

Alaska Telecom Association

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February 6, 2018

The Honorable Jonathan Kreiss-Tomkins
Chair, House State Affairs Committee
State Capitol, Gruenberg 120
Juneau, AK 99801

RE: HJR 31 Urging the United States Congress to overturn the Federal Communications Commission's order ending net neutrality.

Dear Chair Kreiss-Tomkins and Members of the Committee,

We are writing to express our commitment to the principles of net neutrality, provide more details regarding the issues surrounding net neutrality, and express our support for action by the United States Congress, which can impose rules of net neutrality on *all* participants in the internet landscape.

Consumer Protection

ATA member companies, which include Alaska's internet Service Providers (ISPs) and wireless companies, support an open internet. We have not and do not block websites, throttle or degrade traffic based on content, or unfairly discriminate in our transmission of internet traffic.

Strong protections remain in place to protect the core net neutrality principles. The Restoring Internet Freedom Order retains the requirement, first adopted in 2010, that providers clearly and publicly disclose their network management practices to consumers. The FCC retains authority to police compliance with its own rules by bringing enforcement actions and imposing significant penalties if a provider's blocking, throttling or other practices were inconsistent with the provider's disclosures. The repeal of the FCC's 2015 Order actually strengthens consumer protections by placing one watchdog, the Federal Trade Commission (FTC), over the entire internet. The FTC, the top agency in charge of protecting consumers from unlawful business practices, has a proven, two-decade track record of carrying out this responsibility. Further, antitrust laws protect competition in all sectors of the economy.

Benefits of Light-Touch Regulation

ATA member companies support light-touch regulation which encourages investment in broadband networks and does not burden small companies with excessive regulatory requirements.

Former Congressman Rick Boucher, (D) Virginia, recently wrote, "The FCC's order reinstated bipartisan policy started under President Clinton and continued until 2015, holding that the broadband internet is not a monopoly and should be regulated under Title I of the Communications Act as an information service, rather than being regulated under Title II with heavy-handed common carrier rules. For two decades prior to 2015, broadband investment soared under Title I light-touch regulation, making America's communications network the envy of the world. The FCC

has now sensibly returned the regulatory status of broadband to that of the golden era for investment.”¹

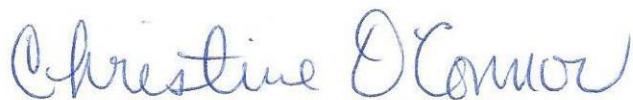
Congressional Action Needed

ATA members encourage Congress to take action to resolve lingering uncertainty over net neutrality. We respectfully ask the Alaska Legislature to defer to Congressional action which can impose rules for ALL participants in the Internet landscape.

The best place for the uncertainty over net neutrality to be resolved is in Congress. It alone has the power to adopt clear internet rules. Clear rules from Congress will give certainty to providers, critical for investment in broadband networks.

ATA members companies will continue our commitment to provide access to the internet according to the principles of net neutrality. We are engaged with Alaska’s Congressional Delegation on this issue and are working with our national trade associations to support Congressional action to adopt legislation to permanently ensure net neutrality.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Christine O'Connor". The signature is fluid and cursive, with "Christine" on the top line and "O'Connor" on the bottom line.

Christine O'Connor
Executive Director

¹ See “Congress Shouldn’t Repeat the FCC’s Title II Mistake,” published in Tech & Telecom in Bloomberg Law, January 30, 2018.