

2-4-82

HCR-56

HOUSE LABOR & COMMERCE
STANDING COMMITTEE
February 4, 1982
1:12 p.m.

Members Present: Rep. Martin, Chairman
Rep. Bylsma, Vice-Chairman
Rep. Randolph

Members Absent: Rep. Gardiner
Rep. Rogers

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

HCR 56 Relating to the policy of the legislature
concerning telecommunications.

WITNESS REGISTER

Roy Paschal
BC Cable Co.
Box 929
Juneau, Alaska 99801
586-3187
Position Statement: Recommendations.

Charles Northrip, Executive Director
Alaska Public Broadcasting Commission
Pouch CB
Juneau, Alaska 99811
465-2846
Position Statement: Options to reduce interference between cable
and locally-broadcast television.

Alex Hills
Department of Administration
Pouch C
Juneau, Alaska 99811
465-2200
Position Statement: Spoke of Division of Telecommunications.

PREVIOUS ACTION

HCR 56 See previous day's minutes (2/3/82) for
action taken on resolution. No formal
action taken this date due to lack of quorum
by the end of the meeting.

ACTION NARRATIVE

Tape #009
Recording
Number 0000

Meeting was called to order by Chairman Martin at 1:12 p.m. Members present were: Representatives Martin, Bylsma, and Randolph. Members absent were: Representative Gardiner and Rogers. Representative Martin left the meeting approximately five minutes after the call to order. RCN 56, relating to the legislature's policy regarding telecommunications, was before the committee, being held over from the previous day.

Number 0014

Roy Paschal, BC Cable Company, Juneau, spoke about interference between cable and local television stations. He said that, historically, UHF channels are used, but the FCC made an exception for Alaska because the lower channels were not being used. He explained local interference problems. Paschal said he wants KTOO (Juneau's public television station) to go to UHF so as not to interfere with his cable stations. After discussion by the committee of UHF and VHF channels, Paschal said that there is objection to BC Cable going to UHF. He said that if cable has to convert to UHF, it will be costly for the consumer. Rep. Bylsma asked Paschal if he would like all public television to get off the VHF channels and move to UHF. Paschal agreed.

Number 0139

Charles Northrip, Executive Director of the Alaska Public Broadcasting Commission and former general manager of KTOO in Juneau, said the specific instances Paschal spoke of in Juneau are related to the local public television station, but not to all telecommunications. He said that, elsewhere in the state, the Learn Alaska and Television Demonstration Project directly relate to the telecommunications division. Northrip pointed out that public stations in the Lower 48 are not relegated to UHF; he said approximately 50% are VHF. Northrip said these channels are assigned by the FCC. He explained that the FCC assigned certain channels to each community, making sure that the same or adjacent channels were not assigned to the same community. Certain channels were set aside for public broadcasting. For a long time in Alaska,

UHF was used for the troposcatter system (telephone); but are now available for public use. Northrip said it takes more power to get the same coverage with UHF--a main UHF transmitter for KTOO would cost about \$100,000; it would use more electricity and have a higher operating expense.

Number 0230

Northrip said that, as the channels are assigned by the FCC, it would be impossible for the Division of Telecommunications to force an independent entity to change frequency, as this is under federal jurisdiction. He explained the local situation between KTOO and the cable transmissions. Northrip said that, as long as cable and transmitters exist on the same channels, there will be interference.

Number 0285

There was discussion between Northrip and Rep. Randolph about the practicality of switching to UHF.

Number 0300

Rep. Bylsma asked how a compromise could be reached. Northrip suggested that the cable could carry the public station on UHF free to any consumer, except for the charges for deposits and converter box. Objections to this are a poor signal; cable doesn't reach to all areas; and, as public stations are partially state-funded, all people should have access. Northrip did not feel it was possible to completely eliminate the problem.

Number 0360

Alex Hills, state Administration, reiterated the distinction between state-operated programs and separate entities receiving state funds. He said they have resolved interference situations in several communities. Hills said that phase locking and co-channel assignment have been used as solutions rather than UHF. Hills felt that, even without the resolution (HCR 56), the Division of Telecommunications would continue to work on these areas.

Number 0435

As there was not a quorum, and no one else wished to testify, the meeting was adjourned by Vice-Chairman Bylsma at 1:43 p.m.

LABOR & COMMERCE COMMITTEE
DAILY COMMITTEE HEARING

Date: 2/4/82

Place: _____

<u>Members</u>	<u>Present</u>	<u>Absent</u>	<u>Time Arrived</u>	<u>Time Left</u>
Rep. B. Bylsma, V. Chair	✓		12:55	
Rep. D. Randolph	✓		1:10	
Rep. B. Rogers				
Rep. T. Gardiner				
Rep. T. Martin, Chair	✓			

1:00

Subject Matter:

House Bill No. HCF 56 _____

Senate Bill No. _____

Special Orders:

2/4/82 1:12

- 0000 Call to order
- 014 Roy Pascal, re line 23, p. 1; spoke about interference bet. cable & local stns.
- 040 Randolph - need stronger language
- 045 Pascal - historically (cable) goes on UHF channels; exception made by FCC for Alaska because lower ^{local} channels not being used. Explained interference problems.
- 065 Randolph asked expense of switching; Pascal - \$2-3,000. This change wd eliminate all interference. Wants KTOO (public stn) to go to UHF.
- 089 Byloma & Randolph discussed possible rewording.
- 100 Pascal - there is objection to going to UHF. If cable has to convert to UHF, will be costly for consumer.
- 128 Byloma - you wd like all public TV to get off lower & move to higher channels. Pascal agreed.
- 139 Charles Northrup, Exec Dir, AK Sub Broadcasting Comm., former gen mgr KTOO, juv. Specific instances Pascal speaks of in juv are related to local pub. TV stn, but not all telecomm. Elsewhere in state, (hear AK, TV demons. proj.) directly relate to telecomm. div. Pub stns in lower 48 are not reloged to UHF; approx 50% are VHF. These channels are assigned by FCC; certain channels were assigned to each community - same or adjacent channels not assigned to same comm.

Certain ~~some~~ channels were set aside for public broad-
casting. For a long time in AK, UHF was
used for troposcatter system (telephone) ^{but} is now
available for public use. Takes more power to
get same coverage w/UHF; main xmts for ^{UHF for} KTOD
wd. cost ~~at~~ abt \$100,000. More electricity,
higher operating expenses.

230

~~Suggests~~ ~~also~~ These channels are assigned
by FCC; wd be impossible for Div of Telecomm
to force independent entity to chng freq. when
assigned by FCC (federal jurisdiction).

Explained local sit'n between KTOD & cable
transmissions. As long as cable & xmts
^{on same channels} exist, there will be interference.

285

Randolph - correct that switching to UHF wd solve
prob? (Yes) But difficult to get FCC appl?

Northrip - yes; ^{also} expensive (at least \$100,000)
Not practical.

300

Bygloma - how cd compromise be reached?

Northrip - ~~sec. communities, cable filed pet'n~~
~~to deny~~ cable cd carry public stn (on UHF)
free to any consumer, except deposit on
converter box. Objections - poor signal, some
people can't hook up (cable doesn't reach); state
funds for pub TV, so all shd have access.

355 Not possible to completely eliminate problem;

Alex Hills
360 Alex Hill - ~~reiterated~~ ~~just~~ ~~reiterated~~ reiterated
distinction between state operated prog & ~~the~~
separate entities receiving st. funds.
Have resolved interference sites in several
communities. Phase locking & co-channel assignment
have been used as solutions rather than UHF.
~~Just~~ Even w/o resolution, Div of Telecomm. & ~~is~~ will
continue to work on these areas.

435 As there was no quorum, mtg was adjourned.
1:43.

