* Whereas [NAME OF MUNICIPALITY] is a local franchising authority operating under Wisconsin’s state franchise law, which severely limits it power to regulate cable television to serve the needs and interests of the community; and
* Whereas cable franchise fees, called video provider fees in Wisconsin statutes, are paid by cable companies and other video providers to Wisconsin municipalities for access to municipal public rights-of-way in accordance with federal law, and;
* Whereas video provider fees are set by Wisconsin statute and cannot be increased or decreased from the rate a municipality received in 2008, unless a municipality collected no franchise fee at the time; and
* Whereas Wisconsin municipalities are forbidden by Wisconsin statute from collecting a “PEG fee” to fund PEG-related equipment and facilities, making them completely reliant on the static franchise fee to fund public, education, and government (PEG) access television; and
* Whereas cable operators have long served the public interest by providing one or more PEG access channels on their systems to local franchising authorities at no cost for the use of communities based on their needs and interests pursuant to federal law;
* Whereas setting a financial value on PEG access channels, whether cost-based or market-based, that municipalities will be forced to pay out of franchise fees could force Wisconsin municipalities, including [MUNICIPALITY}, to close our media centers and give back the PEG access channels, though we do not want to do so, due to a lack of funding; and
* Whereas, these local public, education, and government (PEG) access channels serve important community needs in [MUNICIPALITY] including fostering transparency in government, informing and involving citizens in the electoral process, providing information on municipal services and serving local non-profits, the business community, the local arts scene, and places of worship, and;
* Whereas PEG access channels enable the public to use cable television, a mass medium, which otherwise would be closed to them, to communicate to diverse groups and to the larger community about matters of concern to them; and
* Whereas PEG access channels provide communities with information from diverse sources because they are open to local government, local schools, and members of the community; and
* Whereas, PEG access channels are the only channels on the entire cable lineup with local programming on it most hours of the day; and
* Whereas the Federal Communications Commission was established to regulate mass media on principles important to a democracy including access to a diversity of information sources and serving the needs of local communities;
* Now, therefore, the [NAME OF MUNICIPALITY] urges the FCC to not change the way federal law has always been interpreted and to continue to require cable operators and other video providers to provide channel space and transmission of local PEG access channels at no charge to municipalities.