

Congress of the United States  
Washington, DC 20515

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April 17, 2017

The Honorable Ajit Pai  
Chairman  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12th St SW  
Washington, DC 20554-0004

Dear Chairman Pai:


We applaud your pledge to make April “infrastructure month” at the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), and we welcome your efforts to identify and eliminate unnecessary rules and regulations and modernize our Nation’s telecommunication networks. As you are set to vote on your draft order for Business Data Services (BDS), we write to express our support for a reasonable transition period in implementing these new rules to allow all market participants the opportunity to evaluate and adapt to the implications of BDS deregulation in order to minimize potential disruptions and unintended consequences to small businesses in America.

A transition period would create a window where all market participants could plan for price increases or the purchase of internet protocol (IP)-enabled equipment, shop for alternative service arrangements, and even solicit build-out proposals from potential market entrants. A reasonable transition would also enable service providers to adapt and remain viable in more markets than will occur in the event of a flash cut to new policies.

Further, as we understand, the draft order seeks to accelerate investment in IP technologies and transition more customers to IP services and notes that future developments, such as the onset of 5G wireless deployments in 2020, may serve to hold prices in check despite the highly concentrated ownership of BDS facilities. A transition period would allow additional time for these changes to play out and allow providers time to adjust their business models and educate consumers about the coming changes, including the possibility of price hikes, termination of service, and migration to alternate technologies.

For these reasons, we respectfully request that you give full and fair consideration to the adoption of a reasonable transition period when implementing this order. Thank you for your consideration of our request, and please do not hesitate to reach out to us if you have any questions or concerns. We look forward to working with you on improving our Nation’s telecommunications networks.

Sincerely,

  
John Boozman  
U.S. Senator

  
Tom Cotton  
U.S. Senator

*J. French Hill*

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Member of Congress