

Increasing the speed and availability of broadband in our country is an important goal, especially considering that the United States has fallen far behind many other developed nations in this respect, even though the internet originated here. For this to happen, however, internet access must be affordable to the greatest number of consumers. It appears that the rules currently being voted on would do the opposite, and increase the profits of corporate internet providers rather than benefit the public. If this is so, I urge you to consider revising these rules to make greater broadband access and affordability a priority.

This week the FCC is voting on a reform of the Universal Service Fund program. I agree with the agency that the program's goals are noble - but outdated - and that the agency must find a way to funnel its resources toward building broadband networks rather than phone lines.

However, the rules proposed in the industry-authored "ABC plan" would do little to promote the public interest. They would simply allow phone companies like AT&T and Verizon to extract billions more from consumers with no accountability.

Any new rules that you adopt must require phone companies to justify additional fees before they start taking even more hard-earned money out of our pockets. The Commission must require strong regulatory oversight in exchange for carriers' receiving this ratepayer-funded subsidy.