bridges of understanding between cultures and nations, a need that has steadily grown in importance in recent years

Many believed the widespread advent of the cell phone would largely eliminate amateur radio's value as an emergency communications bridge in times of disaster. The 9-11 tragedy and subsequent natural disasters have revealed that thinking to be in error. Cell towers are subject to destruction as are cell systems, even those systems with priority override, are subject to overloading. We are certainly no less susceptible to natural disasters and are faced with the added and increasing dimension of acts of terrorism carefully crafted by minds trained to exact the maximum horrific effect and executed by individuals devoid of conscience, pity, or fear. We must not do anything that would diminish one iota of our ability to respond to what is likely to be an ever-growing need in this facet of communications

Amateur radio is, therefore, still a highly valuable, irreplaceable, asset to our communities and our nation. Now in this period of perceived decline in interest, it needs to be encouraged in every feasible way and those amateurs who have studied, and often struggled, to reach their level of achievement, should not now feel penalized by shortsighted, often meaningless changes in license structure. I believe it would be a wise and significantly encouraging move, and urge the Commission to cause those who have reached the license level of Technician with 5 WPM code to be automatically up-graded to a General license and those who have reached the license level of Advanced be automatically granted an Extra License. As a further show of regard and encouragement, I suggest that these upgrades be placed into effect at once

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Response to The Federal Communications Restructuring Plans for Amateur
Radio Designated as **RM 10867, RM 10868, RM 10869, and RM 10870**
(Continued)

As archaic as it may seem to some, I believe a 5 word-per-minute code requirement should be made part of future attainment of General and Extra Licenses. The ability to send and receive Morse code is entwined in the birth and earliest days of our hobby and service and, as antique and slow as it may seem, is still a viable means to communicate with minimal equipment in times of poor propagation, difficult operating conditions, and deliberate interference.

Respectfully submitted,

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