

Coalition of Broadband Users and Innovators

PRESS RELEASE

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Broadband Group Urges FCC to Ensure Consumer Freedom on the Internet

Consumer groups along with leading Internet and high-tech broadband companies and trade associations joined forces today to urge the Federal Communications Commission to protect broadband users' ability to communicate across the Internet without interference from the companies that own broadband communications networks. The group, called the Coalition of Broadband Users and Innovators, said in a letter to the FCC that "the Government must ensure that transmission network operators do not encumber relationships between their customers and destinations on the network."

The Coalition is concerned that broadband network operators will implement restrictions designed to block or impair access to innovative content, services, and devices on the broadband network. The Coalition's letter comes as the FCC is reviewing the regulatory rules applicable to high-speed Internet access offered over cable and telephone lines in its *Wireline Broadband* and *Cable Broadband* proceedings. Chairman Powell has indicated that a decision is likely in the coming months.

The Coalition includes many of the world's largest information developers, technology companies, their representative trade associations and consumer advocacy groups. Internet innovations have created millions of jobs and contributed billions to the national economy. These benefits would not have been possible without the open architecture of the Internet, the Coalition said. The Coalition explained that the coming age of broadband is poised to offer additional economic growth, but network operators can defeat these benefits if they do not respect the Internet's principles of network neutrality and nondiscrimination.

The ability of consumers to connect to the Internet today via dial-up and go anywhere stems in part from the FCC's decision more than twenty years ago to permit computer equipment, such as modems, to be connected to the telephone network and to prevent discrimination. The Coalition wants the FCC to ensure that these same principles are brought forward into the broadband age.

In addition to sending the letter to the Commissioners, the Coalition submitted the letter as an *ex parte* presentation in the FCC proceedings in which the Commission is considering the regulatory framework applicable to broadband offered over the telephone and cable networks. The members of the Coalition of Broadband Users and Innovators are consumer groups the Alliance for Community Media and Media Access Project; companies Amazon.com, Apple Computer, eBay, Microsoft, RadioShack Corporation, The Walt Disney Company, and Yahoo!; and trade associations AeA, Association for Competitive Technology, Association for Independent Video and Filmmakers, Association for Local Telecommunications Services, Competitive Telecommunications Association, CompTIA, Consumer Electronics Association, Information Technology Association of America, and National Association of Manufacturers.

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