

Dear Members of the Commission:

My family runs a construction contracting business in northeast Ohio. It is hard for me to imagine running our business without robust broadband access, but today I am deeply worried that this access may be threatened by new rules from the Federal Communications Commission.

Our company, the Knoch Corporation, provides construction services around northeast Ohio. The company, founded in 1947, originally began offering services in the residential market and gradually expanded to the commercial and industrial fields. Over the years, we have established a reputation as one of the state's most respected construction managers and general contractors.

Working at a company that has been around for nearly 70 years gives you a sense of perspective. When Knoch was first founded, its employees worked on typewriters and rotary phones. A copier was a revelation; a cell phone was transformational.

But the technology that has made the most impact over the years has been the Internet. The Internet has let us reach thousands of new customers and expand to new corners of the state. It makes it easier for us to structure our workforce, gives us access to the newest trends in technology and even helps us power our machines. The emerging growth of the Internet of things will make it even easier to seamlessly integrate broadband into our company.

In short, the Internet is truly the backbone of our business, and it is hard for me to picture how our company could survive if broadband were not as fast or accessible as it is today.

Unfortunately, this may not be the future we are in for. I have been reading reports that the FCC is considering stark new rules on broadband that could slow down the speeds we have come to take for granted and limit access for millions of Americans.

These rules would classify the Internet as a public utility under Title II, a label that has previously been applied to technologies that do not in any way resemble the Internet. Previously, Title II was used to rein in sprawling telephone monopolies that impeded competition and innovation – a far cry from our current telecommunications landscape.

In fact, such rules are a serious mismatch with today's technology, which cannot easily be separated into telephone, cable, and other services. Title II would superimpose an artificial legal framework on these services by separating them into regulatory "silos" that ignore the overlapping, complementary dynamic among different technologies.

More importantly, these new regulations could threaten the enormous investment that has contributed so much to the robustness of our Internet. For the past few decades, private companies have been investing billions to build out, maintain, and improve our national broadband infrastructure. Nearly \$1.2 trillion has been spent on this effort, allowing nearly 98 percent of Americans to access broadband speeds of 10 megabits or higher. In Ohio, 83 percent of the population has access to networks capable of speeds of 50 megabits or higher.

It is critical that we continue expanding this access. Who knows what new technologies could be discovered in the next 50, 20, even 10 years? New apps and wearable technology could revolutionize the way we build, work and run a business. It is vital that we have a legal framework in place that advances this kind of innovation, not one that hinders it.

I strongly urge the FCC to consider what Title II regulations would mean to companies like ours in their decision. In an industry that moves as fast as technology does today, regulations can make all the difference.

Sincerely,

Charles Fenske
Vice President
Knoch Corp.