

# US ISPs Threaten to Slow Innovation and Network Upgrades if Reclassified Under Title II by FCC

They call it a warning.

What it is is a threat.

The major ISPs that make up the trade group **Broadband for America** had their CEOs lay it all out on the table in this **letter to the FCC**:

Not only is it questionable that the Commission could defensibly reclassify broadband service under Title II, but also such an action would greatly distort the future development of, and investment in, tomorrow's broadband networks and services.

Translated from PR speak, this reads:

Nice Internet you've got there, bub. Shame if something were to happen to it.

They go on to completely miss the point of why Title II regulation of ISPs is needed:

In defending their approach, Title II proponents now argue that reclassification is necessary to prohibit paid prioritization even though Title II does not discourage -- let alone outlaw -- paid prioritization models. Dominant carriers operating under Title II have for generations been permitted to offer different pricing and different service quality to customers.

If you've been following my diaries on the topic of Net Neutrality, you've seen why **Net Neutrality is a bandaid** and not the end-game. The BFA group is correct -- Title II regulation does not ensure Net Neutrality.

**It ensures we don't have pseudo-monopolies that can enact policies that run counter to Net Neutrality and not allow competition to offer a service that does not have those policies.**

"But Technomancer," some may say, "that's a really terrible way to read this letter. They might even be right -- it is expensive to run these networks, after all."

My response to that? **They're already harming the service they sell to you.**

And frankly, I'm not the only person reading this letter that way. Jon Brodtkin of Ars Technica **points out ways ISPs are already doing what they say regulation will make them do:**

ISPs have continually touted their investment in broadband infrastructure, although Vox pointed to the cable industry's own data today to show that **investment has actually decreased.**

Verizon, meanwhile, has **slowed down its FiOS investments** and led an astroturf campaign in New Jersey to **end an obligation** to build out broadband service to all residents.

Nonetheless, the ISPs' letter claimed that only the status quo, aka a "stable regulatory framework," can "promote future investment, innovation, and consumer choice."

Mr. Brodtkin is right, you know. The US ISPs want a status quo where they never have to upgrade the networks we as their customers pay for, because we don't have a choice to take our business elsewhere.

They want a status quo to continue that makes them the gatekeepers and toll booths of the US Internet.

They want a status quo that allows them to pick the winners of the tech industry.

They want a status quo that means they never have to compete -- they can just divvy up territory like it's information gerrymandering.

If you don't want it, **send your comments to the FCC**. Tell them you don't want ISPs gerrymandering their information districts so they never have to compete. Tell the FCC that you want to choose your ISP -- you don't want your ISP to choose you. Tell them you want Title II regulation and an open, neutral Internet.

**1:56 PM PT**: In the comments, afisher pointed out a **whitehouse.gov petition** to reclassify ISPs. Sign that too, and thanks, afisher!