

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

January 23, 2017

President Donald J. Trump
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Trump:

A cornerstone of your campaign was your pledge to grow the economy, protect existing jobs, and create new jobs. I am writing to urge you to safeguard the foundational Net Neutrality principals that promote an open and free Internet and support the U.S. Internet economy.

According to a 2015 report, the Internet economy is worth \$966 billion and accounts for almost six percent of US GDP¹, a higher percentage of the U.S. economy than other industry sectors such as the construction, mining, utilities, agriculture, education, or entertainment sectors.²

Our economy is in the midst of a massive technological transformation. As technology disrupts industries, incredible opportunities and new jobs are created. The jobs of almost 3 million³ Americans rely on a robust Internet economy. Moreover, between 2007 and 2012, the development and use of applications for smartphones and tablets, created 466,000 high-tech jobs and generated more than \$20 billion in annual revenue.⁴

Recognizing that we cannot allow Internet service providers to implement practices that threaten the economic force of an open and free internet, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC or Commission) acted to protect the Internet economy in February 2015 by cementing strong Net Neutrality rules to safeguard consumers and promote innovation and the free flow of information. These rules were later upheld by the United States Court of Appeals.

Now, 18 months after the FCC's Open Internet rules have taken effect, the Internet Service Provider (ISP) industry's assertions that the FCC's decision would ultimately harm consumers by creating a massive flight of capital and disincentives for broadband network investment remain

¹ <http://www.usnews.com/news/blogs/data-mine/2015/12/11/the-internet-is-6-percent-of-the-us-economy-study-says>; <https://internetassociation.org/121015econreport/>

² <https://www.bcg.com/documents/file100409.pdf>

³ <https://internetassociation.org/121015econreport/>

⁴ <http://www.technet.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/TechNet-App-Economy-Jobs-Study.pdf>

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

unproven.⁵ In fact by some estimates, investment is up among ISPs.⁶ At the same time the Internet economy continues to flourish.

Newly appointed Chairman Pai, Commissioner O’Rielly,⁷ and the majority of the members of your FCC transition team⁸ have openly criticized the FCC’s Net Neutrality rules. Their opposition to the FCC’s pro-consumer open Internet rules suggests that the FCC will act to reverse these critical protections. Doing so will harm consumers, innovation and our economy.

I am disappointed that your choice to guide the Commission is not a supporter of the FCC’s strong rules to protect an open Internet, putting at risk our robust Net Neutrality rules and the three million Internet economy jobs it supports.

By repealing the current Net Neutrality rules, the Commission will create a two-tiered Internet, allowing Fortune 500 companies to pay for special Internet access. This will leave slow lanes for small businesses, and individuals, imperiling the access and innovation that drives the Internet economy. This is unacceptable. All consumers and all innovators deserve equal access to an open Internet.

Americans understand this. When the FCC first sought comments on its open Internet rules, four million Americans registered their views with the FCC—the highest number on any issue in FCC history. These comments delivered one message overwhelmingly—they asked the FCC to adopt the strongest Net Neutrality protections possible.

I look forward to working with your Administration to keep the Internet open, stand up for consumers, and promote innovation to grow our economy and create jobs.

Sincerely,



Senator Maria Cantwell

⁵ <http://arstechnica.com/business/2015/10/comcast-and-other-isps-boost-network-investment-despite-net-neutrality/>

⁶ *Id.*

⁷ <http://arstechnica.com/information-technology/2016/12/fccs-ajit-pai-says-net-neutralities-days-are-numbered-under-trump/>; <http://variety.com/2016/biz/news/fcc-net-neutrality-repeal-michael-orielly-1201942745/>

⁸ <http://fortune.com/2016/12/29/trump-fcc-morken-net-neutrality/>

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

cc:

Acting Chairman Ajit Pai
Commissioner Mignon Clyburn
Commissioner Michael O'Rielly
Jeffrey Eisenach
Mark Jamison
Roslyn Layton
David Morken
Carolyn Roddy
Patricia Paoletta