



**ARRL** *The national association for*  
**AMATEUR RADIO**  
INTERNATIONAL SECRETARIAT OF THE INTERNATIONAL AMATEUR RADIO UNION

**Office of the General Counsel**  
**14356 Cape May Road**  
**Silver Spring, Maryland 20904-6011**  
**(301) 384-5525 telephone**  
**(301) 384-6384 facsimile**  
**W3KD@ARRL.ORG**

January 17, 2006

Via Courier and Email

Joseph.Casey@fcc.gov  
Katherine.Power@fcc.gov

Joseph Casey, Esquire  
Chief, Spectrum Enforcement Division  
Enforcement Bureau  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 Twelfth St. S.W.  
Washington, DC 20555

Katherine Power, Esquire  
Spectrum Enforcement Division  
Enforcement Bureau  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 Twelfth St. S.W.  
Washington, DC 20555

**RE: Interference Complaint, Municipal Broadband  
Over Power Line System at Manassas, Virginia**

Mr. Casey and Ms. Power:

This afternoon, Tuesday, January 17, 2006, the last in a series of meetings was held between officials of COMTek, the operator of the BPL system in the City of Manassas, Virginia, and representatives of the local Amateur Radio community. A representative of ARRL was also in attendance. The topic was the ongoing harmful interference to Amateur Radio communications in Manassas caused by the operation of that BPL system. The results of this meeting dictate the urgency of the Commission's obligation to finally take action to stop the unlawful operation of the Manassas BPL system. COMTek had firmly committed, as you have been previously informed by

JIM HAYNIE  
W5JBP, PRESIDENT  
JOEL M. HARRISON  
W6ZN, FIRST VICE PRESIDENT  
KAY C. CRAIGIE  
N3KN, VICE PRESIDENT  
RODNEY J. STAFFORD  
W6ROD, VICE PRESIDENT  
INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

JAMES E. McCOBB  
W1LLU, TREASURER  
DAVID SUMNER  
K1ZZ, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER  
SECRETARY

BARRY J. SHELLEY  
N1VXY, CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER  
MARK J. WILSON  
K1RO, CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER

MARY M. HOBART  
K1MMH, CHIEF DEVELOPMENT OFFICER

PAUL RINALDO  
W4RI, CHIEF TECHNOLOGY OFFICER

**QST**  
OFFICIAL JOURNAL

**AMERICAN RADIO RELAY LEAGUE**

ADMINISTRATIVE HEADQUARTERS • 225 MAIN STREET • NEWINGTON, CONNECTICUT, USA 06111-1494  
TELEPHONE 860-594-0200 • FAX 860-594-0259 • INTERNET: [hq@arrl.org](mailto:hq@arrl.org) • WWW: <http://www.arrl.org/>

certain of the complainants, to a complete solution to the interference problem by permanent notching of the modems not later than January 15, 2006.

COMTek was unwilling to start the meeting today until Ms. Jacqueline Pitts, a reporter for the Manassas Journal Messenger, left the room. This bizarre action indicates that COMTek, which has not heretofore submitted anything to the Commission in response to the numerous interference complaints about the Manassas BPL operation, was unwilling to subject itself to public scrutiny.

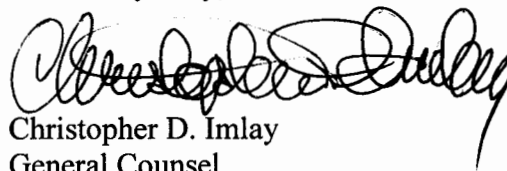
Mr. Walter Adams, Vice President of COMTek, acknowledged at today's meeting that their BPL system is causing harmful interference in frequency bands allocated to the Amateur Radio Service, but specifically declined to take any further steps to mitigate the interference. This position is totally unacceptable to the aggrieved licensees in Manassas. Harmful interference continues in violation of **§15.5(b)** of the Commission's rules. To date, the Commission has done nothing to address this problem.

The record is clear: **COMTek has been given every opportunity**, over the period of 18 months since it was awarded the Manassas BPL franchise, **to resolve the widespread interference in Manassas, and has been unable to do so. It is now apparently unwilling to voluntarily comply with its regulatory obligation to shut the system down.** ARRL does not question COMTek's desire to eliminate the harmful interference. However, the inescapable fact is that the Main.net hardware now in use in the city's BPL system is, and has been proven, incapable of being configured so as to function as intended without causing harmful interference to radio communication.

Because COMTek has declined to do so voluntarily, it is imperative that the FCC order the system **immediately** to cease operation, in accordance with **§15.5(c)** of the Commission's rules, and that operation not resume unless and until new hardware is installed that is capable of operating without causing harmful interference.

Kindly confirm to this office that the necessary action has been taken.

Yours very truly,



Christopher D. Imlay  
General Counsel

Cc: (via e-mail only):

George V. Tarnovsky, K4GVT  
Donald W. Blasdell, W4HJL  
William South, N3OH  
Ms. Jacqueline Pitts (jpitts@manassasjm.com)

Cc: (by mail only)

Jack B. Cochran  
11053 Camfield Court, #002  
Manassas, VA 20109

Walter P. Adams, Vice President  
COMTek.  
14151 Newbrook Drive  
Suite 400  
Chantilly, VA 20151

James N. Horwood, Esq.  
Spiegel & McDiarmid  
1333 New Hampshire Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20036