

I am grateful for the opportunity to respond to the issues addressed in WT Docket 04-344, "Amendment of the Commission's Rules Regarding Maritime Automatic Identification Systems."

The advantages of AIS become more apparent in areas where hills and buildings block the use of radar to detect other water-borne traffic. In fact, the greatest use of this life saving technology may prove to be on the nation's navigable inland lakes and rivers. Where a collision involving a cargo of hazardous materials would be a calamity at sea, it could become an unimaginable horror in the middle of a riverside city. To a lesser peril, a more likely spill of toxic materials (the result of mixing two relatively innocuous cargoes,) could not be contained, and would be swept downstream, spreading environmental devastation for a thousand miles. To allow this to happen by acceding to the demands of a single injured party is unconscionable.

Clearly, AIS should be implemented on all navigable inland waters. Further, AIS B should be approved for the same reasons, as the vessels at risk on these waters are not required, and may not reasonably afford AIS A.

You may hesitate to take action in the climate of a presidential election, but I urge you; no candidate would respond otherwise if asked about this issue.