

Before the
FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
Washington, DC 20554

In the Matter of)	
Implementation of Section 621(a)(1) of)	
the Cable Communications Policy Act of 1984)	MB Docket No. 05-311
as amended by the Cable Television Consumer)	
Protection and Competition Act of 1992)	

COMMENTS OF WEST CENTRAL CABLE AGENCY

These Comments are filed by the West Central Cable Agency in support of the comments filed by the National League of Cities and the National Association of Telecommunications Officers and Advisors ("NATOA"). Like NLC and NATOA, the West Central Cable Agency believes that local governments can issue an appropriate local franchise for new entrants into the video services field on a timely basis, just as they have for established cable services providers. In support of this belief, we wish to inform the Commission about the facts of video franchising in our community.

Cable Franchising in Our Community

Community Information

The West Central Cable Agency is a intergovernmental agency in Illinois consisting of five Villages (Indian Head Park, LaGrange, LaGrange Park, Riverside, and Western Springs) with a combined population of 53,976. Our franchised cable provider is Comcast. Our community has negotiated cable franchises since 1982.

Competitive Cable Systems

Our communities:

- have never been approached by a competitive provider to provide service.
- had actively sought out competitive providers, but has not been successful.
- have not denied any provider the opportunity to serve in our community.
- have mechanisms in place to offer the same or a comparable franchise to a competitor upon request.

Conclusions

The local cable franchising process functions well in the West Central Cable Agency communities. As the above information indicates, we are experienced at working with cable providers to both see that the needs of the local community are met and to ensure that the practical business needs of cable providers are taken into account.

Local cable franchising ensures that local cable operators are allowed access to the rights of way in a fair and evenhanded manner, that other users of the rights of way are not unduly inconvenienced, and that uses of the rights of way, including maintenance and upgrade of facilities, are undertaken in a manner which is in accordance with local requirements. Local cable franchising also ensures that our local community's specific needs are met and that local customers are protected.

Local franchises thus provide a means for local government to appropriately oversee the operations of cable service providers in the public interest, and to ensure compliance with applicable laws. There is no need to create a new Federal bureaucracy in Washington to handle matters of specifically local interest.

Finally, local franchises allow each community, including ours, to have a voice in how local cable systems will be implemented and what features (such as PEG access, institutional networks or local emergency alerts, etc.) will be available to meet local needs. These factors are equally present for new entrants as for existing users.

The West Central Cable Agency therefore respectfully requests that the Commission do nothing to interfere with local government authority over franchising or to otherwise impair the operation of the local franchising process as set forth under existing Federal law with regard to either existing cable service providers or new entrants.

Respectfully submitted,

West Central Cable Agency

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