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United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-2402

COMMITTEE ON
AGRICULTURE, NUTRITION,
AND FORESTRY
CHAIRMAN
COMMITTEE ON
APPROPRIATIONS
COMMITTEE ON
RULES AND
ADMINISTRATION

May 11, 2004

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The Honorable Michael K. Powell
Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW, #8B201
Washington, D.C. 20554

RECEIVED

JUN - 8 2004

Federal Communications Commission
Office of the Secretary

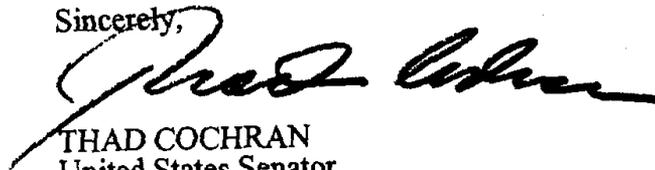
Dear Chairman Powell:

Enclosed is a copy of correspondence sent to me by Mr. Arthur Allen.

I would appreciate your providing me with a response to Mr. Allen's letter regarding Broad Band Over Power Line proceedings and amateur radio operators.

Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,



THAD COCHRAN
United States Senator

TC/mt
Enclosure

21 MAY 2004 RCUD

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Cochran, Senator (Cochran)

From: nobody@www.senate.gov
Sent: Thursday, April 29, 2004 7:55 PM
To: Cochran, Senator (Cochran)

Sender's IP address = 68.63.212.108

A01= mr

B01= Arthur

C01= Allen

D01= 100 Hyland Drive

E01=

F01= Petal

G01= MS

H01= 39465

H02= 601.582.3412

H03= 601.583.1178

I01= ac5e@comcast.net

I02= Dear Senator Cochran: We have a serious threat to our country's emergency preparedness.

I am sure you remember the aftermath of Hurricane Camille, and the Amateur Radio Operators who chainsawed their way down Highway 49 and provided what WLOX called "the only reliable communications in or out of the Mississippi Gulf Coast for over two weeks.

You probably do not remember the aftermath of Hurricane Betsy, which devastated Cameron Parish Louisiana. A young Amateur Radio Operator ran his boat down the flooded Calcasieu river, tied up to the courthouse railing, threw a wire over a tree limb, and provided the first communications from the stricken area.

Perhaps you were not aware that more than 2,000 Amateur Radio Operators turned out to provide the only reliable full coverage communications in the aftermath of the collapse of the World Trade Center.

And I am sure you did not notice when Amateur Radio Operators provided emergency communications when Big Bay Dam in Lamar County Mississippi collapsed a few weeks ago.

But that is what the the trained radio operators of the Amateur Radio Service do. We "ham" operators provide reliable full coverage communications when all else fails. And now there is a serious threat to our ability to continue to provide vital, life saving emergency communicaitons.

The problem is called "Broadband over Power Lines" or BPL for short. The idea is to connect every light socket to the internet. And the reality is that power lines are nothing more or less than an enormous antenna system - and the frequencies the power companies propose to operate on are those used by the Amateur Radio Service to provide emergency communications.

Since the antenna is so large, even a very small amount of power will completely blank out short wave radio reception a very large area. The

actual effect is much like listening to an AM radio station and then driving under a power line. The music stops and the "hash" begins.

Worse yet, those radio frequencies are easily "propagated" over very long distances even with very low power. I had BPL interference last night from the Raliegh Durham area of North Carolina last night - strong enough to completely cover up the weak station I was trying to communicate with.

And perhaps worst of all, the extensive power line network acts like a very efficient receiving antenna. Even a very low power Short Wave transmission will "block" all the internet connections over a relatively wide area.

One can readily imagine what would happen if BPL had been deployed during that big ice storm in the northern part of the state. I handled more than 100 emergency messages, and even the modest power needed to reply and relay those messages to MEMA in Jackson would have blanked out BPL over most of Petal.

Frankly, Senator, there are many ways to do essentially the same thing. There are large blocks of unused spectrum in the Ultra High and Super High frequency ranges that would be ideal for "WIFI," wireless internet. A WIFI transceiver in every block would do essentially the same thing, at much lower cost, and without sacrificing emergency communications.

Any help you can give the Amateur Radio Community on this threat will be deeply appreciated.

Thank you in advance for your efforts, and best regards

Arthur C. Allen