

Received & Inspected

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FCC Mail Room



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April 4th, 2014

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The Honorable Thomas Wheeler
Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, S.W.
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Chairman Wheeler:

I am writing to you with respect to the growing problem of illegal radio stations in the AM/FM bands in New York City and Long Island. As you know, these "pirate" radio stations operate without any authorization from the Federal Communications Commission (FCC).

As a member of the Homeland Security Committee, I have been committed to ensuring that our nation has a functional Emergency Alert System (EAS) to ensure that emergency information is effectively and efficiently shared with the public. I have been told that pirate radio stations do not participate in the EAS system and therefore the listeners will not receive important emergency messages. Additionally, according to information I have received, these unauthorized radio stations may interfere with EAS messages and news reports that are broadcast by licensed radio stations during emergencies.

The ability to access emergency information from radio stations is critical. FEMA Administrator Craig Fugate has advised consumers to listen to local radio stations during emergencies. During Superstorm Sandy New York's radio stations remained on the air. It was reported that radio listening increased by 70% in Manhattan (1.15 million people) and more than 245% (357,000) on Long Island. The potential for interfering with emergency messages from licensed radio stations is a serious matter that must be investigated.

Tracking down and prosecuting illegal pirate radio stations is an enormous task. The FCC's New York Office has tried its best to address this issue. I understand the office issued approximately 64 notices of unlicensed Operations throughout New York last year but, these notices are often ignored by pirate operators. Due to insufficient staffing, the New York field office does not have the resources to follow up.

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to hearing from you about the assignment of additional personnel to the New York Field Office, as well as other steps the Commission will take to remedy the illegal pirate radio problem in New York.

Sincerely,



PETER T. KING
Member of Congress

Cc: The Honorable Mignon Clyburn
The Honorable Jessica Rosenworcel
The Honorable Agit Pai
The Honorable Michael O'Rielly