



VIA FAX

June 19, 2006

The Honorable Ted Stevens
Chairman
Senate Committee on Commerce
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The letter was sent to the following:

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|----------------------|-------------------------|
| Ted Stevens | David Vitter |
| John McCain | Daniel K. Inouye |
| Conrad Burns | John D. Rockefeller, IV |
| Trent Lott | John F. Kerry |
| Kay Bailey Hutchison | Byron L. Dorgan |
| Olympia J. Snowe | Barbara Boxer |
| Gordon Smith | Bill Nelson |
| John Ensign | Maria Cantwell |
| George Allen | Frank R. Lautenberg |
| John E. Sununu | Ben Nelson |
| Jim DeMint | Mark Pryor |

Dear Mr. Chairman:

The Communications Workers of America (CWA) believes deployment of universal, high-speed networks is the key Internet issue before Congress. As you consider S.2686, the Communications, Consumers' Choice, and Broadband Deployment Act of 2006, we urge you to address these priorities in the legislation.

Reasonable Build-out and Anti-redlining Requirements. Strong anti-redlining provisions alone will not ensure universal access to high-speed Internet services. The absence of any reasonable build-out requirement is the most significant gap in the current legislation. Without such provisions, network providers will understandably pursue the most profitable markets, leaving rural and low- and moderate-income communities behind. In exchange for streamlined federal video franchising, Congress must preserve statutory provisions that require network carriers to build-out and upgrade their networks.

CWA recommends initial requirements on incumbents and newcomers to build-out or upgrade their networks to provide high-speed Internet with initial speeds of 25 megabytes per second (mbps) downstream, increasing the speed requirement over time. The U.S. is now 16th in broadband deployment, and falling in world rankings. All 15 nations that are ahead of us have used government support and funding to accelerate high-speed deployment. If U.S. deployment of high-speed broadband was measured at the current global standard of 10 mbps rather than the FCC definition of 256 kilobytes per second (kbps), it would be even clearer that the U.S. is now years behind East Asia. This public policy failure jeopardizes our economic future, and is a far more important national concern than the price of watching television.

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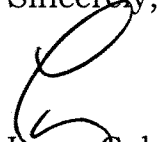
So-called "Net Neutrality" Proposals Will Slow High-Speed Internet Build-Out. Bandwidth scarcity and unequal deployment of high-speed networks are the largest threat to a universal high-speed Internet. Heavy-handed legislation promoting so-called "net neutrality" would dampen investment and foreclose many consumer benefits. Such policies would delay job-creating high-speed network deployment to the home by denying carriers the ability to recover some of their investment from providers of bandwidth-intensive applications. Within the current environment in which capital markets value Google more highly than AT&T, we must provide an incentive for network carriers to build-out their high-speed networks. Otherwise, we will not have a high-speed universal Internet, and the U.S. will continue to slip relative to the rest of the world in terms of a high-speed Internet economy.

To protect an open Internet, CWA supports public disclosure of broadband access, speed, and usage policies, and a complaint-based adjudication process to protect consumers' right to access the content, run the applications, and attach the equipment of their choice to high-speed networks. To promote consumer choice, legislation should also require carriers to offer the option of selecting individual channels on an a la carte basis or as a self-selected tier. CWA also supports requiring network carriers providing Internet access at 10 mbps or higher to reserve a basic level of open, unmanaged Internet access, initially set at least 2 mbps downstream and 1 mbps upstream, with FCC annual rulemaking to adjust the speeds upward.

In addition to these priorities, CWA reaffirms the positions on closing the terrestrial loophole, universal service reform, strong consumer protections, service standards, and franchising requirements communicated in the attached May 17, 2006 letter.

Thank you for reviewing this letter. If you have questions or comments, please contact Lou Gerber, Legislative Director at (202) 434-1315 or Debbie Goldman, Research Economist, at (202) 434-1194.

Sincerely,



Larry Cohen
President

Attachment