

## Rural access to information

History repeats itself, even for such new concerns as Internet access. As a retired rural resident living on Social Security thirty miles away from the nearest small city I do not have much opportunity to keep in touch with the world at large. Deregulation of the broadcast media has drastically reduced the types of programs and information available over the airways. Fortunately our small rural telephone company has connected us to the Internet. I spend many hours each day online, communicating and researching. Without free access to all sources I would lose the opportunities I now have to keep contributing to our global culture.

It took strong government action to bring electricity to our home. Big businesses were not interested in providing service to rural customers like us. As members of a Rural Electric Cooperative we made sure all of us had access to electric power. Who will make sure that our rural telephone provider and our local independent ISP will not find themselves powerless as national corporations control more and more of the Internet? That is, in my opinion, why the FCC was created. I do not believe the FCC is proceeding in a correct and proper direction under pressures from national corporate interests and lobbyists.

Net Neutrality is essential to free speech, equal opportunity and economic innovation in America. Since the FCC removed this basic protection in 2005, the top executives of phone and cable companies have stated their intention to become the Internet's gatekeepers and to discriminate against Web sites that don't pay their added tolls.

This fundamental change would end the open Internet as we know it. It would damage my ability to connect with others, share information and participate in our 21st century democracy and economy. The FCC must ensure that broadband providers do not block, interfere with or discriminate against any lawful Internet traffic based on its ownership, source or destination.

My dialup connection is a priceless resource. I doubt that I will ever be able to afford a broadband connection under the current rate structure. My understanding is that people like me in other countries of the world enjoy affordable broadband connections. Only with the oversight of the FCC will this ever become possible here in rural northeastern Pennsylvania.

I trust you will maintain the Net Neutrality that allowed this new communications channel to flourish so quickly. Protect our interests, just as federal agencies protected our access to the electric service that commercial interests would not provide