

I oppose allowing encryption of amateur radio communications for the following reasons:

Encryption is a potential disaster for the Amateur Radio service because it defeats the self-policing nature of amateur radio. If amateur radio operators can't decode messages, we can't identify if the communication is appropriate for ham radio or not. A potentially worse problem is that encryption destroys the harmless nature of Amateur radio. For governments around the world to continue to allow Amateur Radio, it must be perceived as harmless. There's no reason for anyone to believe that encrypted communications are harmless. Foreign governments will start to see amateur radio as more of a threat. This is likely to have a chilling effect upon DXpeditions (amateur radio operators operating from foreign locations), which are already often viewed suspiciously by the host nations, and perhaps will even lead some countries to take Amateur Radio off of the air or limit amateur radio privileges in some way.

We have no way of telling if the content of encrypted messages are appropriate for amateur radio. While their senders will identify them as emergency communications drills, they could be used for crime, operating a business, downloading pornography, etc. WiFi-like cards are already available for Amateur frequencies, and while amateur radio operators can build legitimate networks with them, none of their vendors check for a license before selling them to anyone. Legalizing encryption on the air will make abuse of Amateur frequencies provable only after difficult and potentially illegal code-breaking.