

June 7, 2004

To: Federal Communications Commission
Re: Issue # 03-104, Broadband over Power Lines

I am the communications chair for our local chapter of the American Red Cross and am deeply concerned about the impact of Proceeding # 03-104, Broadband over Power Lines (BPL) on emergency communications. I became involved with emergency services in response to the events of September 11, 2001 and signed up that afternoon as a disaster services volunteer with the American Red Cross. When the Red Cross asked me to become the communications chair, I readily accepted, even though I knew nothing about communications. However, I quickly learned that amateur radio was essential to emergency communications and I soon earned my license. Unlike other operators who view radio as a hobby, my primary interest in amateur radio is for emergency communications.

Sending high-frequency signals through unshielded lines that were never intended for this purpose would most likely seriously jeopardize the integrity and reliability of emergency communications, not to mention causing harmful interference. Emergency situations require the use of batteries and low-power transmissions (yes, even when power is on, since one never knows when it may fail). When you're dealing with low-power signals, it doesn't take much additional noise to cause harmful interference.

Because of the potential for serious disruption to emergency services, including the potential loss of life and property, I strongly urge the FCC to disallow the implementation of BPL until the impacts can be thoroughly studied, including its impact on emergency communications and amateur radio in general.

Sincerely,

Richard Ross, KG4TAX
31 Timberline Crescent
Newport News, VA 23606-3902
ross873@arrl.net