Dear Sir/Madam:

I support strong net neutrality backed by Title II oversight of ISPs. Protecting net neutrality is protecting small businesses. I urge the FCC to take action to protect high net neutrality standards and discontinue plan to roll back net neutrality protections.

Strong net neutrality protection is essential for ensuring no additional undue influences over online user behavior. Strong net neutrality is incredibly important for individual internet users, but it has a particularly profound impact on America’s small businesses. According to the SBA, Small businesses make up 99.7 percent of U.S. employer firms and 64 percent of net new private-sector jobs. Small businesses are integral to improving our economy, creating job growth, and increasing the availability of goods and services. Weaker net neutrality standards damages the competitiveness of small businesses, deters new entrepreneurs from starting their own businesses, and makes it more difficult for consumers to find and patronize small businesses online.

Weakening net neutrality standards in favor of a handful of internet service providers and large companies is both misguided and short-sighted; it is a sure way to weaken the online presence and thus the profits of America’s 28 million small businesses. The internet has played an incredibly important role in fueling the growth of our small businesses in the past decade, and having an online-presence is increasingly becoming essential for any new business. However, weak net neutrality standards threatens to hinder the growth of small businesses online by providing preferential download to much larger and affluent competitors. Americans already have short attention spans – it is a well-repeated statistic in the start-up community that 40% of users will leave if a website takes longer than three seconds to load. Just three seconds. Without strong net neutrality protections, it would not require much tinkering on the part of ISPs to make the websites of small businesses effectively non-competitive.

I personally am directly impacted by the continued success of small businesses. I am currently employed by a start-up, and I come from an entire family of small business owners. I have seen first-hand the difficulties small businesses face in reaching out to new customers. Here, the internet has played an invaluable role in providing a space for small businesses to launch their brand to the huge global community that is the internet. I too soon would like to continue the family tradition of launching my own company. But it is an extremely competitive environment, and even just subtly minimizing the ability of potential customers to find new brands can be devastating for start-ups. Even just the threat of weakened net neutrality standards scare potential entrepreneurs like me from taking the risk.

As a consumer, I have also been on the other side of the equation where I am trying to find suppliers of goods and services. Conducting proper research and comparing products before making a purchase is time-consuming enough without some internet provider trying to lead me to one big brand and making it more difficult to reach the webpage of a competitor. Equal access to information is essential in a functioning capitalist economy, and yet the time it takes to gain access to that information is also of great importance. After all, time is money. Weakening net neutrality standards risks companies deliberately making it easier to access certain websites before others, effectively controlling the flow of information.

I support strong net neutrality backed by Title II oversight of ISPs for the millions of small businesses which would be unduly effected by weaker net neutrality standards. Strong net neutrality standards protect small businesses, entrepreneurs, and consumers in addition to all the economic, social, and societal good these groups bring. I urge the FCC to take action to protect high net neutrality standards and discontinue plan to roll back net neutrality protections.

Sincerely,

Alta Alonzi