

Chairman Tom Wheeler
Federal Communications Commission
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Re: Business Data Services in an Internet Protocol Environment, WC Docket No. 16-143; Special Access Rates for Price Cap Local Exchange Carriers, WC Docket No. 05-25

Chairman Wheeler:

With the FCC taking a look at competition in the broadband market, I'm glad to see you are also examining the business data services market. While business data services may not be something that receives much attention from the general public, it is important to business owners in Alabama and around the nation. We definitely need more competition in this market, and I urge the FCC to rewrite the rules governing business data services to accomplish this goal.

Innovation Depot is a 501c3 not-for-profit high-tech business incubator with over 100 early-stage companies currently residing in our facility. These companies, as well as Innovation Depot itself, rely on business data services to compete successfully in the modern marketplace. These services carry information that is vital to the day-to-day operation of Innovation Depot, our member companies, and other businesses, nonprofits, and universities in Alabama.

Unfortunately, the lack of competition to provide these services means that I and other users are paying billions of dollars a year more than we should be paying. This takes money from my pocket that could be going to pay for other services, to hire more employees, or to reduce prices for my customers. It is also diverting money away from upgrading digital services. In short, this overpayment is a drag on our economy.

This situation only persists because the business data services market is operating under outdated rules. The two companies that control a majority of the market are simply following the regulatory structure that is laid out by the FCC. To address this issue, I urge you to investigate the situation and change the rules. Businesses like mine should not be forced to continue to operate under the uncompetitive market we face today.

Mr. Chairman, you have long recognized the problems caused by one or two firms controlling a market. Please take action to remedy this unfair situation in the business data services market.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

T. Devon Laney
President & CEO