



Legislation Text

File #: 53885, **Version:** 1

Fiscal Note

No fiscal impact.

Title

Opposing Federal Communications Commission (FCC) Proposed Rule Change Regarding Public TV Channels.

Body

WHEREAS, all across Wisconsin, community media centers and public educational (PEG) TV channels provide transparency in government, inform and involve citizens in the electoral process, provide information on municipal services and serve local non-profits, community organizations and places of worship; and,

WHEREAS, in Madison, WYOU provides members of the public access to cable television to create and share a diverse array of programming, and MMSD-TV helps the Madison Metropolitan School District disseminate important information about schools; and,

WHEREAS, the City of Madison IT Department's Media Team distributes Madison City Channel programming on three cable TV systems to increase transparency in government and offer improved access to City information, meetings, events, and proceedings, especially to those who might otherwise find it difficult to participate; and,

WHEREAS, Madison City Channel's Know Your Candidates forums, co-produced with the League of Women Voters of Dane County, provide candidates for offices ranging from the Common Council to U.S. Congress the opportunity to introduce themselves to voters, and encourage constituents to watch, decide, and vote; and,

WHEREAS, Madison City Channel programming was invaluable in reaching as many residents as possible with important emergency information during the devastating flooding in the late summer of 2018; and,

WHEREAS, Wisconsin municipalities are forbidden by Wisconsin statute from collecting a "PEG fee" to fund PEG-related equipment and facilities, making them completely reliant on the static franchise fee to fund PEG access television; and,

WHEREAS, cable franchise fees (called video provider fees in Wisconsin statutes) are paid to Wisconsin municipalities, including Madison, by cable companies and other video service providers for access to municipal rights-of-way in accordance with federal law; and,

WHEREAS, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has proposed a rule change that would allow video service providers to set a financial value for public, education, and government (PEG) channels and deduct that value from franchise fees - essentially requiring the public to purchase public access; and,

WHEREAS, the proposed change would unfairly diminish or eliminate cable franchise fees in the U.S. and put tremendous strain on the ability of PEG channels to continue operations,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the City of Madison urges the FCC to reconsider its proposed

rulemaking as it pertains to community media centers and PEG TV, and to continue to require video service providers to provide channel space and transmission of local PEG access channels at no charge to municipalities and without offsetting or reducing already established franchise fees for the value of providing such services.