

COMMUNICATIONS news

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November 16, 1976

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Mr. James H. Quello, Commissioner
Federal Communications Commission
1919 M Street, Northwest
Washington, D.C. 20554

JAMES H. QUELLO

Dear Commissioner Quello:

The January issue of Communications News will be featuring an extensive profile on the Federal Communications Commission, and Ken Bourne, our Managing Editor, is spending November 17 and 18 at your offices to gather information for that special section.

Naturally, our readers are interested in the individual views and philosophies of the Commissioners, and we would like your participation by answering the questions below.

Because of the time and your busy schedule, we would appreciate your answers being held to a paragraph or so for each question, and receiving your answers by November 29.

1. Please describe ... in a simple sentence or paragraph ✓
... what you consider to be the role of the FCC.
2. As you see it, does the FCC presently have enough
authority to effectively carry out that role? If not,
what, if any, changes do you feel could be made?
3. In your opinion, what will be the greatest challenge ✓
facing the FCC in 1977?
4. Do you feel that the present Communications Act enables
you to keep pace with rapidly changing technology? Do
you feel it is "time for a complete overhaul" as some
are requesting?
5. How can the public have a greater voice in the decisions
ultimately affecting them?

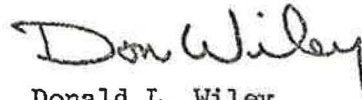
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6. What significant things has "competition" in telecommunications accomplished to date?
7. What major changes in regulatory policy do you foresee over the next five years?
8. What is the major goal you personally would like to accomplish as a member of the FCC?

Thank you for your time. Our readers will be looking forward to "meeting" the Commissioners and reading some of your personal views.

Cordially,



Donald L. Wiley
News and Features Editor

DLW:dd

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20554

Sent

OFFICE OF COMMISSIONER
JAMES H. QUELLO

November 29, 1976

Mr. Donald L. Wiley
Communications News
402 West Liberty Drive
Wheaton, Illinois 60187

Dear Mr. Wiley:

My response to your letter of November 16 regarding your profile on the Federal Communications Commission is as follows:

1. In my view, the role of the FCC is to encourage the provision of the widest possible variety of communications services to the greatest number of Americans at the least cost. As I condensed it in one of my initial speeches -- "the best communications service to the most people at the most reasonable cost".
2. Generally speaking, I believe the FCC has enough authority to carry out its responsibilities. I believe that our forfeiture authority should be greatly expanded across the board. And, I believe that the FCC needs much more in the way of resources - money and manpower - with which to enforce our rules and regulations.
3. I believe the greatest challenge facing the FCC in 1977 and subsequent years will be to adjust the regulatory climate to accommodate very rapid technological change. I would hope that we can arrive at carefully reasoned policies that will make the most of technology and innovation and not merely be swept along by an accelerating technical capability. At present, I believe our communications technical capabilities have outstripped our ability to implement them socially and economically.
4. I believe that the Act is broad enough to accommodate technological change to a large extent. I am in agreement with the move toward reviewing the Act, as a whole, to determine whether certain changes might be necessary. Any changes of a substantive nature, I would guess, will reflect not simply technological innovation in the traditional communications services, but will recognize a changing communications environment resulting from new modes of communication. Specifically, the

advent of cable television and data communications were certainly not contemplated when the present Act was drafted. Such new services cause profound changes in the entire communications environment and should, I believe, have recognition within the Act itself.

5. The Commission has long recognized and encouraged public participation in its processes. Unfortunately, the public at large rarely takes an interest in the day-to-day work of the Commission and abdicates an active role in our deliberations to special interest groups, both public and private. Insofar as the Commission is made aware of real public needs and interests, I believe that the Commission itself can and does adequately represent the general public in its actions.
6. There have been many significant accomplishments in telecommunications brought about as a result of competition. In the telephone industry alone the development and widespread use of digital communication is but one example of a competitive spur towards innovation. I might also mention electronic PABX's, various automatic dialing, call forwarding and answering devices, just to mention a few.
7. The kinds of changes in policy over the next five years will be influenced by the views and capabilities of the next FCC chairman. I would hope that the general trend is in the direction of further reducing the number and kinds of regulation while, at the same time, improving the FCC's ability to enforce those regulations which are considered to be in the public interest.
8. During my tenure as a Commissioner, I would like to contribute to a greater public understanding and appreciation of our communications services. I would like to help overcome the loss of credibility which has affected all government agencies in recent years and I would like to contribute to the restoration of public confidence in the government.

I hope that my efforts to answer your questions have been responsive to your needs. And, I wish you success in your forthcoming profile of the FCC.

Sincerely,

James H. Quello