

Dear \_\_\_\_\_ :

Thank you for your ongoing support and participation in local community television!

*Provide a brief introduction of your community media operations.* We are requesting that you sign on as a co-sponsor of H.R. 5659.

[H.R. 5659 \(Eshoo, 1/21/2020\)](#) is a short and simple bill that provides a clear solution to the severe financial harm to cities and local community media stations caused by a recent FCC Order. By defining “franchise fees” as “monetary payments,” this Congressional Act undoes the FCC’s recent attempt to supersede the Federal Cable Act and change the 35-year practice of calculating franchise fee payments to cities.

In August of 2019 the FCC passed its “621 Order.” If cities across the nation are unsuccessful in our appeal before the Sixth Circuit and our motion to stay the Order during the litigation, cable companies may begin subtracting their own computed “value” of non-cash technical requirements from cash franchise fee payments. These non-cash items, which were negotiated as part of a franchise agreement between the city and the cable company, include providing live signal transport from schools and city halls back to master control for live video events such as city council meetings, high school sports, and town hall meetings. They also include free cable services for schools, libraries, police and fire stations. And they include fiber institutional networks or “I-Nets” that provide critical government data connections such as police/fire dispatch systems and city or school WAN and LAN networks. Since cable companies are allowed to determine the “value” of these non-cash franchise requirements, the deductions from cash franchise fee payments cause a severe threat to the budgets of local community media stations, cities and schools.

We know there are at least ?? local community media stations in your district, in addition to many more individual city- and school-related public/education/government (“PEG”) access channels, which are funded at least partly by cable franchise fees. And of course there are hundreds across Minnesota and thousands across the nation. Thank you for your support of our work in the past, and please let us know if you need further information about supporting this legislation.

Sincerely,