

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

November 26, 2018

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

Dear Chairman Pai,

I am writing in response to recent action taken by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to advance a Second Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (MB Docket No. 05-311) regarding the way local franchising authorities (LFA) regulate cable operators. I have heard concerns from my constituents that the proposal, as written, would harm public, educational and government (PEG) stations. Local community media provides valuable information to residents in New Hampshire and across the country by delivering tailored news, community updates and creative programming. I hope that you and your colleagues at the FCC will take these concerns into account and ensure that the interests of local programming are considered when adopting a final rule.

In 1984, Congress passed the Cable Communications Act, which grants LFAs the authority to require that cable operators reserve channel capacity and provide adequate facilities, equipment or support for PEG stations. I am concerned that the FCC's proposal to expand the definition of in-kind services that can count toward franchise fees would result in a significant reduction in financial support for local programming. In the absence of public funding, PEG stations across the country rely on franchise fees to keep their content available and programs running. Local stations have expressed concern that the proposed rule, if adopted, would jeopardize their ability to fulfill their critical mission.

Local communities need PEG stations more than ever. They provide a platform for civic engagement and give viewers critical information about their local communities. Given the importance of these stations, I ask that the FCC closely examine the impact of the proposed changes on local community television and give full consideration to comments submitted for the record addressing these concerns.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,



Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator

CC: The Honorable Michael O'Rielly, Commissioner
The Honorable Brendan Carr, Commissioner
The Honorable Jessica Rosenworcel, Commissioner