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Federal Communications Commission
Office of the Secretary

Community
Happens

Ms. Marilyn Dortch, Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th St SW
Washington, DC 20554

March 31, 2009

RE: Docket 09-13 Public, Educational and Governmental (PEG) Access Channels, Alliance for Community Media CRS-8126, the City of Lansing, Michigan CSR-8127 and the City of Dearborn, Michigan CSR-8128.

As the Founding Member of a local PEG Channel, I am writing in support of the petitions of the Alliance for Community Media CRS-8126, the City of Lansing, Michigan CSR-8127 and the City of Dearborn, Michigan CSR-8128. These petitions will stop AT&T, Comcast and others destructive attempts to limit community access to PEG channels.

AT&T wants to discriminate against PEG channels in several ways: by making PEG channels more difficult to find, by removing channel surfing capability, closed captioning and a second audio program, and eliminating timed DVR recording capability. AT&T plans to further handicap PEG channels by excluding PEG program information from program listings and channel guides. The frustrated viewer would have no idea when or if their favorite PEG program would be shown, forcing them to watch another channel. (Note the Dearborn Michigan petition addresses precisely this problem.)

We are a small, relative new PEG surviving on the commitment and dedication of community volunteers and our over-worked and under paid staff. In the last two weeks we have videotaped our Congressman's Community Forum, a show on earthquake prepared with the Red Cross, a fund-raiser for our local Human Society and a show featuring our local artists.

Vallejo is a low income community, with high crime and unemployment. Both our school system and our City government have declared bankruptcy. In these hard economic times, our local PEG channel is the one thing that everyone can afford to participate in - we turn no one away! Now more than ever, our community depends on our local PEG channel to stay informed and connected. But we are stretched to the limit! We simply can't survive if AT&T, a multibillion dollar corporation, is allowed to place these additional hurdles between the community we serve and little VCAT, struggling on a shoe-string budget. We ask you to stand up VCAT and the hundreds of other small PEG channels across our nation. We ask the FCC to act now to preserve the intent of Congress and grant all three petitions.

Sincerely,

Beverly McGain
Beverly McGain, VCAT Founding Board Member

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