

President Barack Obama
White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

The Honorable Tom Wheeler, Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street SW
Washington, D.C. 20554

May 8, 2014

Dear President Obama and Chairman Wheeler:

We are writing to express our support for a truly free and open Internet. We strongly urge the Federal Communications Commission to reconsider and abandon efforts to adopt rules that would harm — rather than preserve — Net Neutrality.

The open Internet is a forum for free speech, innovation, civic engagement and the exercise of our basic rights. The Internet achieved this status because it was created on a platform governed by the principle of nondiscrimination.

In 2010, the FCC attempted to incorporate this principle into its open Internet rules. Those rules were thrown out earlier this year, leaving Internet users in limbo while the FCC decided its next move.

Now, instead of restoring this important principle of nondiscrimination, the Commission's proposal would make things even worse. It would reportedly propose rules that would enable phone and cable Internet service providers (ISPs) to discriminate both technically and financially against fledgling online companies, independent media outlets, nonprofit organizations and anyone else with a website. These policies would create troubling incentives for ISPs to create “artificial scarcity” to extract new sources of revenue. The result will be a two-tiered Internet: a fast lane for those willing or able to pay for it, and a dirt road for the rest of us.

This is discrimination pure and simple. It is the opposite of a free and open Internet.

President Obama, in 2007 you told the world, “I am a strong supporter of Net Neutrality,” rightfully asserting “that one of the best things about the Internet ... is that there is this incredible equality there.”

And Chairman Wheeler, last fall you wrote that “[o]ne of the signal achievements of this latest great information revolution — our network revolution — is how the results of its diffused control and increased autonomy produce ‘innovation without permission.’”

We wholeheartedly agree with both statements. Internet service providers should not be in the business of picking winners and losers online. But the proposal the FCC is currently considering gives ISPs the power to do exactly that, which is why it must be abandoned. Instead, the Commission must propose and adopt legally sound rules that keep the Internet an open and nondiscriminatory platform for speech and innovation.

Sincerely,

Access
American Civil Liberties Union
Appalshop, Inc.
Art Beyond Sight
Center for Environmental Health
Center for Media Justice
Centre College
Citizens for Sanity
ColorOfChange
Common Cause
Consumers Union
Council on American-Islamic Relations
CR Consulting
CREDO Mobile
Daily Kos
Defending Dissent Foundation
Demand Progress
Democracy for America
Diversified Media Enterprises
Electronic Frontier Foundation
Engine Advocacy
Entertainment Consumers Association
Evanston Community Television
FAIR
Fight for the Future
Free Press
Free Software Foundation
Future of Music Coalition
Glocal
Greenlining Institute
Greenpeace USA
Hackers & Founders
Harry Potter Alliance
Institute for Local Self-Reliance
Just Foreign Policy
LAMP (Learning About Multimedia Project)
Latino Print Network
LatinoRebels.com
Louder
Media Alliance
The Media Consortium
Media Equity Collaborative
Media Literacy Project
Media Matters for America
Media Mobilizing Project

MoveOn.org Political Action
Museums and the Web
The Nation
National Alliance for Media Arts + Culture
National Association of Black Journalists
National Association of Hispanic Journalists
National Association of Latino Independent Producers
National Hispanic Media Coalition
Netroots Foundation
New America Foundation's Open Technology Institute
New Moon Girls
NTEN
Occupy Network
OpenMedia.org
Pacific University
Park Center for Independent Media, Ithaca College
Participatory Politics Foundation
PEN American Center
The People's Press Project
Personal Democracy Media
PopularResistance.org
Presente.org
Progressive Change Campaign Committee
Prometheus Radio Project
reddit
Reel Grrls
RootsAction.org
Savvy System Designs, Inc.
SOA Watch San Francisco
St. Paul Neighborhood Network
The Stonewall Chorale
Student Net Alliance
SumOfUs
Tarakali Education
TheUpTake.org
ThoughtWorks
Tin House
Tully Center for Free Speech at Syracuse University
United Church of Christ Office of Communication, Inc.
Upwell
Women In Media & News
Women's Institute for Freedom of the Press
Women's Media Center
Writers Guild of America East
X-Lab