



*american association of information radio operators*



Formed in 2008, AAIRO is a nonprofit organization of operators & licensees from public agencies who manage Information Radio Stations across the country to inform & protect motorists.

December 18, 2012

The Honorable Julius Genachowski, Chairman  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12<sup>th</sup> Street SW  
Washington DC 20554

**Subject: Petition Docket 09-19**

The American Association of Information Radio Operators (AAIRO) is comprised of 346 members, consisting of government agencies and associated individuals in the Public Safety Community in the United States.

AAIRO strongly endorses the attached letters, directed to the attention of the FCC by coastal communities in New Jersey that experienced the severe impact of events surrounding the landfall of Hurricane Sandy.

Each letter describes how a Travelers Information Radio Station (TIS) in the community became the sole source of information during and after the storm for many residents due to failures by other means of communication. As AAIRO's Petition Docket 09-19 for rulemaking stated, this is not a new role for TIS stations, but was anticipated by the original Report and Order FCC 77-414 that created the service and needs to be reflected in the rules.

We encourage the FCC to promptly publish new rules for the service making it clear that TIS stations may, to mitigate the loss of life and property, broadcast critical weather and safety information to the traveling public in advance of, during and following such emergencies.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "William Baker", written over a white background.

William Baker  
President

Incorporated December 30, 1887

**Department of Police**  
**BOROUGH OF MANASQUAN**

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ELLIOTT A. CORREIA, Chief of Police  
ecorreia@manasquan-nj.com

November 25, 2012

The Honorable Julius Genachowski,  
Chairman  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12<sup>th</sup> Street SW  
Washington DC 20554

Dear Chairman Genachowski:

I want to express to you in the strongest way how vital the Information Radio Station (TIS) is to our community.

Manasquan is a coastal community just north of where Hurricane Sandy made landfall, meaning that we took maximum storm surge and wind damage from the event. We knew that telephones, internet and even commercial radio stations might not operate throughout the storm so we informed local residents that the Radio Station we operate on AM 1620 would be the single disseminator of information during and in the immediate aftermath.

As predicted, we lost all services including, of course, electrical power. Yet the radio station continued to operate and inform continuously throughout.

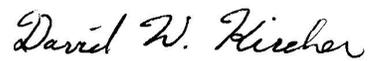
Due to our large battery back, the station had continuous power and never went off the air. Battery-operated radios could receive it, despite the loss of electrical power in homes. The antenna is installed on a hurricane-wind rated "Vertical Profile" antenna support which handled the 90 mph winds and 3 feet of flooding without incident.

There is no telling how many lives and how much property was saved due to this resource which our town thankfully has. Therefore, I must encourage you, to make sure that when new rules for the TIS service are finalized they make accommodation for the critical importance that the TIS service has taken on for communities like ours in disasters such as this.

Please re-craft the content rules to specifically state that weather forecasts, warnings, NOAA rebroadcasts and emergency preparedness information can be broadcast at any time - before, during and after a disaster - as a means of mitigating loss of life and damage to property. As your agency debates the future of the AM radio band, please consider how important these humble 10 watt Information Radio Stations have become to communities like ours...and how the small

investment we made some years ago, has saved us time, money, property and lives by a factor unknown, and will again when the next disaster occurs.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "David W. Kircher".

David W. Kircher, Coordinator  
Office of Emergency Management

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Christopher B. Tucker".

Christopher B. Tucker, Deputy Coordinator  
Office of Emergency Management



December 13, 2012

The Honorable Julius Genachowski, Chairman  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12th Street SW  
Washington DC 20554

My name is Drew Winans. I am the present Chief of Police of the Monmouth Beach Police Department. In reference to our information radio station purchased 10 years ago or more? I have been involved with the radio station since its installation when it was installed by them Chief Patrick McConville. One of the few people who was able to record messages and get them out there to the public. Here's a brief synopsis of how the radio station was "An Invaluable" tool not only for the residents of Monmouth Beach but nearby towns within listing distance.

In the days leading up to "Sandy" the Monmouth Beach Office of Emergency Management had many vehicles to inform the residents of Monmouth Beach. The "Code Red" system which sent recorded messages to all subscribers via phone, text and email. These messages were updated as needed. Each time these messages were sent out the same message was recorded and being transmitted on our radio station (WPMG676 1640am). I knew that not many people were listening. Why would they? Email.... Text... House Phone... Cell Phone... Smart phone...

The night Sandy arrived in full force the storm surge started surrounding our headquarters and separate annex building that houses the controls of our radio station we had to abandon our HQ and head for higher ground which was Borough Hall. I was continually updating information on the radio station remotely, using my cell phone until the phone lines went down and I wasn't able to access the radio station to update information. In the early morning hours the next day and the days following when code red messages were being sent out, many of the subscribers were not getting the messages. Cell phone service was out, people's phones were dead since they had no power to charge them or some carriers just weren't working properly. But!!! We were able to continually update information on the radio station with the same information being sent out with our code red system. But I wondered are the people listening? During these days and weeks following the storm I came in contact with numerous people who thanked us for keeping them informed through the radio station. The older technology that most were not custom to was the one thing that held true. In talking to people they felt so disconnected from what was going on. But having the radio station they had some idea what was going on and receiving important recovery information.

Sea Bright is a town just north of us and shares our border. [It was] severely devastated by Sandy. I had the opportunity to speak to residents of that town who live on the border and were continually tuned into our information broadcasts. They couldn't thank us enough with the information being transmitted. Bottom line..... Old School won out when it was needed most.

Drew Winans, Chief  
Monmouth Beach Police Department  
14 Willow Avenue  
Monmouth Beach, NJ 07750



December 13, 2012

The Honorable Julius Genachowski, Chairman  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12th Street SW  
Washington DC 20554

I had a very interesting conversation on the phone this morning with a police lieutenant in a nearby town ...[who said] ...that Sandy had pressed them into looking at the power and potential of local AM [TIS] radio when computers, cell phones, hardwired phones and smartphones die. We concurred that the TIS AM signal could get through on car radios, crank radios and battery radios in a true emergency. He admitted that until Sandy, they kind of thought of AM as antique, but that this experience had permanently turned them around. Here is another instance where I am being made to believe that TIS's are the real-world Conelrad stations of the 21st century, especially when they are used responsibly to get out vital local information.

As an aside, as a radio listening fan caught in a blackout, I was astonished at how clear the AM band became when all the juice was cut off. Away went the whine of light dimmers, computers, electronic clocks and fibre optic phone installations. During a true blackout, the 10-watt stations carry even better!

Your faithful servant

Richard K. Phoenix, RMC  
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January 30<sup>th</sup>, 2013

The Honorable Julius Genachowski, Chairman  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12<sup>th</sup> Street SW  
Washington DC 20554

Subject: Petition Docket 09-19

The North Tahoe Fire Protection District services 31 square miles on the northwest shore of Lake Tahoe, California; an area subject to forest fires, floods, avalanches, snow events, and back-country emergencies. Serving mountain communities in the Sierra Nevada's provides additional egress challenges associated with small mountain roads and population that double during peak tourist seasons.

In the summer of 2007, we experienced two large fires that presented life safety challenges to our responders. The most immediate danger was that of a local, fast spreading, wind-whipped wild-land interface fire burning through a residential neighborhood. Secondly, evacuees gridlocked several communities as they attempted to escape the fire through a single means of egress, both impeding emergency vehicles and endangering citizens lives. The "After Action" report identified a need to disseminate real time, information to both our local citizens and visiting public.

In response, the District acquired three portable AM transmitters, hired a Public Information Officer, and formed a Citizen's Emergency Information Team to deploy the transmitters in urgent and emergent circumstance.

As an example, last year all "Red Flag" fire watch days were announced through these emergency broadcasts and a new public awareness of fire weather was established. Later in the year, our portable AM broadcast transmitters were utilized to prepare the public for the dangers of an approaching early season winter storm, that brought heavy precipitation, compromised structures, caused avalanches and power outages.

The Public Information Officer has continued to educate our citizens of the importance of committing our AM frequency to their memory. The District has proved these portable AM transmitters as a reliable and now essential tool for communicating with our communities. The District believes that any limitation on our ability to utilize these transmitters will jeopardize public safety within our communities. Please consider the dangers to public safety as you review Docket 09-19.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Michael Schwartz", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Michael Schwartz, Fire Chief