

Comments on Power Line Transmission:

I have reviewed the FCC proposal to allow transmission of Internet communications via the power grid in the U. S. As an electrical engineer with decades of experience in radio, radar and wire communications, I feel strongly that this move will be a monumental mistake by the FCC.

Over 10 years ago, when I was employed at Litton Amecom in College Park, MD, we entertained the idea of transmitting communications over the power system. However, we were only considering doing this in small complexes or within buildings. After some initial studies, it became very apparent that the idea was not feasible. We also commissioned selected contractors to conduct experiments using this approach. Our findings indicated that the system was not reliable, that it caused all kinds of interference, and that it required substantial investment and maintenance.

The main objection, however, was the interference caused by the radiated signals from unshielded power lines. In addition, it lacked the bandwidth necessary to transmit the amount of data required. We quickly dropped the project in favor of more conventional forms of communications that provided more reliability and less interference potential. Furthermore, we felt that a system exposed to the environment would be much more susceptible to interference as well.

As a long standing member of the amateur radio community, the implementation of this proposal – especially on a large scale - would be a catastrophe for day-to-day and emergency amateur radio communications. In this age of terrorism, our country depends upon the amateur radio community to backup our conventional communications systems, With high levels of HF and VHF interference to contend with, these backup communications (using low power transmitters) would be severely affected.

I strongly recommend that the FCC exhaustively study this proposal, and the consequences that it holds, before making a monumental mistake and deciding to proceed.

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