ORIGINAL

Before the
FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMUNICATION
Washington, D.C. 20554

In the Matter of	)	
	)	
Travelers Information Stations	)	PS Docket No. 09-19
	)	
American Association of Information Radio Operators Petition for Ruling on Travelers' Information Station Rules;	)	
	)	
Highway Information Systems, Inc. Petition for Rulemaking;	)	RM-11514
	)	
American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials Petition for Rulemaking	)	RM-11531

EX PARTE OR LATE FILED

FILED/ACCEPTED
DEC 18 2012
Federal Communications Commission
Office of the Secretary

EX PARTE FILING OF CORRESPONDENCE
PURSUANT TO SECTION 1.1206 OF THE RULES

The American Association of Information Radio Operators ("AAIRO") hereby respectfully submits its Ex Parte filing of correspondence related to the issues in the above-captioned docket. The correspondence comes from public safety officials in New Jersey in areas hit hard by Hurricane Sandy. The correspondence reflects the great and urgent need for optimization of Travelers Information Station facilities and content across the country, particularly in weather and related emergencies. In many cases, TIS stations may be the only viable communications outlet for information about weather, traffic, evacuation and access to shelter and food. It is therefore essential that TIS stations be afforded the maximum possible operating parameters, both technically and as to content, by the Commission.

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We ask that the FCC give serious consideration to this correspondence in its resolution of Docket 09-19.

Respectfully submitted,
American Association of Information
Radio Operators

By: _____

Frank R. Jazzo, Esquire
Howard M. Weiss, Esquire
Fletcher, Heald & Hildreth, PLC
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Arlington, Virginia 22209
(703) 812-0400

Date: December 18, 2012

Formed in 2008, AAIRO is a nonprofit organization of operators & licensees from public agencies who manage Information Radio Stations across the country to inform and protect motorists.

December 18, 2012

The Honorable Julius Genachowski, Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street SW
Washington DC 20554

Subject: Petition Docket 09-19

The American Association of Information Radio Operators (AAIRO) is comprised of 346 members, consisting of government agencies and associated individuals in the Public Safety Community in the United States.

AAIRO strongly endorses the attached letters, directed to the attention of the FCC by coastal communities in New Jersey that experienced the severe impact of events surrounding the landfall of Hurricane Sandy.

Each letter describes how a Travelers Information Radio Station (TIS) in the community became the sole source of information during and after the storm for many residents due to failures by other means of communication. As AAIRO's Petition Docket 09-19 for rulemaking stated, this is not a new role for TIS stations, but was anticipated by the original Report and Order FCC 77-414 that created the service and needs to be reflected in the rules.

We encourage the FCC to promptly publish new rules for the service making it clear that TIS stations may, to mitigate the loss of life and property, broadcast critical weather and safety information to the traveling public in advance of, during and following such emergencies.

William Baker
President

PO Box 41 ◦ Zeeland, Michigan 49464-0041 ◦ www.AAIRO.org

Incorporated December 30, 1887

Department of Police

BOROUGH OF MANASQUAN

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Manasquan, New Jersey 08736-3004
732-223-1000 x223 732-223-0587 Fax

ELLIOTT A. CORREIA, Chief of Police
ecorreia@manasquan-nj.com

November 25, 2012

The Honorable Julius Genachowski,
Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street SW
Washington DC 20554
Dear Chairman Genachowski:

I want to express to you in the strongest way how vital the Information Radio Station (TIS) is to our community.

Manasquan is a coastal community just north of where Hurricane Sandy made landfall, meaning that we took maximum storm surge and wind damage from the event. We knew that telephones, Internet and even commercial radio stations might not operate throughout the storm so we informed local residents that the Radio Station we operate on AM 1620 would be the single disseminator of information during and in the immediate aftermath.

As predicted, we lost all services including, of course, electrical power. Yet the radio station continued to operate and inform continuously throughout.

Due to our large battery back, the station had continuous power and never went off the air. Battery-operated radios could receive it, despite the loss of electrical power in homes. The antenna is installed on a hurricane-wind rated "Vertical Profile" antenna support which handled the 90 mph winds and 3 feet of flooding without incident.

There is no telling how many lives and how much property was saved due to this resource which our town thankfully has. Therefore, I must encourage you, to make sure that when new rules for the TIS service are finalized they make accommodation for the critical importance that the TIS service has taken on for communities like ours in disasters such as this.

Please re-craft the content rules to specifically state that weather forecasts, warnings, NOAA rebroadcasts and emergency preparedness information can be broadcast at any time - before, during and after a disaster – as a means of mitigating loss of life and damage to property.
As your agency debates the future of the AM radio band, please consider how important these humble 10 watt Information Radio Stations have become to communities like ours...and how the small

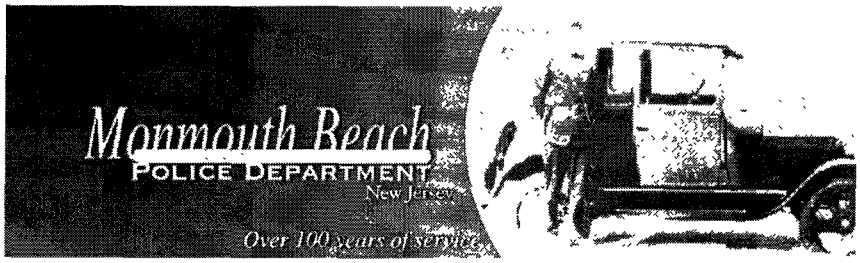
investment we made some years ago, has saved us time, money, property and lives by a factor unknown, and will again when the next disaster occurs.

Respectfully submitted,

David W. Kircher

David W. Kircher, Coordinator
Office of Emergency Management

Christopher B. Tucker, Deputy Coordinator
Office of Emergency Management



December 13, 2012

The Honorable Julius Genachowski, Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street SW
Washington DC 20554

My name is Drew Winans. I am the present Chief of Police of the Monmouth Beach Police Department. In reference to our information radio station purchased 10 years ago or more? I have been involved with the radio station since its installation when it was installed by them Chief Patrick McConville. One of the few people who was able to record messages and get them out there to the public. Here's a brief synopsis of how the radio station was "An Invaluable" tool not only for the residents of Monmouth Beach but nearby towns within listing distance.

In the days leading up to "Sandy" the Monmouth Beach Office of Emergency Management had many vehicles to inform the residents of Monmouth Beach. The "Code Red" system which sent recorded messages to all subscribers via phone, text and email. These messages were updated as needed. Each time these messages were sent out the same message was recorded and being transmitted on our radio station (WPMG676 1640am). I knew that not many people were listening. Why would they? Email….. Text . House Phone.. Cell Phone…. Smart phone .

The night Sandy arrived in full force the storm surge started surrounding our headquarters and separate annex building that houses the controls of our radio station we had to abandon our HQ and head for higher ground which was Borough Hall. I was continually updating information on the radio station remotely, using my cell phone until the phone lines went down and I wasn't able to access the radio station to update information. In the early morning hours the next day and the days following when code red messages were being sent out , many of the subscribers were not getting the messages. Cell phone service was out, people's phones were dead since they had no power to charge them or some carriers just weren't working properly. But!!! We were able to continually update information on the radio station with the same information being sent out with our code red system. But I wondered are the people listening? During these days and weeks following the storm I came in contact with numerous people who thanked us for keeping them informed through the radio station. The older technology that most were not custom to was the one thing that held true. In talking to people they felt so disconnected from what was going on. But having the radio station they had some idea what was going on and receiving important recovery information.

Sea Bright is a town just north of us and shares our border. [It was] severely devastated by Sandy. I had the opportunity to speak to residents of that town who live on the border and were continually tuned into our information broadcasts. They couldn't thank us enough with the information being transmitted. Bottom line……. Old School won out when it was needed most.

Drew Winans, Chief
Monmouth Beach Police Department
14 Willow Avenue
Monmouth Beach, NJ 07750

December 13, 2012

The Honorable Julius Genachowski, Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street SW
Washington DC 20554

I had a very interesting conversation on the phone this morning with a police lieutenant in a nearby town ...[who said] ...that Sandy had pressed them into looking at the power and potential of local AM [TIS] radio when computers, cell phones, hardwired phones and smartphones die. We concurred that the TIS AM signal could get through on car radios, crank radios and battery radios in a true emergency. He admitted that until Sandy, they kind of thought of AM as antique, but that this experience had permanently turned them around. Here is another instance where I am being made to believe that TIS's are the real-world Conelrad stations of the 21st century, especially when they are used responsibly to get out vital local information.

As an aside, as a radio listening fan caught in a blackout, I was astonished at how clear the AM band became when all the juice was cut off. Away went the whine of light dimmers, computers, electronic clocks and fibre optic phone installations. During a true blackout, the 10-watt stations carry even better!

Your faithful servant

Richard K. Phoenix, RMC
Borough Clerk
263 Somerset Street
North Plainfield NJ 07060-4895

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I, Evelyn Ojea, an assistant in the firm of Fletcher, Heald & Hildreth, PLC, hereby certify that a true and correct copy of the foregoing "Ex Parte Filing of Correspondence Pursuant to Section 1.1206 of the Rules" was sent on this 18th day of December, 2012, via electronic mail or as otherwise specified, to the following:

Julius Genachowski
Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20554

Robert M. McDowell
Commissioner
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20554

Mignon Clyburn
Commissioner
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW
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Jessica Rosenworcel
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Mr. Thomas Beers
Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau
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Evelyn Ojea

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