FCC

Online Comment Regarding Net Neutrality

July 15, 2017

RE: FCC Needs to Support Net Neutrality

Purchasing internet access (whether broadband or otherwise), definitely involves purchasing telecommunications not just access to “information”. It is next to impossible to communicate with

local, state, and federal government agencies these days without recourse to email and online contact

forms. Also, getting basic information on deadlines, what forms need to be filed, how to complete forms, etc requires access to the internet. For many rural residents, lack of reliable cell service means VOIP is a vital internet communications service. Therefore it is nonsense for the FCC to try and classify the internet as a non-communications service.

Mr. Pai’s argument that consumers don’t select IP addresses directly is not clear to me.

When I send forms to the IRS (or FCC for that matter), I am directing the form to a specific addressee.

The free-market argument that unsatisfied consumers can just select another provider does not apply to people who have no alternative providers.

I am not arguing that elimination of net neutrality and poor internet access should be opposed just out of “fairness”. Access to communication and information is vital to the economic well-being of the United States. People will be less “productive members of society” if they are hindered in their access to communication, information, education, etc. Currently, the United States is well down the list of countries in terms of national internet access capabilities; both

regarding bandwidth and percentages of the population with broadband access.

Up until recently, I was living “off the grid” in Alaska (for about 30 years). Cell phone service was unreliable and did not provide any internet access. VSAT (first Starband and later Hughesnet) was my

only access to the internet, email, and VOIP. VOIP was very poor due to low bandwidth. Downloads were capped at about 120 kbps, but usually closer to 20-30 kbps. Uploads slower still.

Although, both Starband and Hughesnet were available through the federal “broadband” program, I purchased my systems privately. I was paying full local, state, and federal taxes while having little access to communications (or other) services. Poor communication made it very difficult to deal with the various government agencies such as the IRS, Social Security, Healthcare, etc. Poor access to information made it hard to educate myself on changes in technology, making me less productive ( and therefore paying less taxes).

After leaving Alaska, I tried to upgrade my computer skills on the US West Coast, using hotel Wi-Fi.

Hotel Wi-Fi is not very secure, and generally not very fast or reliable. Currently, I am relying on cell service. AT&T, T-mobile, Sprint, and Google Project Fi have not worked well for me.

Overseas, I have found China, Japan, and Russia to provide better Wi-Fi and cell service than the U.S.

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