

Dear Sirs

Following a previous exchange of e-mails on the above matter in respect of the impact on the RNLI, I am pleased to submit my formal response to your consultation below. A cover sheet also attached in Word format as requested.

I was surprised and disgusted to learn from a BBC news article, that Ofcom charges the RNLI an annual licence fee of £38,000 and that proposals could put this up to as much as £260,000.

The RNLI is as much an essential service as the fire, police or ambulance services and unlike them, it is run as a charity from the donations it receives, entirely from the public and without any government support. I understand that 9 out of 10 sea rescues are carried out by the RNLI and there can be no doubt that thousands of lives are saved every year by the great work they do. To levy a charge on the RNLI for the use of VHF communications equipment is, in my opinion, entirely wrong. It amounts to little more than another government stealth tax, taking money directly from the RNLI which would be better spent on equipment and indirectly from those who donate to this worthy cause.

I am not a sailor, nor do I donate much money to this particular organisation on an annual basis, but I do think that they should not be charged a single penny for a licence to use their communications equipment. I would ask that you give serious consideration to this, giving due regard to the nature of this organisation, the service it performs and sacrifices made by its members, over many years for this nation.

In respect of pricing the spectrum used for aviation safety equipment, radars and radio navigation aids etc, I am concerned at the possible safety implications of this. As a consequence of being involved in a near miss in an airliner some years ago, I no longer fly. I can see aircraft operators (especially in the current economic climate) choosing not to fit or use essential aids to safety, rather than pay a tax for using them and I wonder what the CAA's view would be on this.

It is my view that any part of the radio spectrum that is used for saving lives or to do with safety where lives are at risk, should be free to those who use it. I am sure that to do otherwise, will eventually lead to loss of life, possible on a catastrophic scale.

Yours faithfully