Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

March 18, 1999

The Honorable William E. Kennard
Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, S.W.
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Chairman Kennard:

We are writing regarding the concerns voiced by many of our constituents that the FCC intends to impose per-minute access charges on Internet services.

We were pleased to learn of your recent statement, in a March 11 speech, that "as long as I am chairman of the Federal Communications Commission, we will not regulate the Internet." As you make clear in your speech, the fact that the Internet is unregulated by the FCC has been an indispensable factor in the Internet's development and explosive growth. As you so clearly put it: "The Internet grew so fast that regulators hardly had a chance to regulate it even if they wanted to. And that's a good thing."

We support these efforts, and agree with you that the Internet should remain unregulated by the FCC and, specifically, that the government should not hit Internet users with per-minute access charges. Still, we note that at least one commissioner has voiced concern that the FCC's recent reciprocal compensation decision in fact "put in jeopardy" the longstanding rule that bars local phone companies from assessing usage-sensitive access charges on Internet service providers.

To end this uncertainty once and for all--and to stop the thousands of emails and phone calls from concerned Internet users--we are writing to ask you to work with us on legislation to clarify the 1934 Communications Act to make it clear that the FCC will not regulate the Internet or impose access charges on Internet service. Without such a clarification, there will always be a reason for Internet users to suspect that FCC regulation could be right around the corner.

We appreciate your consideration of this request, and look forward to working with you for such a clarification of the FCC's desire not to regulate the Internet.

Sincerely,

Chris Cox

John McCain

Rick Lazio

Paul Coverdell

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