

Stan Young

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18 May, 2006

The Honorable Kevin J. Martin, Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20554

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WT Docket 04-140, WT Docket 05-235

Dear Chairman Martin:

The above-mentioned proposals to make urgently needed reforms in the rules governing Amateur Radio have been before the commission for quite some time. There have been extensive rounds of public comment, extensive staff review, and reams of discussion in the appropriate media – a small forest would have been needed to supply the magazines alone. Millions of electrons have been inconvenienced as discussions continued via emails, websites, and blogs.

There seems to be a consensus that both of these proposals need to be enacted, and quickly. There may be some things that will need to be revisited after we've had some time to use them...but WT-07 will be a natural review point.

We are coming up on the hurricane season. Amateur radio was one of the bright spots of the horrible hurricane season last year. We're trying to improve...and antiquated requirements like learning Morse Code do NOT help the situation at all.

I see from the attached article from the American Radio Relay League that it looks like these two proposals may not even make it out before the end of the year.

Hurricane season is almost on us. Why wait? Let's get this in place when it can do some good! The comment period on these bills has been over since 2005. I know governments move slowly, and I know there have been some administrative changes to get through, and the hurricane season LAST year caused problems.

Stan Young
W1AECOE

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Let's get this resolved before the hurricane season THIS year causes further disruption! It's one of the best bangs for the buck your office can provide at this time.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Stan Young', with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Stan Young
WG4RAY

Enclosure: Crystal Ball Still Foggy: FCC Won't Say Publicly When It Will Act On Morse Code

CC: The Honorable Saxby Chambliss, United States Senate
The Honorable Johnny Isakson, United States Senate
The Honorable Cynthia McKinney, United States House of Representatives

* Previous: [Amateur Radio Volunteers Wrapping Up New England Flooding Operations](#)

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Crystal Ball Still Foggy: FCC Won't Say Publicly When it Will Act on Morse Code

NEWINGTON, CT, May 17, 2006--All bets appear to be off as to when the FCC might make a final decision on deleting the Morse code requirement. Last July, an FCC *Notice of Proposed Rule Making and Order (NPRM&O)* in WT Docket 05-235 proposed to eliminate the Element 1 (5 WPM) Morse code requirement for all license classes. Most observers expected the Commission to release a *Report and Order (R&O)* to that effect by the end of this year, but even that timetable could prove optimistic, based on what the Commission will say publicly. Before it tackles the Morse proceeding, the FCC wants to wrap up another important Amateur Radio proceeding, WT-Docket 04-140, the so-called "omnibus" or "phone band expansion" proceeding. Responding to an ARRL inquiry, FCC personnel would not go on the record and declined even to hazard a ballpark guess on when the Commission might act on *either* Amateur Radio proceeding.

"They're at different points in the process," an FCC staffer said, refraining from saying anything that might suggest a commitment. "One is farther along in the review chain than the other." The "omnibus" proceeding is "way ahead" of the Morse code proceeding in the WTB pipeline, the staff member indicated.

Not Neglected

The FCC staffers attempted to assure ARRL that the WTB has not been sitting on its hands with respect to the Morse code issue. "It takes a while to plow through 4000 comments," one said, referring to the huge volume of opinions filed in the Morse docket. "It's not being neglected." The staff member did allow that WTB staff had completed its comment review in the Morse proceeding but wouldn't say when it might see the light of day. "I'd hesitate to say," the staff member demurred. Neither individual would even say whether the WTB expected to conclude either proceeding by the end of 2006.

"They should probably start learning code," one staffer advised those waiting for the FCC to drop the Morse requirement before upgrading, noting that a *Certificate of Successful Completion of Exam (CSCE)* for a written exam element is only good for a year. Even after the FCC goes public with its decision on Morse code, still more time is likely to pass before any new rules go into effect, the staff member pointed out.

"It's so hard to predict," the FCC staff member concluded.

The ARRL also is hoping the FCC will soon issue a *Notice of Proposed Rule Making* in response to its petition for rule making, RM-11306, to regulate Amateur Radio subbands by emission bandwidth rather than by mode.

Lowered Expectations

Earlier this year, a WTB staffer, speaking on background, told ARRL, "We certainly hope to release WT Docket 05-235 sometime this year, but we're not making any predictions at this time. We certainly are not saving up any big announcements for Dayton Hamvention."

Bill Cross, W3TN, the FCC Public Safety and Critical Infrastructure Division staff member who typically addresses Amateur Radio-related proceedings during Dayton Hamvention's FCC forum, won't be attending this year's show.

No Surprises Expected

When the FCC *does* act on WT 05-235, no one's expecting any major surprises: The Commission appears poised to simply drop the Morse requirement for all Amateur Radio license classes as it proposed last summer. Beyond that, the FCC turned away several other petition requests, including proposals to create a new entry-level license class.

The FCC did *not* propose in WT 05-235 to extend HF privileges to current Technician licensees who have *not* passed a Morse code examination. In its *NPRM&O* the FCC suggested that in a no-Morse-requirement regime, such "codeless Techs" would be able to gain HF access by taking the Element 3 General class written examination.

CW Bands, Privileges Unaffected

Any FCC decision to eliminate the 5 WPM Morse code requirement for HF access would have no impact on either the current HF CW-only subbands or on the CW privileges of Amateur Radio licensees. The Morse code proceeding neither put forward nor recommended any changes in CW allocations or privileges.

"Omnibus" Proceeding: What's in the Bag?

The "omnibus" *Notice of Proposed Rule Making (NPRM)* in WT Docket 04-140, released in April 2004, consolidated a dozen petitions for rulemaking, some dating back to 2001. The Commission has proposed to go along with the ARRL's Novice refarming plan aimed at reallocating the current Novice/Tech Plus subbands to expand portions of the 80, 40 and 15 meter phone bands. The FCC also agreed with an ARRL proposal to extend privileges in the current General CW-only HF subbands to present Novice and Tech Plus licensees (or Technicians with Element 1 credit).

Among other things, the FCC also proposed to essentially do away with its rules prohibiting the manufacture and marketing to Amateur Radio operators of amplifiers capable of operation on 12 and 10 meters.

Multiple Vanity Applications

The FCC further proposed to adopt a rule to limit the number of applications a licensee may file on a given day for the same vanity call sign. Some amateurs have filed multiple applications for the same call sign on the same day to greatly enhance their chances of getting their first call sign choice.

In its comments, the League suggested the FCC expand the scope of its proposed rule change to eliminate a loophole and to give it some teeth. The ARRL wants the Commission to preclude the filing of more than one application on a single day for a given applicant type (individual versus club) for the same call sign choice(s). The FCC's proposed rule addressed only the first choice.

The ARRL further recommended that the FCC dismiss the vanity applications of any

violators.

Additional QRM

Possibly complicating matters further is the fact that the WTB now is undergoing another reorganization. The Commission announced in March that it would create a new Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau that would assume some functions now under the WTB umbrella. Amateur Radio will remain under the WTB. The Bureau also is under interim leadership.

▼ [Previous: Amateur Radio Volunteers Wrapping Up New England Flooding Operations](#)

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