

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

In the Matter of)	
)	
Annual Assessment of the Status of)	MB Docket No. 12-203
Competition in the Market for the)	
Delivery of Video Programming)	

**COMMENTS OF
THE RAINIER COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION**

The Rainier Communications Commission (“RCC”) submits these comments in response to the above-captioned Notice of Inquiry (“NOI”), released July 20, 2012, seeking “data, information, and comment on the state of competition in the delivery of video programming.”

I. INTRODUCTION

RCC is an intergovernmental entity pursuant to the Interlocal Cooperation Act, RCW 39.34, *et seq.*, and the General Laws of the State of Washington, comprising Pierce County and 13 municipalities located within the County. Mount Rainier is located in the eastern part of Pierce County. To the west, the County includes the Narrows Bridge spanning Puget Sound, connecting County residents on the Washington Peninsula. RCC jurisdictions comprise an area of approximately 1,680 square miles, and represent a population of approximately 805,400 people. The RCC has existed since 1992 as an advisory body on matters relating to telecommunication for Pierce County and most of the Cities and Towns in the County.

II. OVERVIEW OF PEG PROGRAMMING IN OUR JURISDICTIONS

Seven of the RCC member jurisdictions currently take advantage of video production opportunities through the county-wide government channel, PCTV. Their Council meetings are replayed on the channel, made available on demand and archived on line. They also participate

in a quarterly news magazine, Rainier Country, and have stories included in the weekly news show, Pierce County News. PCTV video production has been honored every year in the past fifteen years as recipients of the National Association of Telecommunications Officers and Advisors (“NATOA”) Government Programming Awards. Last year the news show won second place in the nation and PCTV won second place for Excellence in Government Programming.

The RCC also programs a channel (UPTV) and disseminates it on cable for member jurisdiction University Place, and programs and disseminates an educational channel for Clover Park Technical College. In addition, the RCC designates access providers for two other educational channels.

There are sixty-six categories of NATOA Government Programming Awards to be awarded this year on September 29th. RCC and its members are award finalists five times.

III. SPECIFIC INFORMATION ABOUT PEG PROGRAMMING IN OUR JURISDICTIONS

1. MVPD Operator(s) and Channels Provided for PEG Programming

RCC jurisdictions are served by Comcast, Click! and Rainier Cable. Five access channels, two government and three educational channels, are provided on Comcast and Click! systems. One government channel is provided on the Rainier Cable system. Each of these systems has a county-wide franchise with Pierce County in the unincorporated areas. Comcast covers the entire county except on and near Mount Rainier. Click! is run by Tacoma Public Utilities only in its electrical power service area which amounts to about a third of the county including coverage in Fife, University Place, a portion of Lakewood and some of unincorporated Pierce County. Rainier Cable covers an area in the Southeast of the county which includes Eatonville.

In addition there are three small rural cable systems that serve small areas and offer no PEG services at this time. Wave Broadband serves parts of the peninsula in the Long Branch area, New Day serves Anderson Island, and Y-Comm on the southern border of the County serves the Yelm area.

2. Channel Placement on Programming Tiers and Equipment Required to View Them

All of the PEG channels from the cable operators that offer them are available on the basic tier of cable service, and no extra equipment is required at this time. Comcast has announced it is migrating to a digital format by the end of the year at which time customers will need to have a digital set-top box or digital adapter to view the channels.

3. Number of PEG Channels at Present Compared to PEG Channels Carried on MVPD Systems as of June 2010

The number of PEG channels at present is the same as it was in June 2010.

4. Data Sources to Track the Availability of PEG Programming

Most RCC jurisdictions provide programming lineup information for government access on their municipal and county web sites. PEG program lineup information is also made available on Comcast's online TV Guide directory.

5. Information about PEG Programming in Our Communities

Government access is taken very seriously in Pierce County. PCTV starts with the importance of transparency in local government by televising Council meetings for participating members of the RCC including Pierce County, and the cities of DuPont, Fife, Orting, Puyallup, Sumner, and University Place. It is our policy to never edit these meetings. The video replayed on our regional government channel (PCTV) is complete from gavel to gavel. Often times a jurisdiction will debate the value of being on TV until they try it. The recognition the elected

officials receive and the appreciation of the citizens who can follow the workings of their local government are such that in our experience no City has ever gone back to not televising the meetings.

PCTV also provides the opportunity for each of these jurisdictions, no matter their size, to produce videos on issues in the community, to highlight local events and to explain the workings of local government. What is the progress of a public works project or what factors are being considered in the new budget? The vehicles used for this video production are the weekly news shows and for more in depth stories, the quarterly news magazine.

RCC members have never cut back on the annual budget. On the other hand, we have had no increase in membership dues since we started the RCC in 1992. Our revenues are tied to the number of cable subscribers, a number which has declined slightly in the past few years. It is anticipated that an increase in dues will be necessary in 2014. Our capital budget is funded by a grant from the cable companies allowing a fixed amount per subscriber to be passed through on their cable bill. Without these funds there would have never been enough money available to keep up with the advances in television technology. Our studio is entirely digital now and we are gearing up to be able to transmit an HD signal by the beginning of next year. Keeping up with this changing technology has been expensive, but the improvement in video quality, and the benefit to Pierce County subscribers is significant.

IV. CONCLUSION

PEG programming has a long, successful and beneficial history in RCC communities. As the Commission reviews Comments to its NOI, we urge the Commission to remember the public

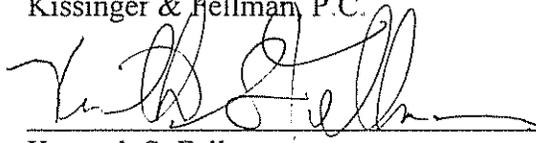
benefits of local programming and diversity, and take appropriate steps to ensure that the ability to meet these important goals are not lost in the broader discussions about video competition.

Respectfully submitted this 10th day of September.

THE RAINIER COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

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