

**Before the
FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
Washington, D.C. 20554**

In the Matter of)
) **EB Docket No. 06-1 19**
Recommendations of the Independent Panel)
Reviewing the Impact of Hurricane Katrina on)
Communications Networks)

Via the ECFS

Comments of Charles L. Young Jr.

1. As an Amateur Radio Operator, I support the comments of AT&T, Cingular Wireless, Verizon Wireless and others who clearly identify steps necessary to restore commercial communications for residents of hurricane ravaged areas. Those actions support the recommendations of Homeland Security to utilize the National Communications System (NCS), streamline and extend Special Temporary Authorization processes (STA) for carriers, elevate telecommunications workers to "First Responder" status, and streamline credentialing for responders.

2. In Katrina, the wireless carriers did a superb job across the board of overcoming power outages with the use of thousands of portable generators, and dealing with interconnect outages caused by the destruction of wireline calling centers.

3. A lesson that should have been learned from Hurricane Katrina is that communications systems that rely on infrastructure are as susceptible or more so to outages related to disaster damage. Therefore the suggestion for implementation of 700 MHz systems in 06-119 must keep this important lesson in mind and use simple communications modes that do not rely on infrastructure.

4. Amateur Radio was able to play an important interim role while basic communications was restored by providing reliable services that were not dependent on any infrastructure (such as power, internet, computer network, or digital control). This highlights the need for expanding the initial response of Amateur Radio to bridge the gap while commercial services are being repaired. The ARRL can and should take a major part in proposing a national Amateur Radio response plan including the ability to provide basic "Life Safety" communications to area residents and "Tactical Support" to local government.

5. One well equipped team with amateur radio repeaters, satellite phones and satellite data terminals could have greatly impacted the successful restoral of basic communications for local government in the New Orleans area, while providing a monitored Amateur Radio link for local amateurs with little or no training to offer support to their neighbors with basic health and welfare traffic. With the ability to interact with the NCS Command Center, this one team could have been invaluable in the first 36-48 hours of Katrina recovery.

6. Therefore I strongly urge the Commission to make no changes to the Amateur Radio rules (Part 97), but simply facilitate the coordinated response of Amateur Radio with a defined role in large disasters. Groups like the ARRL should interact with the Department of Homeland Security to define a clear path for communications recovery in the first 7 days after a disaster with an emphasis on a fast, reliable, strike team to provide a basic level of communications.

7. This initial communications recovery model should include the quick restoral of basic services for local government to communicate in and out of a disaster area with phone, Amateur Radio and basic messaging service with national teams equipped for rapid deployment. The teams should use standard equipment to provide a reliable standard stable of services. Amateur Radio should also be used by way of simple HF communications and local low power repeater deployment.

8. Deployment of basic repeater service on predetermined amateur frequencies will allow every Amateur with a working radio to become a lifeline for the community or neighborhood where he/she lives regardless of training. It will allow trained Amateurs to supplement local emergency services communications in a unified and predetermined way.

9. There is no doubt that the reliability of commercial communications services such as cellular carriers is such that only minimal time is needed to restore service, even in the most serious of disasters (as was demonstrated in the New Orleans area during Katrina). Providing pre-planned deployment of interim communications that **does not interfere with commercial recovery efforts** can play an important and integral role in protecting life and property.
10. Where 700 MHz systems are deployed, they should include interfaces into the NCS system and not rely on sophisticated infrastructure support. This sophistication is better supported in commercial systems where the support structure is national in nature and resources exist to recovery quickly. The simple fact exists that large expenditures for sophisticated 700MHz systems will only indirectly benefit the public. Restoral of cellular services and use of Amateur Radio offers the public the ability to more directly communicate out of effected areas.
11. In no way do I suggest that a national 700MHz system for front line responders such as Police, EMS and Fire Departments not be built. I only urge that the system be kept simple and that the role of this platform should be focused to direct emergency response services. A national, reliable, and swift Amateur Radio response with a menu of communications services can serve as an important baseline for service restoral and offer interim service to local government as well. No change in Part 97 Regulations is needed to perform these tasks.

Respectfully,

Signed Electronically

Charles L. Young , Jr.
409 Assurance Way
Brandon, Ms. 39042