

MARK E. GREEN, M.D.

7TH DISTRICT, TENNESSEE

COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY

SUBCOMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE
AND COUNTERTERRORISM

SUBCOMMITTEE ON CYBERSECURITY,
INFRASTRUCTURE PROTECTION, AND INNOVATION

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT
AND REFORM

SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL SECURITY

SELECT SUBCOMMITTEE ON
THE CORONAVIRUS CRISIS



Congress of the United States
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Washington, D.C. 20515

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June 16, 2020

622

Attn: Ajit Pai
FCC Chairman
445 12th Street SW
Washington, D.C. 20554

Dear Chairman Pai:

As you know, every facet of our society has been deeply impacted by COVID-19. Churches and other houses of worship across this country have been forced to shut their doors—at a time when our families and communities need them most. Despite the challenges of physically congregating, our communities of faith have sought innovative ways to gather and share the good news without putting their members at risk. Some houses of worship have had “drive-in” services using FM transmitters. But for houses of worship to do this, they must be able to operate without the fear of heavy penalties threatening their services.

I am writing to ask you to consider granting a temporary waiver for houses of worship for 47 CFR Section 15.239 during the COVID-19 pandemic. Such a waiver would enable our faith communities to continue congregating while abiding by the CDC’s recommended social distancing measures by operating FM transmitters with an effective service range greater than 200 feet.

While current FCC regulations allow for the unlicensed operation of certain extremely low-power devices, they are often too weak to send a signal for large congregations. Additionally, many FM transmitters that are advertised and sold in the US are not compliant with Part 15, which houses of worship may purchase and operate unknowingly. Given the complexity of the situation and the importance of allowing our citizens to exercise their rights, we respectfully request that such a waiver be issued.

It was out of a desire to practice religion without government interference that America was founded. These fundamental freedoms are the cornerstone of the liberties that we enjoy in the United States and any action that threatens to curb their expression threatens all others. The pandemic has forced houses of worship to find alternative ways to exercise these freedoms. The least the federal government can do is to get out of their way, so they can serve our communities without fear of violating a government rule.

I appreciate and understand the difficulties associated with regulating our nation’s communications infrastructure, but I also recognize that it exists to serve the people as an avenue for expressing their freedoms.

Thank you for your dedication to strengthening the defense of our nation's communications infrastructure. I appreciate your time in evaluating this waiver proposal. If you have any questions, do not hesitate to call my office at (202) 225-2811 or email me at Mark.Green@mail.house.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mark E. Green". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Mark E. Green, MD
Member of Congress