

Restoring Internet Freedom

On December 14, the Federal Communications Commission voted to restore the longstanding, bipartisan light-touch regulatory framework that has fostered rapid Internet growth, openness, and freedom for nearly 20 years.

Following detailed legal and economic analysis, as well as extensive examination of comments from consumers and stakeholders, the Commission reversed the FCC's 2015 heavy-handed utility-style regulation of broadband Internet access service, which imposed substantial costs on the entire Internet ecosystem.

In place of that heavy-handed framework, the FCC returned to the traditional light-touch framework that was in place until 2015. Moreover, the FCC also adopted robust transparency requirements that will empower consumers as well as facilitate effective government oversight of broadband providers' conduct. In particular, the FCC's action restored the jurisdiction of the Federal Trade Commission to act when broadband providers engage in anticompetitive, unfair, or deceptive acts or practices.

The framework adopted by the Commission will protect consumers at far less cost to investment than the prior rigid and wide-ranging utility rules. And restoring a favorable climate for network investment is key to closing the digital divide, spurring competition and innovation that benefits consumers.

"What is responsible for the phenomenal development of the Internet? It certainly wasn't heavy-handed government regulation. Quite to the contrary: At the dawn of the commercial Internet, President Clinton and a Republican Congress agreed that it would be the policy of the United States 'to preserve the vibrant and competitive free market that presently exists for the Internet . . . unfettered by Federal or State regulation.' This bipartisan policy worked."

Chairman Pai on the Restore Internet Freedom Order



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