

CERTIFIED MAIL-RETURN RECEIPT REQUESTED

February 28, 2011

(Name withheld)
(Address withheld)
(Address withheld)

**RE: Radio frequency interference
EB-10-GB-0105**

Dear Mr. & Mrs. (name withheld):

The Federal Communications Commission notified you by letter dated September 3, 2009, that it had received complaints of harmful radio interference possibly caused by an electrical device in your home. This interference has been reported by an operator in the Amateur Radio Service. The complainant is:

(Name withheld)
(Address withheld)
(Address withheld)

The Commission has the responsibility to require that such problems be rectified within a reasonable time if the interference is caused by faulty consumer equipment. Under Commission rules, certain types of equipment are classified as "unintentional emitters." These devices generate radio frequency energy but do not intentionally radiate it. Examples include computers, radio receivers and television sets. Other types of devices are classified as "incidental emitters." These devices do not intentionally generate any radio-frequency energy, but that may create such energy as an incidental part of their intended operation. Common examples include aquarium heaters, certain portable telephones, alarm control panels, fluorescent light ballasts, doorbell control circuits and so forth. Some unintentional emitters are imported and do not comply with Commission certification standards, and thereby result in interference to other radio services. If the device is an approved one, it should have a silver FCC label on the unit showing a certification number. **Even an approved device, however, can only be operated legally if it is *not* causing harmful interference to a licensed radio service.**

The complainant has attempted unsuccessfully to resolve this problem and as a result the matter has been referred to our office. The Commission prefers that those responsible for the proper operation of equipment assume their responsibilities fairly. This means that you should resolve the interference caused by the device and make necessary corrections within a reasonable time. The September 3, 2009, letter specifically stated, however, that if it became necessary for

the Commission to facilitate a resolution, the Commission might investigate possible rule violations and address appropriate remedies, including monetary forfeitures.¹

You did respond to this office on October 8, 2010. In your response you focused on the door bell transformer as a possible source for the interference claiming that you had installed a new doorbell in order to alleviate the interference. My letter to you did not specify the exact source of the interference, but rather suggested that it could be any number of electronic devices currently being used within the residence. As indicated above, even an approved and properly installed device may only be operated legally if it is *not* causing harmful interference to a licensed radio service. According to Mr. (name withheld), the noise still continues.

You also questioned why Mr. (name withheld) identified your residence as the source of the noise. Mr. (name withheld) provided the Commission with a written explanation of the methodology he used in determining the source of the interference. After reviewing his explanation, the Commission is satisfied that he used accepted industry standards for locating the source of the noise. If however, you still have doubts as to your residence being the source of the noise, I suggest that you and Mr. (name withheld) set up a mutually acceptable time and you turn off the main breaker to your home and have Mr. (name withheld) listen on his amateur radio during the time that your power is off. If the noise stops while your power is off, the source of the noise is most likely an electrical device in your home. If it continues, the source is not your home. This simple test will resolve in both of your minds whether or not your residence is indeed the source of the interference.

If this simple test confirms that your residence is the source of the noise, I suggest that you and Mr. (name withheld) again set up a mutually acceptable time and you allow him to use his equipment to determine the exact source. Once the source of the interference has been located, you have 30 days from that date to resolve the interference to Mr. (name withheld) amateur station and report back to this office. Please direct your response to the following address: 1270 Fairfield Road, Gettysburg, Pennsylvania 17325.

If you have any questions about this matter, please contact me at 717-338-2577.

Sincerely,

Laura L. Smith, Esq.
Special Counsel
Enforcement Bureau

cc: Denver Field Office
Western Regional Director

¹ Fines normally range from \$7,500 to \$10,000.