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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

REQUESTING LETTER FROM SENATOR TALMADGE

HERMAN R. TALMADGE, GA., CHAIRMAN  
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C. M. MOUSER, MOUSER, CLERK

United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON  
AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20510

June 25, 1974

Emilio Q. Daddario  
Director  
Office of Technology Assessment  
300 New Jersey Avenue, "S. E.  
Washington, D. C. 20515

Dear Mr. Director:

For all of my career, I have been seriously concerned about the problem of equity for rural people. I have had some successes and some failures in dealing with this problem, but the fact remains that it is very difficult to deliver basic human services to people who live in low density circumstances in the American countryside.

Therefore, I was very excited to receive the enclosed good letter from Russell A. O'Neal, General Manager of the Wisconsin Electric Cooperative Association concerning the use of broad-band two-way telecommunications in rural areas. As you will see from Mr. Kaye's enclosed paper on transportation of older Americans in rural areas, he suggests that some transportation of people in rural areas might be supplanted with just such a system.

I am also enclosing a copy of Rural Electric magazine which describes some "of the activities which rural electric cooperatives are doing in regard to cable television, as well as the New Rural Society Project of Dr. Peter Goldmark. This material is on pages 12-20.

I also call your attention to a communications satellite which was launched recently that will be used to train rural para-professionals in Appalachia and the Rocky Mountain States, and then will be turned around to beam a signal to India. From what I have seen of this project, it was hastily conceived and launched before there was a clear understanding by anyone of what was to be accomplished. However, it is an example of the fact that communications can play an important role in reaching rural people, providing some types of services, educating and informing.

I am aware that the FCC is still groping with the notion of what it wants cable television to be, and this indecision has caused delays in exploring the full potential of the concept of a "wired nation".

But it seems to me that we already are a wired nation. It is my understanding that with some modifications, lines which carry electricity can also carry television pictures. Therefore, it would appear that the rural electric systems which are already in place in rural areas could provide a vital new service for rural people at a limited cost.

However, it is not the intention of the rural electrics to capture all of cable television in rural areas. Many and perhaps most of these cooperatives may not want to get involved at all.

But for those which might want to get involved -- for that matter, for any-individual or group which might want to get involved, the potential for using communications technology as one of the components that make up the concept of broad based rural community development is a new ballgame.

Therefore, I would appreciate it if OTA would consider a project to determine the feasibility and value of experimental efforts to develop public service for rural areas through the use of broadband communications techniques, whether cable or satellite.

If it would be helpful to your staff in determining whether to attempt this project, I would be pleased to put them in touch with Mr. Kaye, Dr. Goldmark and the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.

With every good wish, I am,

Sincerely,



HERMAN E. TALMADGE  
Chairman

cc: Ira Kaye  
Russell A. O'Neal  
Dr. Peter Goldmark  
Tom Hoy  
Robert Partridge  
David Hamil