

The FCC should NOT approve Broadband over Power Lines (ET Docket 03-104).

Cable TV, DSL, and UHF/microwave satellite communications already provide broadband service WITHOUT causing such strong and widespread interference on so many amateur radio bands. Fiber optic technology provides bandwidth and speed orders of magnitude above that of Broadband over Power Lines. The availability and speed of broadband technology grows substantially every year. Thus, the need for the benefits of broadband communications to the home is already being met, and Broadband over Power Lines is not necessary.

However, the consequences of Broadband over Power Lines are extremely dire. Trials in other nations have proven that broadband over power lines cause so much interference on amateur radio frequencies that communicating is effectively impossible. As Roy Clinton Herbert (AB7RG) and others have already mentioned, amateur radio provides communications during emergencies that disable conventional communication methods. This has already been proven during disasters like Sept. 11th, 2001, the recent tornado outbreak in the nation's midsection, the Oklahoma City tornado of 1999, Hurricane Andrew, Hurricane Hugo, Hurricane Gilbert, and the San Francisco earthquake of 1989.

There is another consequence of destroying HF amateur radio communications that the others have not addressed that I can discuss due to my experiences. The challenges of operating on the HF bands have been EXTREMELY educational for me. I am currently a graduate student in electrical engineering at George Mason University, and I have found amateur radio to be the SINGLE MOST indispensable part of my experience. Amateur radio brought to life many important topics in electrical engineering, such as transmission lines and antennas. I never knew any active electronics hobbyists until an amateur radio group called the Northern Virginia QRP Club introduced me to art of building electronic circuits. For my independent study project of this past semester, I designed and built a device to enhance my amateur radio operating experience. This is the first major electronics project I have ever completed, and it will be, by far, my single biggest selling point as I seek employment as an electronics design engineer.

If it had not been for amateur radio, I could never have learned so much about electronics engineering. Killing amateur radio, which Broadband Over Power Lines would do, will have long-term negative consequences on our nation's ability to compete in the technological arena.