

The following is a copy of an email I have sent to the ARRL regarding BPL issues. It should speak for itself, however I would like to add that any attempt to transmit data over power lines needs to be tied to an effort to improve the power lines themselves. Here is the email:

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Hello:

I just read through the article on the Broadband over Power Line proposal (pg 12 of the 7/03 issue, "ARRL in Action") and I have to say I'm amazed and dismayed at such a proposal. Amazed that companies would even consider such a method given the sorry state of so many power lines in the U.S., and dismayed at the possible interference it could cause.

Ed Hare's statement about "... Many Hams have a power line within 30 feet of their house" is close to the mark, but unfortunately for most of us here in older portions of over crowded Southern California its more like 20 feet. That's right, in Downey the required minimum setback from the back of a home to the property line is only 20 feet. Same for most of the older surrounding cities built before underground utilities came into vogue (and then its even less in a lot of cities). Yes, some homeowners are lucky in that they live on yet older, deeper or larger lots (like the house where I grew up) but they are in the minority.

The condition of the power lines themselves leads to noise and degradation of signals of any kind. For example, when one of the 120 V feeds at the transformer down the street fried due to overloading, did Edison's crew replace the high voltage to transformer feed line? No! I actually saw the lineman pull hard on the wire to make it reach the transformer, then he sanded the burned end to clean it, then clamped it back on the transformer. Voilà, the power was back on, but for how long? What about noise due to arcing? Who knows, who cares? It sure appears that Edison doesn't.

Add to that the numerous old baked transformers, strange collections of feed wires, "singing" high voltage lines and just the age of the lines themselves (most have been in place in our city from about 1950) and you've got a sure fire recipe for noise of all kinds.

Sorry, but BPL is just a bad idea. I hope we and the ARRL can convince the FCC of this.

73

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