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Via ECFS  
Marlene H. Dortch, Secretary  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12th Street, S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20554

**Re: In the Matter of Petition of USTelecom for Forbearance Pursuant to  
47 U.S.C. Section 160(c); WC Docket No. 18-141; Category 1**

Dear FCC,

I am writing to comment on why the 'last mile' copper wire connections must be maintained as an open path for competitive telecom networks.

While the huge telecom firms argue that there are many pathways to internet and other communication networks, the plain fact is that most markets have only one major telephone provider and only one cable provider (and the latter tend to be subject to high fees and restrictions on capacity or speed). As such, for smaller companies to provide adequate competition or even to introduce other services, they must be guaranteed access to the critical unbundled network elements - but now the huge players are trying to shut out smaller companies. That is not the way competition is supposed to work!

For a number of years I have been using an ISP based locally that has provided me with excellent service and responsive customer service. But, even as they build out their own fiber optic cable network (something that AT&T is NOT doing here, despite their vastly greater resources and customer base), they are dependent upon the unbundled elements owned and controlled by AT&T for that last mile (or last block) connection to individual homes and businesses.

Without such access this company cannot survive - which is clearly why AT&T and the other major providers are so adamant about limiting access. They want to stifle competition. Your mandate is to foster such competition!

The FCC must follow their mandate and ensure access to all players to the existing 'last-mile' copper wire and fiber connections into homes and businesses. This is the critical infrastructure that allows smaller and more nimble companies to build faster networks or provide innovative services. The huge telecom and cable companies always argue that they will provide these new services, but they never deliver! They act instead to stifle competition and enrich their executives and shareholders. You must not enable such anticompetitive behavior!

I urge the FCC to maintain the open unbundled elements - the infrastructure necessary for competitive broadband deployment - and ensure access to all companies to these connections to

homes and businesses. That is the only way to ensure open competition and additional rollout of needed services and innovations.

Thank you for looking out for the interests of all Americans.

Richard Bradus