October 21, 2009

The Honorable Julius Genachowski Chairman Federal Communications Commission 445 12th Street, SW Washington, DC 20554

Dear Chairman Genachowski:

The undersigned public interest groups write to express our strong support for your recent announcement that the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) will begin a public proceeding that will ensure an open and nondiscriminatory Internet.

Since its creation, the Internet was intended to be a medium controlled by users, not by network access providers. As a result, it has become the most democratic medium this country, and the world, has ever known. The power that an open Internet vests in individuals has resulted in an unprecedented surge in creativity, innovation, and civic discourse. The open Internet has generated billions of dollars in investment, by network operators and Web-based companies, opening up new opportunities for consumers while creating thousands of jobs.

Since 2005, the future of an open Internet has been unclear. We wholeheartedly support your effort to bring certainty to network providers, applications and service providers and the public through rules that will ensure that the FCC can preserve an open and nondiscriminatory Internet.

Over the past two weeks, the largest telephone and cable companies have launched an intense lobbying campaign to oppose meaningful rules using dire yet vague predictions of doom if the FCC acts to preserve the Internet's traditional openness. This outcry over a proposal the public has yet to see is clearly intended to halt the dialogue over the proper rules of the road for an open Internet before it even starts.

We urge you to continue with the process you have set out. We are also encouraged by the Administration's statement this weekend about the importance of an open Internet. We believe this will best serve the public. So far, 1.6 million Americans have spoken – they do not want the Internet to become just another closed network where large media entities pick winners and losers, like broadcasting and cable. We are confident that even more Americans will rally to the cause in the months ahead.

You have dedicated your Chairmanship to guaranteeing that the public's needs are served first. As representatives of the public in the nation's capital and throughout the United States, we applaud the FCC for beginning a process that seeks to ensure that users will continue to reap the benefits of an open Internet.

Respectfully submitted,

Helen Soule Executive Director Alliance for Community Media	Mary Alice Baish Director of Government Relations American Association of Law Libraries	Michael McLeod-Bell Acting Director, Washington Office American Civil Liberties Union	Lynne E. Bradley, Director Office of Government Relations American Library Association
Prudence Adler Associate Executive Director Federal Relations and Information Policy Association of Research Libraries	Charles Benton Chairman Benton Foundation	Leslie Harris President & CEO Center for Democracy and Technology	Jeff Chester Founder and Executive Director Center for Digital Democracy
Lawrence Lessig Co-Founder Change Congress	Bob Edgar President & CEO Common Cause	Mark Cooper Research Director Consumer Federation of America	Ellen Bloom Director, Washington Office Consumers Union
Marc Rotenberg Executive Director Electronic Privacy Information Center	Ben Scott Policy Director Free Press	Michael Bracy Policy Director Future of Music Coalition	Lisa Fager-Bediako President and Founder <i>Industry Ears</i>
Brewster Kahle Director and Co-Founder Internet Archive	James Love Director Knowledge Ecology International	Andrew Jay Schwartzman President and CEO Media Access Project	Beth McConnell Executive Director Media and Democracy Coalition
Helen DeMichiel Co-Founder National Alliance for Media, Arts and Culture	Jack Walsh Co-Founder National Alliance for Media, Arts and Culture	Carol Pierson President and CEO National Federation of Community Broadcasters	Terry O'Neill President National Organization for Women
Michael Calabrese Vice President and Director of Wireless Future Program New America Foundation	Sascha Meinrath Director Open Technology Initiative New America Foundation	Gigi B. Sohn President & Co-Founder <i>Public Knowledge</i>	Douglas Newcomb Chief Policy Officer Special Libraries Association

Matthew R. Rantanen Director of Technology Tribal Digital Village Cheryl Leanza Policy Director United Church of Christ, Office of Communication, Inc. Edmund Mierzwinski Consumer Program Director and Senior Fellow USPIRG John Kosinski Political Director Writers Guild of America, West