February 19, 2015

Dear Chairman Wheeler:

We write to you at a crucial moment for net neutrality, as we probably don't have to remind you. We understand that your position can be thankless and that it is difficult to take a stand for what is right when there is so much pressure from powerful interests and their political allies. As musicians and composers, we want to thank you for moving forward with strong net neutrality rules. As so many creators have already noted, reclassification under Title II is the best way to ensure that the Internet remains open for us to build businesses, reach audiences and earn a living in what is a challenging marketplace for creative content.

You certainly have our appreciation. And we urge you to remain steadfast in your efforts to keep the Internet a viable platform for creative entrepreneurs. Without clear and enforceable rules that let us compete alongside the biggest companies, our ability to create and innovate will be threatened, if not extinguished.

Please don't be fooled by those trying to turn this issue into a partisan grudge match. Not only do recent polls show that some 80 percent of conservatives back your plan, the music community—which includes folks of all political dispositions—is equally supportive. The reason is simple: creators of all genres and backgrounds will benefit from the protections your proposal would enshrine. Net neutrality is not only a powerful engine of creative expression and civic discourse, it is the very oxygen of a free and competitive marketplace built on technological and cultural innovation. And artists are drivers of both.

The music community has endured tremendous consolidation in the media marketplace that has limited opportunities for many creators to reach audiences and earn a living. We are sure that you probably don't need to be reminded, but we'll mention it anyway: there is a public interest imperative in preserving an open Internet and the creative sector is a huge part of this interest. It is our creativity that enriches culture and inspires the world in countless ways. The Internet is one of the greatest amplifiers of our contributions to society, and society benefits from access to a diverse array of lawful online content. While we await details of the specific provisions in your proposal, we are confident that you have chosen the proper framework with which to proceed.

We know that you will face political opposition and coordinated attacks from well-funded corporations. But isn't it cooler to have us on your side than some giant ISP? We think so. And we'll step up to defend your plan because we know it's the right call, and we know you understand the importance of making it.
So we thank you, Chairman Wheeler. For listening to our perspectives and making some tough but crucial decisions. Now let's get this thing over the finish line so that today and tomorrow's artists can continue to enrich our culture and achieve excellence on our own terms.

Alastair Brown, Northcape
Alec Ounsworth, Clap Your Hands Say Yeah
Amanda Palmer
Anni Rossi
Benji Rogers, Pledge Music
Bill Berry, Peter Buck, Mike Mills, Michael Stipe of R.E.M.
The Blow
Bottle Rockets
Brett Lyman, co-owner of M'lady's Records, Machu Picchu Records, Hive Dwellers
Britt Daniel, Spoon
Califone
Cheston Knapp, writer/editor
Chris Funk, Nate Query, Jenny Conlee: The Decemberists
Christina Perri
Curt Sydnor
Dar Williams
David Bazan
Death Cab for Cutie
Devotchka
Dick Huey, Founder/CEO, Toolshed
Downtown Boys
Erin Mckeown
Flobots
Franz Nicolay
Harry & The Potters
Jasiri X
Jeff Parker, (guitarist/composer/jazz musician/member of Tortoise)
Jeff & Spencer Tweedy
Jill Sobule
Joan of Arc
Joe Perry, Aerosmith
Billie Perry
Joe Plummer (Modest Mouse, The Shins)
John Askew, Producer/Engineer
Jon Solomon, WPRB / Comedy Minus One Records
Kathleen Hanna
Kathi Wilcox, The Julie Ruin, The Casual Dots
Ken Stringfellow & Jon Auer, The Posies
Ken Umezaki, Fifth of Bourbon
Kimya Dawson
Kiran Gandhi, Drummer, M.I.A.
Kronos Quartet / Kronos Performing Arts Association
Kurt Wagner, Lambchop

Laura Ballance, bass player/ songwriter for Superchunk, label owner, Merge Records
Laura Veirs
Lee Ranaldo, Sonic Youth
Martin Perna, Antibalas
Merrill Garbus, tUnE-yArDs
Michael Wells, Dir. of Ops & Digital Light @ In The Attic Records,
Michael Slaboch, Producer / Sound Engineer
Mirah
Nato Green
The New Pornographers
OK Go
Priests
Radiator Hospital
Rebecca Gates
Rocky Votolato
RVIVR
Sean Meadows, Everlasting the Way
Sohrab Habibion, Obits
Spoonboy
Speedy Ortiz
Thao & The Get Down Stay Down
Tift Merritt
Tim Kinsella
Tony Perez, Editor, Tin House Books
Tucker Martine, Producer/Engineer
Wayne Kramer (MC5; Jail Guitar Doors)
Will Johnson
Vijay Iyer