

**Before the
Federal Communications Commission**

In the Matter of

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Restoring Internet Freedom

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WC Docket No. 17-108

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**Joint comments: Music for a Healthy Internet
July 17, 2017**

Prepared by:
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As musicians, composers, producers, and independent labels representing diverse backgrounds, traditions, genres, and communities, we urge the Federal Communications Commission to protect the open internet as a vehicle for free expression and collaboration.

We've built careers and big parts of our lives around our passion for music -- creating it and connecting with listeners. Today, the internet is one of the primary places this work happens. We rely on it for everything from booking tours to selling merchandise, to collaborating with musicians on the other side of the globe. The fundamental principle of openness online has enabled artists to connect directly with each other and with audiences, empowering us to distribute our work and reach fans in a multiplicity of ways. At its best, the open internet has allowed for a flourishing of diverse voices, allowing to compete alongside the biggest companies, creating connections across geographic barriers, offering choice, flexibility, and creative autonomy.

To truly make good on the remarkable democratic potential of the internet, the fundamental infrastructure underpinning it all must be neutral and nondiscriminatory. Unfortunately, the FCC's current proposal would amount to a sharp turn in the opposite direction. It would allow big cable and wireless companies to create new pay-to-play fast lanes, disadvantaging those who cannot pay for preferential treatment, and replicating the industry's past problems with payola. Allowing broadband providers to control this once-open platform shifts leverage away from individual artists, creators, and small businesses, and interferes with freedom of speech and expression.

The implications for free expression also extend to digital service providers. Without strong net neutrality protections, digital retailers will have to compete to better meet the needs of the ISPs that can block, throttle, or slow down access to their offerings. These services should instead be competing to better serve the needs of diverse musicians and listeners. Artists and labels' choices about how and where to bring their work to the market could likewise be constrained by what the ISPs prefer, rather than what works best for their individual business and creative goals.

Of course, network neutrality alone is not sufficient to ensure a healthy internet, where free expression thrives, creative labor is fairly compensated, consumer privacy is respected, and diverse voices can reach audiences. But it is a necessary foundation for fair competition.

We urge the FCC to sustain the existing, strong net neutrality rules, based on Title II of the Communications Act. The FCC should maintain bright line rules against blocking, throttling, and paid prioritization on both fixed and mobile connections, as well as maintaining ongoing oversight of other types of discrimination.

Respectfully submitted,

Musicians, Composers, & Producers

Aabaraki

Alec Ounsworth (Clap Your Hands Say Yeah)

Allan Wilson (!!!, Secret Drum Band)

Amy Klein

Antibalas

Beauty Pill

Brent Knopf (Ramona Falls, Menomena, Eyelids)

Brian Henneman, Bottle Rockets

Craig Finn (The Hold Steady)

Cumulus

Dave Narcizo (Throwing Muses)

David Bazan

Devin Gallagher (Typhoon, Ghosties)

Downtown Boys

Dude York

Ear Trumpet Labs

Erin McKeown

Franz Nicolay

Gabriel Teodros

Rebecca Gates

Greg Saunier (Deerhoof)

GRYPT

Harry & The Potters

Ian MacKaye

Iji

Jace Clayton

Jeff Mangum & Astra Taylor, Neutral Milk Hotel

Jeff Rosenstock

Jeff Tweedy & Spencer Tweedy

Jon Spencer

Jonny X and the Groadies

Kimya Dawson

Kristin Hersh

Kronos Quartet
Kyle Morton (Typhoon)
Lee Baines III & The Glory Fires
Lisa Schonberg (Secret Drum Band, Explode Into Colors)
Maggie May Morris (Genders, Sunbathe)
Matthew Caws (Nada Surf)
Merchandise
Merrill Garbus (tUnE-yArDs)
Mirah
Mike Wroblewski (Genders, Paper Brain)
My Morning Jacket
Pieter Hilton (Typhoon, Deathlist, Sunbathe, Genders, Secret Drum Band)
Priests
Radiator Hospital
R.E.M.
Scarves
Spoonboy
Superchunk
Tanya Donnelly (Belly)
Thao & The Get Down Stay Down
The Blow
Tobi Vail
Will Johnson
Will Sheff (Okkervil River)
Zoë Keating

Record Labels

American Association of Independent Music
Atlantic Rhythms
Bad Friend Records
Bloodshot Records
Cuneiform Records
Dischord
Don Giovanni Records
DZ Tapes
JMC Aggregate
Kill Rock Stars
Merge Records
Partisan Records
Regalia Records
Secretly Group
Sister Polygon Records
Slumberland Records
Tape Modulator
Thirsty Ear Recordings
Top Shelf Records