July 17, 2017

Federal Communications Commission

445 12th St. SW

Washington, DC 20554

Honorable Commissioners:

As an owner of a small business, I feel it is essential that existing Net Neutrality regulations remain in place.

Our small (5 employees) communications firm was founded over 35 years ago, when final delivery of our products was 100% physical; today, as technology has evolved over the years, we rely exclusively upon our Internet connection to ship our products to our business customers. Some days, terabytes of data may move into and out of our facility; and invariably, there’s a recipient waiting impatiently for our large file to arrive, whether in another small business, a Fortune 500 corporation, or even the US Government (we service US Attorneys in both the Southern and Eastern Districts of New York, among others).

Our ability to retain unfettered access to the high speed services we need, both inbound and outbound, is essential to the competitiveness of our business.

In our view, Internet connectivity is a service no different in nature than our connection to the public water and sewer systems, not a luxury, as some have flippantly suggested, that we can forego “if we don’t like” the conditions attached by major ISP’s. As in our personal lives, Internet connectivity is now at the core of everything we do.

It is disingenuous to suggest that a “free market” approach, including deregulation, is the optimum method for guaranteeing fair and equal Internet access for all users. As a small business, we’re quite accustomed to having our interests and needs forcibly subjugated to those of larger corporations, often as large sums of money change hands; and we see the proposed Net Neutrality deregulation as an extension of these attitudes and practices. Analysts often tell us that small business is the single largest single segment of the US economy; and it seems inconceivable that a Federal regulatory body would not seek to protect that most significant segment from predatory practices.

Proponents of deregulation are quite fond, usually on behalf of large ISP’s, of claiming that a “free market” will cure all ills. It is ironic, therefore, to note that in one of the most business-aggressive markets in the world, the Northern New Jersey – New York City region, our building is passed by only two Internet service providers… and both are also entertainment providers who have clear interests in promoting their baseband services and discouraging competitors’ ability to deliver via high-speed data. There is no real competition in our region – no way for a third or fourth or fifth entity to offer data alone, and be free from this entertainment-peddling conflict. And in most people’s understanding, a “free market” does not exist in the absence of bona-fide competition.

I urge you to preserve current Net Neutrality regulations, and, indeed, to seek to extend protections which would guarantee businesses like mine (and, at home, individuals like me) that our essential connection to the public Internet is not compromised by the actions of anticompetitive special interests.

Sincerely,

Walter Schoenknecht

Midnight Media Group, Inc.

45 East Willow Street

Millburn, NJ 07041