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Dear Sir,

FCC MAIL ROOM

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Please allow me to express my displeasure with the FCC proposal which would authorize a surcharge for the use of modems on the telephone network. This regulation is nothing less than an attempt to restrict the free exchange of information among the growing number of computer users. Calls placed using modems require no special telephone company equipment, and users of modems pay the phone company for use of the network in the form of a monthly bill. These charges are the same as the charges for any other telephone communication, as they use the same equipment and methods as an ordinary voice call.

In short, a modem call is the same as a voice call and therefore should not be subject to any additional regulation.

Some may say that the surcharge is to fund a conversion to digital telephone lines for modem use. This does not make any sense. If all telephone lines are converted to digital format, it would also require a massive conversion of all the voice telephone equipment in use today. That would add a huge cost to every person who uses the telephone system for any purpose.

Digital telephone lines are already available, although at a higher cost. This makes sense, because it is a premium service, which is naturally offered at a premium price. The higher expense of digital phone lines should fund expansion of this service, and eventually a lower cost, without affecting the mainstream telephone user, no matter what their purpose for use.

I personally happen to be planning a business which will offer Internet access at the lowest rate possible to people in my area. I am only fifteen, and thus do not have a regular job. I feel that if the rate for modem communication on standard telephone lines was raised (if a surcharge was imposed), I would have many extreme difficulties. I am planning to have a low fee from the beginning, and as I get my equipment paid for, based on usage, I will likely reduce my rates even further. Any surcharges imposed on modem communication would surely crush this kind of business quickly, likely leaving a loss with the owner. I would not be able to afford that, having no regular income now.

I am basically trying to pass this one message to you: Please refuse the surcharge(s) that are planned for computer modem users. Many people like myself would no longer be able to run a business like this. Would that not affect the free enterprise concept in our country? It certainly would. Please refuse the surcharges that are being planned.

Sincerely,

Greg Hill

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