

June 17, 2003

Federal Communications Commission
Washington, D.C.

Subject: Docket 03-104 (Broadband over Power Line/Power Line Carrier)

Dear Commissioners:

I am writing to express my concern about the potential of Broadband over Power Line (BPL) / Power Line Carrier (PLC) technology to cause serious interference to high frequency radio spectrum users. I urge you to proceed cautiously with this technology and to not license it's use until it can be clearly demonstrated it will not cause harmful interference.

Well-documented studies in Europe and Japan have shown that BPL/PLC causes harmful interference to high frequency communications. Additional investigation within the U.S provides further evidence that the interference caused by this technology is a serious problem. It is strong enough to obliterate all but the strongest signals, which would render high frequency communications virtually useless. The distribution system almost guarantees that there would be no inhabited areas free of interference.

I live in a rural area which is touted as one of the areas that could most benefit from BPL/PLC technology. However, I am also an FCC-licensed radio amateur (N5AW). If the studies cited above are accurate, the proliferation of this technology at this stage of its development would likely drive me and many other amateur radio operators off the air. In the area where I live there are also other options to BPL already in place capable of providing similar services with less risk of harmful interference. I have the choice of four broadband wireless Internet providers at a cost not much greater than dial-up services.

The communications infrastructure in rural areas such as mine can be severely impacted by natural disasters. Radio amateurs are frequently called upon to assist local law enforcement and emergency personnel in dealing with life threatening situations. It would seem counter-productive for the Commission to permit implementation of BPL/PLC at the cost of hindering emergency communications capabilities. I should also point out the emergency services radio amateurs provide are not limited to rural areas – they were a vital link in New York City and Washington, D.C. in the aftermath of September 11.

The FCC should be very cautious in evaluating the potential implementation of BPL/PLC. Proponents of this technology should be required to thoroughly evaluate and test their delivery systems, and to prove conclusively that BPL/PLC will not cause harmful interference to other users of the High Frequency spectrum.

Very truly yours,

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