

TOM COLE
4TH DISTRICT, OKLAHOMA

DEPUTY WHIP

COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS
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EDUCATION AND RELATED AGENCIES – CHAIRMAN
DEFENSE
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COMMITTEE ON RULES

COMMITTEE ON THE BUDGET



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

July 2, 2018

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FCC Mailroom

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

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Dear Chairman Pai:

We are writing today to urge the Commission to carefully consider the effects of clearing C-Band spectrum for wireless services on the operation of the Public Radio Satellite System (PRSS). We understand that public radio representatives have met with you, briefed other Commissioners, and met with FCC Bureau staff involved in this matter to explain public radio's dependence on these C-Band frequencies to deliver programming and public safety information to 42 million Americans each week. Every one of the 1,270 local public radio stations relies on C-Band frequencies to downlink and uplink programming for their respective audiences. According to independent studies conducted for the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, there are no current alternatives that replicate the affordability, availability and reliability provided by C-Band satellite service.

In addition to the 450,000 hours of national, regional and local programming annually that depend on public radio access to C-Band frequencies, the PRSS distributes emergency alerting on a national basis, and local stations have established regional emergency networks that rely on C-Band. Providing news and emergency information during times of local, regional and national crises requires public radio operations that are resilient and reliable during very challenging and difficult conditions – even when power grids and other communications networks are down. Public radio's ability to stay on the air during emergencies is closely connected to access to C-Band frequencies.

Our Committee has long been supportive of public radio's satellite-based programming interconnection systems and has provided appropriations to maintain and improve these capabilities. In fact, our current FY 2019 appropriations proposal approves funding for public radio to upgrade its satellite-based, C-Band interconnection system. This significant investment is recognition that there is no alternative means of program distribution that can reach all corners of our country, including rural and remote areas.

We hope that you and your Commission colleagues will proceed with clearing or sharing of C-Band spectrum for wireless use only after you have provided assurances that public radio's indispensable programming services will be protected and unimpaired.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Tom Cole". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Tom" and last name "Cole" clearly distinguishable.

Tom Cole
Member of Congress