

October 21, 2009

The Honorable Julius Genachowski
Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Chairman Genachowski:

The undersigned public interest groups write to express our strong support for your recent announcement that the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) will begin a public proceeding that will ensure an open and nondiscriminatory Internet.

Since its creation, the Internet was intended to be a medium controlled by users, not by network access providers. As a result, it has become the most democratic medium this country, and the world, has ever known. The power that an open Internet vests in individuals has resulted in an unprecedented surge in creativity, innovation, and civic discourse. The open Internet has generated billions of dollars in investment, by network operators and Web-based companies, opening up new opportunities for consumers while creating thousands of jobs.

Since 2005, the future of an open Internet has been unclear. We wholeheartedly support your effort to bring certainty to network providers, applications and service providers and the public through rules that will ensure that the FCC can preserve an open and nondiscriminatory Internet.

Over the past two weeks, the largest telephone and cable companies have launched an intense lobbying campaign to oppose meaningful rules using dire yet vague predictions of doom if the FCC acts to preserve the Internet's traditional openness. This outcry over a proposal the public has yet to see is clearly intended to halt the dialogue over the proper rules of the road for an open Internet before it even starts.

We urge you to continue with the process you have set out. We are also encouraged by the Administration's statement this weekend about the importance of an open Internet. We believe this will best serve the public. So far, 1.6 million Americans have spoken – they do not want the Internet to become just another closed network where large media entities pick winners and losers, like broadcasting and cable. We are confident that even more Americans will rally to the cause in the months ahead.

You have dedicated your Chairmanship to guaranteeing that the public's needs are served first. As representatives of the public in the nation's capital and throughout the United States, we applaud the FCC for beginning a process that seeks to ensure that users will continue to reap the benefits of an open Internet.

Respectfully submitted,

Helen Soule
Executive Director
*Alliance for Community
Media*

Michael McLeod-Bell
Acting Director,
Washington Office
*American Civil Liberties
Union*

Lynne E. Bradley,
Director
Office of Government
Relations
*American Library
Association*

Prudence Adler
Associate Executive
Director
Federal Relations and
Information Policy
*Association of Research
Libraries*

Charles Benton
Chairman
Benton Foundation

Leslie Harris
President & CEO
*Center for Democracy and
Technology*

Jeff Chester
Founder and Executive
Director
*Center for Digital
Democracy*

Lawrence Lessig
Co-Founder
Change Congress

Bob Edgar
President & CEO
Common Cause

Mark Cooper
Research Director
*Consumer Federation of
America*

Ellen Bloom
Director, Washington
Office
Consumers Union

Marc Rotenberg
Executive Director
*Electronic Privacy
Information Center*

Ben Scott
Policy Director
Free Press

Michael Bracy
Policy Director
Future of Music Coalition

Lisa Fager-Bediako
President and Founder
Industry Ears

Brewster Kahle
Director and Co-Founder
Internet Archive

James Love
Director
*Knowledge Ecology
International*

Andrew Jay Schwartzman
President and CEO
Media Access Project

Beth McConnell
Executive Director
*Media and Democracy
Coalition*

Helen DeMichiel
Co-Founder
*National Alliance for
Media, Arts and Culture*

Jack Walsh
Co-Founder
*National Alliance for
Media, Arts and Culture*

Carol Pierson
President and CEO
*National Federation of
Community Broadcasters*

Terry O'Neill
President
*National Organization for
Women*

Michael Calabrese
Vice President and
Director of Wireless
Future Program
New America Foundation

Sascha Meinrath
Director
Open Technology
Initiative
New America Foundation

Gigi B. Sohn
President & Co-Founder
Public Knowledge

Douglas Newcomb
Chief Policy Officer
*Special Libraries
Association*

Matthew R. Rantanen
Director of Technology
Tribal Digital Village

Cheryl Leanza
Policy Director
*United Church of Christ,
Office of Communication,
Inc.*

Edmund Mierzwinski
Consumer Program
Director and Senior
Fellow
USPIRG

John Kosinski
Political Director
*Writers Guild of America,
West*