

Comments Re Broadband over Power Lines

I've been a licensed amateur radio operator since July, 1954. In that time I've participated in and stood by and listened while amateur radio operators performed valuable public service on the amateur HF bands. They have taken care of health and welfare traffic in disaster areas, they have kept members of the public away at school or in the military in touch with their families, they have performed valuable service to their communities in coordination of rescue efforts in natural and man-made disasters -- all without expecting any kind of compensation other than being able to use their communications facilities for relaxation and entertainment in times when their emergency capabilities are not needed.

There are those who take the position that all emergency communications takes place on the VHF bands, but city-to-city communications on VHF requires an infrastructure (repeaters) that may well not be available when needed. HF communications is the key to getting the job done when that infrastructure has been damaged.

The American Radio Relay League (ARRL) has performed tests in areas where BPL tests are being conducted that show that the leakage of the BPL signals from power lines is intense enough to render the HF spectrum just about unusable. Far from acknowledging this and making efforts to reduce the radiation, the BPL proponents are suggesting raising the radiation limits even more. There seems to be a tremendous push to implement BPL without any consideration of what it does to the HF spectrum.

I submit that there is absolutely no need for BPL in urban and suburban areas already well served with telephone DSL, cable modem and satellite links. I agree that there is a need to make broadband communication more available to rural areas. The only recourse available now seems to be satellite links. However I don't think that need is all encompassing enough to effectively kill legitimate uses of the HF spectrum with BPL. When the loss to society of the HF spectrum is factored into the cost of BPL, I'm sure there will be other options that are more cost effective.

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