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December 13, 2017

RE: Restoring Internet Freedom (WC Docket No. 17-108)—NOBODY OWNS THE INTERNET

To All Concerned:

When I began my career in technology (in 1990, at IBM), the Internet consisted of a very few non-graphical protocols like Gopher and FTP. Then Tim Berners-Lee developed HTTP at CERN in Switzerland, and then came the primogenitor browser Mosaic in 1993. It wasn’t until then that the National Science Foundation began the process of extricating itself from the business of “riding herd” on the Internet, and opened it up to commercial expansion—and the dot-coms began to be born.

The word that used to be used at that time—I mean, you heard it everywhere--to describe the growth of this phenomenon was “exponential.” And it most surely has been precisely that.

But the Internet was never anything that, even from early days, corporations owned. The Internet is a vast, vast maze of patch rooms and servers and fiber optic cables and routers and gateways scattered all over the entire planet Earth.

And no one—no single one entity—owns all of that.

Nor does anyone—any entity or group of entities—have the right to claim all of that as their own: either to regulate it in any way, or to charge varying rates for access to it.

Scientists and engineers and an army of companies big and small have built this thing over the past 30 years. The FCC has no legitimate right—**absolutely no right whatsoever**—to make any ruling over it as though the FCC itself had ownership of that vast maze of patch rooms and servers and fiber optic cables, etc.

Shame on you, Mr. Pai. You don’t own it either.

--Georgia Cotrell