

Slidell, LA. 70461

February 24, 1995

Never

C-Span  
400 N. Capitol N.W.  
Suite 650  
Washington, D.C. 20001

Attention: Mr. Brian Lamb

Re: Local Cable Programming  
St. Tammany Parish, LA.

Gentlemen:

Enclosed is a copy of a reply letter received from the local cable carrier (Cablevision Industries Inc., CVI, of St. Tammany Parish, Louisiana). Also enclosed is a follow-up letter to CVI dated February 23, 1995, asking for specific responses regarding local inclusion of C-Span 2.

Please advise if there is a publication or newsletter for or by C-Span supporters who don't use the computer services.

With Best Wishes,

enc.

January 25, 1995

Slidell, LA 70461

Dear Mr. Estopinal:

Thank you for your recent letter commenting on local programming. This is the best way for us to learn where we are failing to meet customer expectations.

As you accurately noted in your letter, increased regulation of the cable industry has significantly impacted both the quality and diversity of available new programming. Since passage of the so called "Cable Television Consumer Protection Act of 1992", start-up capital for fresh, new innovative programming has been very limited. No one would risk developing new programming when the Federal Government and local franchise authorities would have absolute control over rates operators could charge for service.

Some regulations indirectly limit the quality of choices we provide our subscribers. For example, over the next several months, in order to remain in compliance with FCC rules, we will be adding three new broadcast networks. We are not allowed to make any normal business decision as to whether the programming will have any value to our subscribers. We "must carry" these networks. This federal rule, along with major provisions of the "Cable Act", are being reviewed by the new Congress. Obviously, our ability to add requested programming like C-Span II, is limited when we are required to reserve space for any broadcast station that begins operation.

Just after cable rates were frozen by the Federal Government in 1992, CVI of St. Tammany started an 8 million dollar investment program installing new fiber optic technology and constructing a new administrative complex in Slidell. Certainly, we must balance our programming choices to insure that subscribers retain a sense of value and variety in their cable service. We must also use a portion of our increased channel capacity to develop new business and new revenue sources.

Again, thank you for your comments. Your request for C-Span II will be noted. Several new programming choices are being developed and more will come as revisions of the 1992 Act are finalized. We will continue to strive to make our basic service as complete as possible.

Best regards

[REDACTED]  
Slidell, Louisiana 70461

February 23, 1995

[REDACTED]  
Slidell, Louisiana 70458

Attention: [REDACTED]

Re: Comments on Local CVI Programming

Gentlemen:

Thank you for your informative reply of January 25, 1995 to my letter complaining about the quality of recent local programming additions in general, and the lack of C-Span 2 in particular.

Your reply gives insight into the destructive effect of regulation beyond limits of logical marketing practices. With all the various pressures, it's surprising that a franchised monopoly can still turn a profit. I don't know if the recent sale of CVI to Houston cable indicates future profitability or a strategic retreat.

Since my letter an announcement was noted that a northshore channel will be devoted to 24 hours of repeat WWL newscasts. As Hobbes would say --"Aarrghh".

I'm sure my viewpoint would vary if exposed to all of the decision factors. However, my personal need is to get as close as possible to a satisfaction balance. My communication with you is to state my opinion that the recent additions and changes have tipped that balance the wrong way. Carrying C-Span 1 on two channels, with no C-Span 2, is particularly annoying.

May I have specific answers to questions regarding C-Span?

- As long as 56 is C-Span 1 Parish-wide, could 18 east carry C-Span 2 instead of C-Span 1?
- Will or will not we get C-Span 2 in this Parish? If so, when; if not, what is the reason?
- If no C-Span 2, what would have to occur before it would be allowed?
- Is there a direct connection between having to add three new networks by regulatory decree and failing to carry C-Span 2? Are those three new networks also devoid of revenue?

I appreciate the recent successful efforts to improve reliability and picture quality of your service. If the same results could be obtained on the channels carrying local interest, board and committee meetings, it would be also be appreciated.

A Hopeful Subscriber;

cc B. Lamb  
[REDACTED]