



September 13, 2026

SENT VIA EMAIL to: radioaccess@nypd.org, correspondence@council.nyc.gov
district6@council.nyc.gov, district15@council.nyc.gov

Subject: FPF comment on Local Law 46 and Int. No. 1025

Dear New York City leaders,

The following comments are in response to the NYPD's proposed policy implementing Local Law 46 of 2026 and the related issues addressed by Int. No. 1025.

Freedom of the Press Foundation is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit based in New York City.

We write in strong concurrence with the comment submitted in this matter by the National Press Photographers Association and the New York Media Consortium. They have thoroughly addressed significant concerns with proposed police radio encryption. We encourage City officials to match their level of thoughtfulness, especially when it comes to proposed delays in access.

Our organization has been involved in police radio encryption deliberations across the country, and New York City is not alone nor unique in its public safety communication needs. However, when it comes to radio encryption, New York City is considering some of the most extreme anti-transparency proposals in the nation. As a result, we emphasize four further concerns:

1. New York City should not limit listen-only access for radio transmission to professional journalists. Across the nation, so-called "scanner hounds" serve a valuable role monitoring, relaying, and explaining information from police radio feeds to their audiences on social media. The proposal's assumptions about professional journalists unnecessarily risk unequal treatment of independent and freelance press who may be critical to spreading public safety messages and help the public understand matters of civic interest, regardless of whether they are compensated for their important work. This includes both real time reporting as well as public records considerations (i.e., if only a limited number of professional journalists would even be aware to publish limited audio excerpts). Further, restrictions add administrative burdens which cost taxpayers.
2. Broadcasters (including digital livestreams) depend on real-time access to police radio to prevent terrible accidents. Stations have used real-time police radio to



make decisions like keeping a TV helicopter from approaching a scene where they might have accidentally surprised an individual threatening to commit suicide. Similarly, real time radio information factors into decisions necessary for stations to avoid airing gruesome deaths on live TV. In New York City, the information needed by these news outlets would likely be on other feeds besides Citywide 1.

3. While there is sometimes natural tension between police and press when it comes to information access, the opposite is frequently true with other types of first responders. For example, during wildfires and other natural disasters across the country, fire departments often praise the role of the media in raising public awareness of safety threats and helping facilitate (and increase compliance rates with) evacuations. Having just marked the 25th anniversary of 9/11, we cannot forget that many journalists ran to the scene and several lost their lives while attempting to keep the public informed. It's hard to fathom that the City might have implemented a 15 minute delay in access to life-or-death information which journalists work to share with evacuees about collapse risk, debris, dust, transit closures, and the condition of potential evacuation routes (open, closed, or even simply congested).
4. Encrypted radio signals not only add administrative burden and taxpayer cost, they are also known to limit the reach of transmission signals. As a result, some large agencies have indicated they never expect to switch to an encrypted system.

Sincerely,
Adam Rose
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Freedom of the Press Foundation


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