

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

July 17, 2015

Dear Colleague:

The spirit of volunteerism is alive and well among our nation's 730,000 licensed amateur ("ham") radio operators. Amateur Radio provides opportunities for technical self-training in modern telecommunications, electronics technology, and emergency communications. Radio amateurs provide resilient communications services that are needed in the aftermath of disasters at no cost to taxpayers.

Amateur Radio operators are both self-regulating and self-administering, requiring very little from the Federal government. They do, however, need the ability to install functional outdoor antennas at their residences in order to provide critical emergency communications services.

Thirty years ago, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), adopted a flexible policy promoting the "strong Federal interest" in Amateur Radio and limiting regulation by municipal land use policies. As a result, municipal land use planners are required to make *reasonable accommodation* for effective outdoor antenna for Amateur Radio use.

For three decades this policy has resulted in cooperative relationships between licensees and municipalities. The FCC, however, did not apply this same policy to private land use regulations, including restrictive covenants and homeowners' association regulations, which routinely deprive communities of the vital emergency communications services provided by radio amateurs.


The Amateur Radio Parity Act of 2015 (S. 1685) corrects this oversight by directing the FCC to extend the "reasonable accommodation" policy to encompass all land use regulations. The FCC has sought guidance from Congress in this area, and this legislation provides that direction.

In doing so, S. 1685 preserves the jurisdiction of homeowners' associations to protect the aesthetic interests of residences of communities. This measure will bring together the Amateur Radio operators and the homeowners' associations in a cooperative manner, and it will preserve the value of Amateur Radio in those same communities and for all Americans.

We invite you to join us in cosponsoring S. 1685, the Amateur Radio Parity Act of 2015.

If you have any questions or would like to cosponsor, please contact Jane Sarnecky with Senator Wicker at Jane_Sarnecky@wicker.senate.gov or Maya Kalonia in Senator Blumenthal's office at Maya_Kalonia@blumenthal.senate.gov.

Sincerely,



ROGER WICKER
United States Senate



RICHARD BLUMENTHAL
United States Senate