

EDWARD J. MARKEY
7TH DISTRICT, MASSACHUSETTS

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July 27 11 44 AM '83
Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

Washington, D.C. 20515

June 22, 1983

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Mr. Paul E. Healy
City Clerk
City of Cambridge City Hall
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139

Dear Mr. Healy:

Thank you for contacting me concerning the National League of Cities (NLC)-National Cable Television Association (NCTA) compromise agreement. I appreciate hearing from you on this matter.

For some time, several members of the House and Senate have been urging a federal solution to a variety of problems which have arisen between cities across the country and cable operators. One proposed solution, S. 66 sponsored by Senator Barry Goldwater (R-AZ), offered a comprehensive settlement of many of the outstanding issues. Yet this proposal, as well as the others offered in the Senate, drew criticism from city officials and cable industry personnel.

At the same time, groups representing the interests of both sides--the NLC and the NCTA--held negotiations to try to reach an agreement on these matters. Early this year, a compromise was reached, and subsequently approved by the governing bodies of both groups. Senator Goldwater has been willing to generally adopt the terms of the compromise into his bill. Even so, the final terms of S. 66 are less than certain; for example, the NLC recently raised a variety of "clarification" points that some believe will require a renegotiation of the agreement. In sum, it is difficult to speculate about how any cable-cities compromise legislation will look when it comes to the House.

If any legislation passes the Senate, it will be referred to the House Subcommittee on Telecommunications, Consumer Protection and Finance of which I am a member. I strongly believe that any cable-cities legislation must include appropriate protection of the serious financial and policy interests that municipalities across the country have in existing or planned cable systems. It is not enough to have "wiring the country as quickly as possible" as a legislative goal; decisions made today to encourage the arrival of this new technology will outline its contours in the years to come. Concerns about franchise fee levels, public access, and local autonomy must be met by any bill which comes before the Subcommittee. As these concerns are raised and solutions are proposed, I will stay

Mr. Paul E. Healy

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in contact with you.

Again, thank you for contacting me. Be assured that I am aware of the many questions you raise about the NLC-NCTA agreement, and I will keep them in mind as the debate over the legislation continues.

With best wishes,

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ed Markey". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Edward J. Markey
Member of Congress

EJM/rk

21. S-282

Comm. from Congressman Edward J. Markey Re:
National League of Cities & National Cable
Television Assoc. compromise agreement Re:
the proposed Cable Telecommunications Act of
1983.

In City Council,

June 27, 1983

6/27/83

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