



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

November 22, 2016

The Honorable Rodney Frelinghuysen
U.S. House of Representatives
2306 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Frelinghuysen:

Thank you for your letter regarding the interference affecting the Morris County, New Jersey Emergency Communications System.

As you note in your letter, the Commission is aware of this issue, and has determined that this interference is caused by an unpredictable atmospheric phenomenon known as “ducting.” Ducting interference occurs when television signals, which are normally confined to a station’s service area, instead travel hundreds of miles. These signals can interfere with distant public safety communications systems operating on the same frequency.

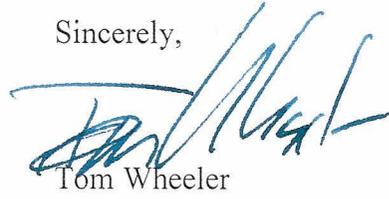
Ducting interference can occur even when both the communications system and the television station are operating in full compliance with the Commission’s technical rules. To rule out the possibility that the recent ducting interference that Morris County’s communications system experienced was due to the station not complying with the Commission’s rules, engineers from the Commission’s Enforcement Bureau performed an on-site inspection of the station’s transmission facilities on October 17, 2016. Although the Enforcement Bureau’s analysis of the results is not yet complete, preliminary data indicate that the station is operating in full compliance with the Commission’s technical rules.

In previous correspondence, the Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau (PSHSB) noted that Morris County could mitigate the interference by operating on another frequency or channel. The Commission has granted waivers allowing other New Jersey public safety communications systems experiencing ducting interference to change their operating frequencies. PSHSB staff are available to help Morris County determine whether a change of frequencies is an option in this case.

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I appreciate your interest in this matter. Please let me know if I can be of any further assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Tom Wheeler", written over a horizontal line.

Tom Wheeler