

**March XX**, 2007

United States Capitol Office  
2243 Rayburn House Office Building  
House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Ackerman:

On February 8, 2006 Congressman Mike Ross of Arkansas told the House of Representatives that Amateur radio operators "were true heroes in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina as they were often the only line of communication available into the storm ravaged areas." Likewise Congressman Steve Israel of N.Y. recently stated that "Amateur radio provides a vital public safety communications service to the public at no cost to taxpayers.... So-called 'hams' provide emergency communications when regular channels are disrupted or disabled. State and local governments, as well as disaster relief agencies, could not possibly afford to replace the services that radio amateurs dependably provide for free."

In the immediate aftermath of the 9/11 tragedy and in the days and weeks after that tragedy, Amateur radio operators provided critical communication links between hospitals and ambulances in the field, between the Red Cross and their volunteers, and for the New York City Office of Emergency Management.

I am concerned that this vital function will be severely hampered or even rendered ineffective by an emerging technology known as BPL (Broadband Over Power Lines). BPL is being developed to carry internet signals as well as signals for remote power meter reading and electric grid control using power lines as the "conduit" for communications. Unfortunately some versions of BPL employ high frequency radio waves that interfere with short range and long distance communications because the power lines act as transmitting antennas that unintentionally radiate the waves.

I am not opposed to BPL per se. The problem is that the FCC is currently misapplying interference standards which appear to put spectrum friendly implementations at a cost disadvantage. BPL and Amateur Radio communications can co-exist to the benefit of all but to do so the FCC must apply regulations that are appropriate and consider all uses of the spectrum.

In 2005, Ross introduced a non-binding House resolution, HRes 230, in the 109th Congress that would have had the FCC conduct "a full and complete analysis" of radio interference from BPL with an eye toward revising the FCC rules that govern BPL to minimize the potential of harmful interference. It was unsuccessful.

Last year, the U.S. House passed a telecommunications bill containing language that Ross proposed requiring the FCC to study the interference potential of BPL systems. The study requirement did not make its way into the final version of the bill, however.

On Jan 12, 2007, Ross submitted the "Emergency Amateur Radio Interference Protection Act of 2007" (H.R. 462). The bill calls for the FCC to conduct a comprehensive BPL service study leading to improved rules to prevent interference. The measure would require the FCC to undertake a study of BPL's interference potential within 90 days of enactment and report to the House Committee on Energy and Commerce and the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation. HR 462 has been referred to the House Committee on Energy and Commerce. In a letter to his colleagues in the House, Ross wrote: "This bill is not opposed to broadband technology. In fact, I support its development and implementation. The study called for by this bill will not slow, nor frustrate the deployment of competitive broadband delivery

mechanisms. It will not inhibit the deployment of Broadband over Power Line (BPL) systems anywhere in the U.S. The purpose of the study is to ascertain what additional rules should be adopted by the FCC governing BPL systems in order to reduce the interference potential to a reasonably low level.” Ross then added: “Many public safety and law enforcement groups have joined with the American Radio Relay League to submit comments to the FCC expressing concerns on interference of BPL. Groups such as the Association of Public-Safety communications Officials-International, Inc. (APCO) representing many organizations including the American Red Cross, International Association of Chiefs of Police, International Association of Emergency Managers, International Association of Fire Chiefs, and the National Association of State Telecommunications Directors have also expressed their concerns.” (Emphasis added)

Please do what you can to help get the bill out of committee, adopted by both Houses of Congress and signed by the President. Though BPL technology may provide benefits to the Electric Power Industry, it is vitally important that the Amateur Radio service is not hampered in providing an irreplaceable service to our citizens. Both needs can be satisfied if meaningful and appropriate standards for interference levels are in place and adhered to.

If you have any questions, need additional information, or can suggest other things I can do to help, please let me know.

**Fill in your name here (Amateur Radio Call Sign, XXXXX)**

**Your address**

**You email address**

**Below is for your reference.**

See also 47 C.F.R. 97.1(a)

Additional information on BPL is available at

<http://www.arrl.org/tis/info/HTML/plc/>

Much of the information in this letter is also from <http://www.arrl.org/>

and linked pages. The Long Island Power Authority (LIPA) will soon be conducting a test of BPL in Suffolk County here on Long Island.

A copy of H.R. 462 can be seen at

<http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/z?c110:H.R.462>

The bill is co-sponsored by Congressman Israel of NY and Congressman Ron Paul of Texas  
From Mike Ross' letter to his colleagues in the House regarding H.R.462.