



Eshoo Net Neutrality Statement for F.C.C. Hearing .

April 17, 2008

Washington, DC – Rep. Anna G. Eshoo (D-Palo Alto) issued the following statement in conjunction with today's Federal Communications Commission hearing at Stanford University:

"I'd like to extend a warm welcome to F.C.C. Chairman Martin, each of the Commissioners, the distinguished panelists, and my constituents of California's 14th Congressional District.

I regret not being able to be with you at Stanford due to the House of Representatives being in session.

Today's F.C.C. hearing on network management and access to emerging technology is extraordinarily important and there is no better place in our country to hold such a hearing than in the heart of Silicon Valley.

I commend the Commission for holding these hearings throughout the country and for the leadership of Commissioners Copps and Adelstein who have done so much to take the Commission to communities throughout the country where dozens of media ownership public hearings have been held. These hearings have now become commonplace for the Commission and there are direct discussions with citizens who ultimately will be affected by the decisions they make.

Net Neutrality and open access both embrace the value of openness which users of networks have enjoyed for years until recently.

Openness of the Internet has actually been its hallmark since it was created – the ability of any person anywhere in the world to reach out and access any content that someone else has made available on the Web. Openness also permitted consumers to connect the phone of their choice to the old telephone network.

The openness of the Internet revolutionized business, it changed our economy, and it has transformed our everyday lives.

Even with all the rapid change we've seen in the development of the Internet, one thing hasn't changed – most Americans have little choice over how they can get onto the Net. 98% of Americans have only their Bell or cable company as choices for broadband access.

The failure of competition for high-speed broadband access permits broadband operators to take advantage of this chokepoint and dictate what content will be available to whom, and at what speeds. They want to control which sites consumers will be able to download music from, where they will be able to watch live video and which blogs will have full access to the best service. This threatens the very existence of today's Internet. That's why I believe that Net Neutrality legislation should be enacted.

I applauded the Commission's decision to mandate certain open access provisions for the C Block in the 700 MHz Auction which was won by Verizon. But the C Block represents only the smallest sliver of our public airwaves with this mandate. The F.C.C. should consider applying open access provisions on spectrum currently dedicated to mobile services.

The Congress has granted the F.C.C. expansive authority which it has used sparingly to promote openness. The Commission should closely examine network management practices. There are reasonable needs today relative to managing the network to address congestion caused by insufficient bandwidth. But such intercession into a user's access to the Internet should not result in the outright blocking of content or applications that do not harm the network.

Today's debate is important because the value of sharing information taps into a deep human desire to communicate with one another. Thank you for coming to the 14th Congressional District today. I look forward to the important outcomes of this hearing which will benefit my constituents and our country."

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