

I am writing as an amateur radio operator (call sign KU4QD) in opposition to the NOI and the proposal to allow Power Line Computing (PLC), also known as BPL.

Even in the 21st century amateur radio continues to play a vital role in emergency communications. Amateur radio is part of nearly every state, county, and municipal plan to deal with emergency situations. At present, with our country engaged in a war on terrorism, amateur radio operators have the potential to provide trained, skilled communications in the event of an emergency caused by a terrorist attack, and as such play a vital role in homeland security.

Tests of Power Line Computing (PLC) in Japan and Europe have produced a high level of interference on HF communications, including amateur radio. Much emergency communications is done on a portable basis at relatively low power levels. Interference from PLC has the potential to render such communications impossible, either reducing or effectively ending the ability of amateur radio operators to provide long distance emergency communications in the event of a natural or man made disaster.

There are other options available for rural broadband internet access which do not have the negative impact PLC has on emergency communications and homeland security. I live in Franklin County, North Carolina, which is still quite rural. DSL and cable are not available to me. However, I am still writing this comment over a broadband internet connection. Both satellite internet and dual channel ISDN are available here. I chose ISDN because I do systems administration professionally, and the latency involved in satellite communications would make my work impractical. However, most home users can effectively use satellite internet service. Even without access to DSL, cable, or satellite internet I was able to purchase adequate and reasonably priced broadband internet service through my local telephone company. I suspect my situation is comparable to that of most rural internet users.

PLC, by severely reducing or eliminating effective HF communications via amateur radio, will have a detrimental effect to communities throughout the United States. Amateur radio is more than a mere hobby. Through ARES and RACES it provides essential communications at no cost to the taxpayer. While PLC certainly has the potential for enormous profits for utility companies, the cost to the taxpayer of replacing the voluntary and skilled communications offered by the Amateur Radio Service in times of emergency will also be enormous.

I urge the Commission to reject PLC and BPL. I urge Mr. Powell and the other members of the Commission who support BPL to rethink their position in light of the service provided to the nation by the Amateur Radio Service.

Sincerely,
Caitlyn M. Martin
KU4QD