



December 11, 2017

The Honorable Ajit Pai
Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th St SW
Washington, D.C. 20536

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NEW YORK, NY 10016

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AUTHORSGUILD.ORG

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Treasurer: Peter Petre
Secretary: Daniel Okrent

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Advisory Council: Sherman Alexie, Judy Blume, Louise Erdrich, CJ Lyons, Frederic Martini, Cathleen Schine

Executive Director: Mary Rasenberger
Chief Operating Officer: Sandy Long

Dear Chairman Pai:

Net neutrality—the principle that all data on the internet should be treated equally, and that internet service providers (ISPs) should not be able to discriminate or provide preferential treatment to any content—has made the internet the engine of opportunity it is today. The Authors Guild and the undersigned authors—representing a broad spectrum of writers across all genres and fields—strongly object to your proposal to roll back the regulations that protect net neutrality.

The Authors Guild has served as the collective voice of American authors since its beginnings in 1912. Its over 9,000 members include novelists, historians, journalists, and poets—traditionally and independently published—as well as literary agents and representatives of writers’ estates.

The regulation of broadband providers and principles of net neutrality adopted in 2015 ensure a free and open internet and protect the diversity and free flow of expression online. As authors, we rely on the internet to make our voices heard and believe that all traffic on the internet should be treated equally.

The decision of an ISP to bar or condition access to a website upon payment of fees can cripple those in the business of creating content. Your proposal would give large companies the ability to control what individuals see and do on the internet, without effective oversight for the benefit of the consumers. It even repeals the prohibition against blocking lawful content, a necessity for the free internet; its removal opens the floodgates to potential abuse. As your fellow commissioner Mignon Clyburn stated in her blog post on the FCC’s own website, “the record contains many real-world examples when broadband providers blocked lawful applications, such as when several wireless providers blocked Google Wallet in favor of these providers’ own affiliated app. Net neutrality principles were established at the FCC as far back as 2004 to prevent exactly this type of bad behavior.” <https://www.fcc.gov/news-events/blog/2017/11/29/fcc-should-not-give-broadband-providers-keys-your-internet-freedom>



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Net neutrality has not stifled, but rather promoted innovation by protecting new content while it is still in its infancy. As Tim Wu wrote in his recent *New York Times* Op-Ed, “Services like Skype and Netflix would have met an early death without basic net neutrality protections.”

<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/11/22/opinion/courts-net-neutrality-fcc.html>

The issue of open access to the internet affects millions, if not all Americans. That is why we believe that the proposal should be repealed, and net neutrality should continue to be protected by the FCC. Repealing net neutrality will harm the free speech of American writers, among others. We urge you not to proceed with this dangerous proposal.

Sincerely,

James Gleick
President
The Authors Guild

Mary Rasenberger
Executive Director
The Authors Guild

cc: The Honorable Mignon Clyburn
The Honorable Michael O’Rielly
The Honorable Brendan Carr
The Honorable Jessica Rosenworcel