

## Senate Introduces Companion Bill to HR 2160

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ARRL Bulletin 31 ARLB031

From ARRL Headquarters

Newington CT October 7, 2009

**To all radio amateurs:**

October 6, Senator Joe Lieberman (D-CT), along with Senator Susan Collins (R-ME), introduced Senate Bill 1755, The Amateur Radio Emergency Communications Enhancement Act of 2009. Similar to HR 2160 -- also called The Amateur Radio Emergency Communications Enhancement Act of 2009 -- that was introduced this past April by Representative Sheila Jackson-Lee (D-TX-18), the bill, if passed, would direct the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to undertake a study on emergency communications. S 1755 points out that "There is a strong Federal interest in the effective performance of Amateur Radio Service stations, and that performance must be given -- (A) support at all levels of government (B) protection against unreasonable regulation and impediments to the provision of the valuable communications provided by such stations."

"We are delighted to have the sponsorship of both the Chairman and the Ranking Member of the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee, and especially to have the support of Senator Lieberman from the ARRL's home state," said ARRL Chief Executive Officer David Sumner, K1ZZ. "The bill could not have a better pedigree." Lieberman is the Chairman of the committee, while Collins is the Ranking Member.

Like HR 2160, S 1755 calls on DHS to undertake a study on the uses and capabilities of Amateur Radio Service communications in emergencies and disaster relief and then to submit a report to Congress no more than 180 days after the bill becomes law. The study shall:

Include a review of the importance of Amateur Radio emergency communications in furtherance of homeland security missions relating to disasters, severe weather and other threats to lives and property in the United States, as well as recommendations for enhancements in the voluntary deployment of Amateur Radio licensees in disaster and emergency communications and disaster relief efforts and improved integration of Amateur Radio operators in planning and furtherance of the Department of Homeland Security initiatives. Identify impediments to enhanced Amateur Radio Service communications, such as the effects of unreasonable or unnecessary private land use regulations on residential antenna installations; and make recommendations regarding such impediments for consideration by other federal departments, agencies and Congress.

In conducting the study, S 1755 directs the Secretary of Homeland Security to "utilize the expertise of stakeholder entities and organizations, including the Amateur Radio, emergency response and disaster communications communities."

S 1755 makes note of the fact that Section 1 of the Joint Resolution entitled Joint Resolution to Recognize the Achievements of Radio Amateurs, and To Establish Support for Such Amateurs as National Policy -- approved October 22, 1994 (Public Law 103-408) -- included a finding that stated: "Reasonable accommodation should be made for the effective operation of Amateur Radio from residences, private vehicles and public areas, and the regulation at all levels of government should facilitate and encourage amateur radio operations as a public benefit." The bill also pointed out that Section 1805(c) of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (6 U.S.C. 757(c)) directs the Regional Emergency Communications Coordinating Working Group of the Department of Homeland Security to coordinate their activities with ham and Amateur Radio operators among the 11 other emergency organizations, such as ambulance services, law enforcement and others. ARRL New England Division Director Tom Frenaye, K1KI said that Amateur Radio operators in the State of Maine have "an outstanding relationship" with their Congressional representatives -- plus Governor John Baldacci is KB1NXP!" Both Connecticut and Maine are part of the League's New England Division Frenaye said that Maine Section Manager Bill Woodhead, N1KAT, dropped off a letter at Senator Collins' office in Lewiston two weeks ago, asking for her support. "After that, we had amateurs in Maine write the Senator," he said; more than 40 Maine hams wrote Senator Collins. The Senate bill points out many positive things that Amateur Radio operators do, including "provid[ing] on a volunteer basis, a valuable public sector service to their communities, their States, and to the Nation, especially in the area of national and international disaster communications." It mentions that amateurs provided emergency and disaster relief communications services during both natural and manmade disasters. "The Amateur Radio Service has formal agreements for the provision of volunteer emergency communications activities with the Department of Homeland Security, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the National Weather Service, the National Communications System, and the Association of Public Safety Communications Officials, as well as with disaster relief agencies, including the American National Red Cross and the Salvation Army," the bill reads. Right now, S 1755 has been read twice in the Senate chamber and referred to that body's Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs. HR 2160 -- now with 27 sponsors -- is in the House Committee on Energy and Commerce.

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