

Senator Ron Johnson
5315 Wall Street
Suite 110
Madison, WI 53718

Re:Corporate broadcasters have significantly raised cost to carry Local Stations in Central Wisconsin.

Dear Senator Ron Johnson

I would like to make you aware of the runaway rate increases demanded by our local TV broadcasters. Despite the efforts of our cable company, Tomorrow Valley Cable/Amherst Communications, our local TV fees have increase by approximately 50% this year.

A combination of factors has led to this unfortunate situation. Most notably, outdated and overly prescriptive federal retransmission consent and network non-duplication laws and regulations have granted corporate broadcasters both a monopoly in their markets and the right to demand significant fees for their signals. When combined, the two rules give broadcasters extraordinary market power in their retransmission consent negotiations with cable operators, allowing them to make "take-it-or-leave-it" deals.

These laws allow national corporate broadcasters to negotiate fees with local cable providers every three years, and local companies like Tomorrow Valley Cable/Amherst Communications have one goal in these negotiations: To secure the lowest possible rates for their customers and ensure uninterrupted television programming.

But the broadcasters affiliated with our local stations have their own agenda, which is to increase retransmission rates to make up for shrinking audiences and lost advertising revenue. Retransmission fees have risen about 30 times over the last decade while network primetime audiences fell by more than half, according to Nielsen and SNL Kagan.

I do not think it is fair to place this financial burden on us, the customers, therefore we are disputing the extremely high rate increase. With these broadcast TV fees expected to continue their steep incline in the years to come, we think this trend is unsustainable, and we are fighting back.

Please work to protect your constituents, the people of Central Wisconsin, from this unjustified financial burden.

Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,