



# NEWS

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This is an unofficial announcement of Commission action. Release of the full text of a Commission order constitutes official action.  
See MCI v. FCC, 515 F 2d 385 (D.C. Circ 1974).

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## **CHAIRMAN KEVIN J. MARTIN COMMENTS ON ADOPTION OF WIRELINE BROADBAND INTERNET ACCESS ORDER**

The Order that we adopt today is a momentous one. It ends the regulatory inequities that currently exist between cable and telephone companies in their provision of broadband Internet services. As I have said on numerous occasions, leveling the playing field between these providers has been one of my highest priorities. With this Order, wireline broadband Internet access providers, like cable modem service providers, will be considered information service providers and will no longer be compelled by regulation to unbundle and separately tariff the underlying transmission component of their Internet access service.

Most importantly, however, the actions we take in this Order are an explicit recognition that the telecommunications marketplace that exists today is vastly different from the one governed by regulators over 30 years ago. The Computer Inquiry requirements that were adopted several decades ago were based on the assumption that, without the imposition of strict regulation, telephone companies would be able to exert considerable market power over unaffiliated entities in the provision of information services. To the extent that this assumption was true at the time, it is no longer true in today's broadband market.

As the item recognizes, the broadband Internet access market today is characterized by multiple platforms that are vigorously competing for customers. Such changed market conditions require, as the Supreme Court in the Brand X decision phrased it, a "fresh analysis." I am pleased that the Commission so quickly undertook this analysis, and, in so doing, removed legacy regulation that applied to only one of the platform providers – the telephone companies.

Broadband deployment is vitally important to our nation as new, advanced services hold the promise of unprecedented business, educational, and healthcare opportunities for all Americans. Perpetuating the application of outdated regulations on only one set of Internet access providers inhibits infrastructure investment, innovation, and competition generally.

In taking these actions, we recognize that change is never easy. Nor can it be effectuated overnight. ISPs currently rely on the transmission offerings that the telephone companies have been compelled by regulation to make available. Such a transition is vital to the continuity of service for thousands of customers. To this end, we require the telephone companies to make their current transmission offerings available for one year from the effective date of this Order.

Similarly, we cannot permit the telephone companies to immediately cease contributing to the universal service fund on the portion of revenues derived from these tariffed Internet access offerings. We must ensure the stability of the fund. Accordingly, we require telephone companies to continue contributing to the universal service fund on their Internet access services based on their current contribution levels for 9 months following the effective date of the Order or until we adopt new contribution rules, whichever comes first. Either way, the Commission will act diligently to ensure that there will be no adverse impact to the fund as a result of the holdings today.

Although we are confronting a changed marketplace, government will continue to have a role in this dynamic, new broadband marketplace. Together with our state colleagues, the Commission must vigilantly ensure that law enforcement and consumer protection needs continue to be met. To accomplish this, we initiate a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking seeking comment on the extent to which we need to develop a consumer protection framework that applies to all broadband Internet access platform providers, regardless of the underlying technology.

We also adopt today a vitally important companion item that confirms that facilities-based Internet access providers (as well as interconnection VoIP providers) are subject to the requirements of CALEA. Law enforcement agencies must have the ability to conduct electronic surveillance over broadband technologies.

The Commission also releases today a policy statement that reflects each Commissioner's core beliefs about certain rights all consumers of broadband Internet access should have. Competition has ensured consumers have had these rights to date, and I remain confident that it will continue to do so.

I believe that, with the actions we take today, consumers will reap the benefits of increased Internet access competition and enjoy innovative high-speed services at lower prices. There is, however, more to do to stimulate infrastructure investment, broadband deployment, and competition in the broadband market. I intend to tackle these challenges in the upcoming months.

Finally, I want to thank my colleagues for their perseverance and commitment to work together to adopt this item today. It is an honor and a privilege to serve with such dedicated and capable public servants.