

## Legendary Internet Creators Demand FCC Cancel Attack on Net Neutrality

by Jake Johnson via tim - CommonDreams Monday, Dec 11 2017, 8:35pm

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More than 20 internet founders and industry leaders wrote an open letter warning FCC plan to kill net neutrality poses "imminent threat" to the web.

Joining the revolt taking place in the streets and online against FCC chair Ajit Pai's plan to kill net neutrality, more than 20 pioneers of the internet—including world wide web inventor Tim Berners-Lee, Apple co-founder Steve Wozniak, and Vint Cert, one of the "fathers of the internet"—published an [open letter](#) on Monday slamming Pai's proposals as "flawed and factually inaccurate" and demanding that his agency cancel its planned Thursday vote.

"The FCC's rushed and technically incorrect proposed order to abolish net neutrality protections without any replacement is an imminent threat to the internet we worked so hard to create," the letter reads. "It should be stopped."

The letter went on to lambast the FCC for ignoring both expert analyses ([pdf](#)) calling attention to the GOP-controlled agency's "misunderstandings" of the web and the millions of public comments demonstrating that the American people are "clearly passionate about protecting the internet."

Given the speed with which Pai is bringing his plan to a vote, the "FCC could not possibly have considered these [comments] adequately," the internet pioneers argue. "Indeed, breaking with established practice, the FCC has not held a single open public meeting to hear from citizens and experts about the proposed order."

With their scathing open letter, internet founders and industry experts added to the massive flood of outrage sparked by Pai's plan to gut net neutrality protections, which was released last month.

In addition to protests on the ground in all 50 states last week and the upcoming "Break the Internet" demonstrations beginning on Tuesday, the FCC's two Democratic commissioners have also spoken out against their Republican colleagues' proposals.

Echoing arguments of the internet's creators in a Wired op-ed on Saturday, FCC commissioner Jessica Rosenworcel ripped the "lack of integrity" in the FCC's public comment process and called on the agency "to do something simple: It should get out from behind its computers and desks and hold public hearings on the changes it has proposed."

"Failure to do so here is tantamount to accepting fraud in this process and using it to justify the rollback of net neutrality rules," Rosenworcel concluded. "For the American people a rush vote like this, on a questionable record, will look and feel illegitimate. They should demand a better process and a better result."

Judging by their open letter, the internet's founders and industry experts agree. Their full letter follows:

Senator Wicker:

Senator Schatz:  
Representative Blackburn:  
Representative Doyle:

We are the pioneers and technologists who created and now operate the Internet, and some of the innovators and business people who, like many others, depend on it for our livelihood. We are writing to respectfully urge you to call on FCC Chairman Ajit Pai to cancel the December 14 vote on the FCC's proposed Restoring Internet Freedom Order (WC Docket No. 17-108 ).

This proposed Order would repeal key network neutrality protections that prevent Internet access providers from blocking content, websites and applications, slowing or speeding up services or classes of service, and charging online services for access or fast lanes to Internet access providers' customers. The proposed Order would also repeal oversight over other unreasonable discrimination and unreasonable practices, and over interconnection with last-mile Internet access providers. The proposed Order removes long-standing FCC oversight over Internet access providers without an adequate replacement to protect consumers, free markets and online innovation.

It is important to understand that the FCC's proposed Order is based on a flawed and factually inaccurate understanding of Internet technology. These flaws and inaccuracies were documented in detail in a 43-page-long joint comment signed by over 200 of the most prominent Internet pioneers and engineers and submitted to the FCC on July 17, 2017.

Despite this comment, the FCC did not correct its misunderstandings, but instead premised the proposed Order on the very technical flaws the comment explained. The technically-incorrect proposed Order dismantles 15 years of targeted oversight from both Republican and Democratic FCC chairs, who understood the threats that Internet access providers could pose to open markets on the Internet.

The experts' comment was not the only one the FCC ignored. Over 23 million comments have been submitted by a public that is clearly passionate about protecting the Internet. The FCC could not possibly have considered these adequately.

Indeed, breaking with established practice, the FCC has not held a single open public meeting to hear from citizens and experts about the proposed Order.

Furthermore, the FCC's online comment system has been plagued by major problems that the FCC has not had time to investigate. These include bot-generated comments that impersonated Americans, including dead people, and an unexplained outage of the FCC's on-line comment system that occurred at the very moment TV host John Oliver was encouraging Americans to submit comments to the system.

Compounding our concern, the FCC has failed to respond to Freedom of Information Act requests about these incidents and failed to provide information to a New York State Attorney General's investigation of them.

We therefore call on you to urge FCC Chairman Pai to cancel the FCC's vote. The FCC's rushed and technically incorrect proposed Order to abolish net neutrality protections without any replacement is an imminent threat to the Internet we worked so hard to create. It should be stopped.

Signed,

Frederick J. Baker, IETF Chair 1996-2001, ISOC Board Chair 2002-2006

Mitchell Baker, Executive Chairwoman, Mozilla Foundation

Steven M. Bellovin, Internet pioneer, FTC Chief Technologist, 2012-2013

Tim Berners-Lee, inventor of the World Wide Web & professor, MIT

John Borthwick, CEO, Betaworks

Scott O. Bradner, Internet pioneer

Vinton G. Cerf, Internet pioneer

Stephen D. Crocker, Internet pioneer

Whitfield Diffie, inventor of public-key cryptography

David J. Farber, Internet pioneer, FCC Chief Technologist 1999-2000

Dewayne Hendricks, CEO Tetherless Access

Martin E. Hellman, Internet security pioneer

Brewster Kahle, Internet pioneer, founder, Internet Archive

Susan Landau, cybersecurity expert & professor, Tufts University

Theodor Holm Nelson, hypertext pioneer

David P. Reed, Internet pioneer

Jennifer Rexford, Chair of Computer Science, Princeton University

Ronald L. Rivest, co-inventor of RSA public-key encryption algorithm

Paul Vixie, Internet pioneer

Stephen Wolff, Internet pioneer

Steve Wozniak, co-founder, Apple Computer

Cc:

Members of the Senate Commerce Subcommittee on Communications, Technology, Innovation, and the Internet

Members of the House Energy Subcommittee on Communications and Technology

Federal Communications Commissioners

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