

My name is Gerald McCarhty and I am writing to you regarding your reconsideration of the rules that require telephone companies to provide ISPs access to the public switched phone network. Removal of these requirements would be a grave mistake.

I and millions others like me depend on my local Internet Service Provider to give me access to Internet services and options not available from the large telephone carriers. If you choose to remove my ISP's access to the public phone network, it will no longer be able to provide me and others the level of service we have come to enjoy and expect for Internet access. Such action will simply force independent ISPs out of business and will do nothing but LIMIT consumer choice not expand it.

Furthermore, by removing fair interconnection requirments and reducing our choice, you will likely also allow consumer rates to rise. By having a current choice among several providers, I am not only allowed to find the best services to suit my needs, but also for best price. Reducing the number of ISPs in the marketplace will certainly have the obvious result of reduced competition and increased prices for consumers in the long run.

When I hear that companies such as the Bell family expect to charge as much as \$150 per month for internet access, I mist wonder where their loyalties lie. Evidently not with the consumer. If they need to charge such exhorbitant rates to ensure a profit to their stockholders, then why not leave this area of the business to those who are capable of running an ISP business at a more modest rate.

Furthermore, where would the average middle class family come up with \$1,800 per year for Internet access on top of all the other expenses that are incurred in simply living a day to day existence (ie) mortgage, education, insurance etc., not to mention the already ever increasing costs paid to these companies for every day telecommunication.

I sincerely hope that you think very carefully what you are considering. Consumers all across America are depending on you to make the right decision. The right decision is to maintain and grow the level of competition in the Internet marketplace. That goal is best met by protecting and nurturing competitive market conditions for the thousands of independent ISPs - not by handing even more market power to the monopolies who control our phone network.

Commissioners, I implore you to continue to protect the ISPs' access to the public telephone networks, thereby protecting the rights of millions of consumers like me.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Gerald McCarthy