

Resounding Silence examines the Federal Communications Commission’s Rulemaking procedure and how communities have historically responded to calls for comment and had their concerns overlooked or discarded. Highlighting specifically the Small Cell and Multi-tenant Environment proceedings provides clear examples of municipalities participating in the Commission’s processes.

Local government commenters often encourage the Commission to make choices that respect the nuanced challenges their communities face, but too often the subsequent decisions run contrary to local needs. The report also provides recommendations for changes the Commission can make that will promote outreach and collaboration with county and municipal governments, which could invite a much-needed local perspective into federal policy.

Ryan Johnston, Senior Policy Counsel, at Next Century Cities, offered the following remarks on the importance of the report:

“Previously, the FCC did not employ an adequate number of community-centric methods, leaving an indelible mark on how local governments interact with the Commission. The FCC has made strides to increase local outreach, particularly as it relates to promoting new affordability programs. But additional work is needed to repair years of decision making that has subverted local control and authority.

“The Commission now has resources and political will to make substantive changes that include municipalities at the policy making table and instead of notifying them after-the-fact.”

The full report is available here and a summary blog post is available here.

Ryan is responsible for NCC’s federal policy portfolio, building and maintaining relationships with Federal Commissions Commission officials, members of Congress.
and staff, and public interest allies. Working with various federal agencies, Ryan submits filings on behalf of NCC members on technology and telecommunications related issues that impact the digital divide such as broadband data mapping, benchmark speeds, spectrum policy, content moderation, privacy, and others. Additional information on Ryan, can be found here.