May 14, 2014

The Honorable Thomas Wheeler  
Chairman  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12th Street, SW  
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Chairman Wheeler,

As you develop a proposal to oversee access to the Internet, we urge you to adopt strong and enforceable open Internet rules that proactively protect Internet users from unfair practices, including the blockage of lawful traffic or discrimination among content providers by Internet Service Providers (ISPs). The rules must preserve the Internet as the open platform that it is today by recognizing our nation’s communications providers as common carriers. Without strong protections, the Internet could devolve into a closed platform in which those who pay the most can overwhelm other views and ideas.

We agree with your previous statements and those from President Obama that expressed similar concerns. ISPs will continue to explore ways to boost revenue by imposing discriminatory charges that will decrease the openness of the Internet. There is ample evidence that protecting the open Internet against such threats is critical for users and businesses alike. However, reports indicate that the current FCC proposal creates an Internet fast lane that would prioritize some Internet traffic and allow ISPs to discriminate against everyone else. The FCC cannot protect the open Internet by allowing discrimination.

We urge the FCC to use its clear authority under Title II of the Communications Act to reclassify the transmission component of broadband Internet access as a telecommunications service. Recognizing our nation’s communications providers as common carriers under the law is common sense. Reclassification would also complement the Commission’s efforts to promote innovation, competition and investment in universally available, reliable and affordable broadband infrastructure.

Over one million people have already gone on the record in support of reclassification. We urge the FCC to consider this support for strong, enforceable open Internet rules as it moves forward with the rulemaking process.

Sincerely,
Keith Ellison  
Member of Congress

Earl Blumenauer  
Member of Congress

André D. Carson  
Member of Congress

Donna F. Edwards  
Member of Congress

Alan Grayson  
Member of Congress

Mike Honda  
Member of Congress

Marcy Kaptur  
Member of Congress

John Lewis  
Member of Congress

Raul M. Grijalva  
Member of Congress

Michael E. Capuano  
Member of Congress

John Conyers, Jr.  
Member of Congress

Peter DeFazio  
Member of Congress

Sam Farr  
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Rush Holt  
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Jared Huffman  
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Alan Lowenthal  
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Jim McDermott  
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Jerrold Nadler  
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Beto O'Rourke  
Member of Congress

Charles B. Rangel  
Member of Congress

John Sarbanes  
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Bobby Scott  
Member of Congress

Carol Shea-Porter  
Member of Congress

John F. Tierney  
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Betty McCollum  
Member of Congress

Jim McGovern  
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Eleanor Holmes Norton  
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Mark Pocan  
Member of Congress

Tim Ryan  
Member of Congress

Jan Schakowsky  
Member of Congress

José E. Serrano  
Member of Congress

Mark Takano  
Member of Congress

Pete Visclosky  
Member of Congress
CC: Mignon Clyburn, Commissioner, Federal Communications Commission
Jessica Rosenworcel, Commissioner, Federal Communications Commission
Ajit Pai, Commissioner, Federal Communications Commission
Michael O'Reilly, Commissioner, Federal Communications Commission