

The proposed expansion of BPL systems is a bad idea. It may interfere with a number of licensed radio services between 1.7 and 80 MHz; I wish to address the harmful effect of such interfering signals to the Amateur Radio service. Amateurs typically use transmitter power levels considerably below the general legal limit. One reason is that FCC regulations requires radio amateurs to use only the amount of power necessary to maintain communications. Second, radio amateurs often use their equipment to carry on communications from mobile or portable situations where a combination of minimizing non-ionizing radiation hazard and economy require that power levels are kept very low. Most of my amateur radio operation has been routine and just for fun. Twice in my amateur radio career, however, I used low-power HF amateur radio (once on the 14 MHz (20 m CW) band and once on the 3.5 - 4.0 MHz (75 m SSB) to transmit an emergency request for evacuation by aircraft. It is precisely those critical situations where the amateur station on the receiving end needs a low-noise environment to properly handle such emergency traffic. To permit unlicensed services which are typically operated by technically unqualified people to interfere with licensed services which require some degree of technical competence begins the slippery slope toward the "tragedy of the commons," where a public resource such as the radio spectrum degrades so much that it ceases to be useful for anyone.

Sincerely,

J. Bruce Prior, PhD
Amateur Station N7RR