

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

July 29, 2019

The Honorable Ajit V. Pai
Chairman
455 12th Street, Southwest
Washington, DC, 20544

Dear Chairman Pai:

We write regarding the Federal Communications Commission's (FCC) Third Report and Order on "Implementation of Section 621(a)(1) of the Cable Communications Policy Act of 1984 as Amended by the Cable Television Consumer Protection and Competition Act of 1992" (MB Docket No. 05-311) ("Order.").

If implemented, the Order puts at risk critical funding for public, educational, or governmental (PEG) stations, which are vital resources for residents across the country. These stations connect Americans to their communities, catalyze civic engagement, and keep us up to date on the local issues and activities that affect our lives. Your proposal would force local governments to decide between supporting PEG stations and supporting other important services for critical community institutions like schools and public safety buildings. We strongly urge the Commission to forego any proposal that would threaten the sustainability of PEG channels. Support for these stations should not be pitted against support for other important community resources.

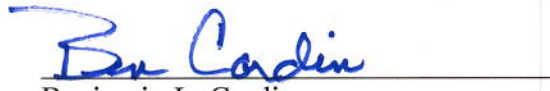
Under federal law, local governments may require cable operators to meet demonstrated community needs. In your latest proposal, however, you allow cable operators to assign a value to in-kind contributions intended for such purposes and subtract that amount from the franchise fees that cable providers owe to the communities where they serve. Local governments should not have to choose between requiring financial support for PEG channel operations or free cable service to schools, libraries and government, or requiring discounts for veterans, seniors and financially challenged families. Your proposed Order creates a no-win situation for Local Franchise Authorities (LFAs) and the residents they serve. To that end, we encourage you to explicitly exclude support for PEG channels—including the provision of channel capacity—from the five percent statutory franchise fee cap governing these contracts.


PEG channels are part of the fabric of our communities. They educate voters, entertain children, and employ workers. Imperiling critical funding for PEG channels across the country would be inconsistent with the intent of Congress and the mission of the Cable Act. We strongly urge the Commission to avoid any policy changes that will harm PEG channels and limit needed services to the communities we represent.


Sincerely,


Edward J. Markey
United States Senator


Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator

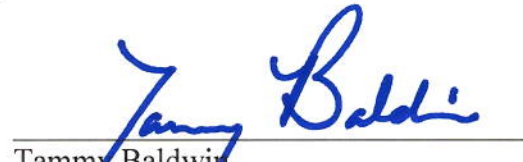

Benjamin L. Cardin
United States Senator


Margaret Wood Hassan
United States Senator

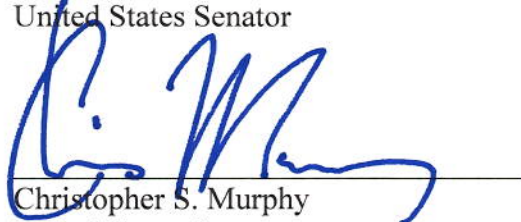

Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator


Mazie K. Hirono
United States Senator

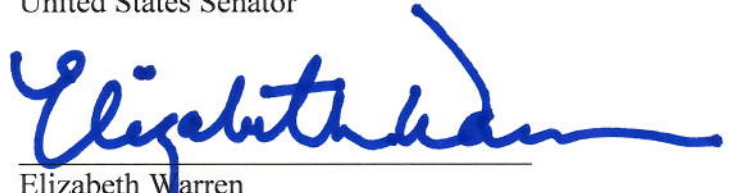

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United States Senator



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United States Senator



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Patrick Leahy
United States Senator


Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator


Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator


Ron Wyden
United States Senator



Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator

CC: The Honorable Michael O'Rielly, Commissioner
The Honorable Brendan Carr, Commissioner
The Honorable Jessica Rosenworcel, Commissioner
The Honorable Jeffrey Starks, Commissioner