

Before the Federal Communications Commission

In the Matter of:

RM-11306--an amendment of Part 97 of the Commission's Rules Governing the Amateur Radio Service Concerning Permitted Emissions and Control Requirements.

I respectfully submit this comment in response to the Reply Comments of ARRL, The National Association for Amateur Radio, dated February 21, 2006

On page 8 paragraph 9, of its Comments, the American Radio Relay League (ARRL) states the following: ARRL's plan attempts to segment emission modes of similar bandwidths in a manner that accommodates the varied needs and interests of all, while insuring compatibility by grouping like-bandwidth emissions together. Absent this, or if the common denominator in the HF bands is a generic, wide bandwidth limit of, for example, 6 or 9 KHz, as some have suggested, there would be a substantially increased threat to established narrow-bandwidth emission modes, and spectrum efficiency would not be encouraged.

This last situation described above, is precisely what ARRL proposes for the 160 m. amateur allocation in the United States, with an authorization for 9 KHz wide AM available for the entire band. On 160 m., there would be no segmentation by emission modes of similar bandwidths, no regulation for grouping of like bandwidth emissions together; only the aforementioned generic, wide bandwidth limit of 9 KHz AM as a defacto maximum limit for the band, since AM will be authorized anywhere on 160 meters. This poses, to use ARRL's own words, a "substantially increased threat to established narrow-bandwidth emission modes, and spectrum efficiency." Yet, in an astonishing non sequitur, ARRL chooses to apply this band plan spectrum conservation tactic only to HF, giving no explanation for the apparent curious double standard for HF and the medium waves.

ARRL might argue that since there has never been any regulation for mode based segmentation on 160 meters, they are attempting to maintain the status quo there. But being strangely tradition minded does not justify excluding 160 m. in ARRL's rush to embrace the 21st century for the rest of the amateur spectrum, whether its users desire it or not. While many tenants of 160 m. would understandably, like to see some protection given to narrow band modes, the ARRL's tradition minded treatment of 160 m. also begs the question of why any bandwidth based band plan is necessary for HF at all, since one does not seem to be vitally important for 160 meters, in ARRL's view of things.

While the ARRL contends that their Petition was properly vetted in the amateur community, I submit that the above apparent oversight regarding 160 meters, shows that the Petition is in need of further

refinement and that it should be returned to ARRL for more work. The ARRL has indeed listened to comments from amateurs, but their hearing may have been selective at times. Readers of the ARRL's Reply Comments are informed that "hundreds of comments [in the drafting process] were received at bandwidth@arrl.org." To my knowledge, these comments were never made public, nor were summaries, or even a simple breakdown of totals pro v. con, published. While this does not directly hand the vetting process an indictment of secrecy, it does indicate that aspects of it could have been more open than they were.

Finally, the ARRL seems to justify its band plan as a "reasonable middle ground" (paragraph 6). This comment follows a lengthy introduction in which a cataloging of the comments of other parties is given. ARRL claims these "polarized arguments" validate its Petition as a compromise, a "reasonable middle ground in a difficult regulatory area." I offer this translation: ARRL has instigated a controversy, and the very Petition that precipitated the controversy is validated as a solution for it. I believe the ARRL has more work to do in winning the acceptance of the Amateur Service and I hope, the FCC, before its Petition can become the canon we know as Part 97.

Respectfully submitted,

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