

FCC's Restoring Internet Freedom Order

The FCC supports a free and open Internet. The agency's *Restoring Internet Freedom Order*, which goes into effect on June 11, 2018, will protect the open Internet that consumers cherish while paving the way for better, faster, cheaper Internet access. The order replaces unnecessary, heavy-handed regulations dating back to 1934 with strong consumer protections, increased transparency, and common-sense regulations that will promote investment and broadband deployment.

The FCC's framework for protecting Internet freedom has three key parts:

1. Consumer Protection

The Federal Trade Commission will police and take action against Internet service providers for anticompetitive acts or unfair and deceptive practices. The FTC is the nation's premier consumer protection agency, and until the FCC stripped it of jurisdiction over Internet service providers in 2015, the FTC protected consumers consistently across the Internet economy.

2. Transparency

A critical part of Internet openness involves Internet service providers being transparent about their business practices. That's why the FCC has imposed enhanced transparency requirements. Internet service providers must publicly disclose information regarding their network management practices, performance, and commercial terms of service. These disclosures must be made via a publicly available, easily accessible company website or through the FCC's website. This will discourage harmful practices and help regulators target any problematic conduct.

These disclosures also support innovation, investment, and competition by ensuring that entrepreneurs and other small businesses have the technical information necessary to create and maintain online content, applications, services, and devices.

3. Removing Unnecessary Regulations to Promote Broadband Investment

The Internet wasn't broken in 2015, when the previous FCC imposed regulations dating back to 1934 (known as "Title II") on Internet service providers. And ironically, these regulations made things worse by limiting investment in high-speed networks and slowing broadband deployment. Under Title II rules, broadband network investment dropped more than 5.6%—the first time a decline has happened outside of a recession. The effect was particularly serious for smaller Internet service providers—fixed wireless companies, small-town cable operators, municipal broadband providers, electric cooperatives, and others—that don't have the resources or lawyers to navigate a thicket of complex rules.

For instance, more than 80% of small fixed wireless companies that generally operate in rural America "incurred additional expense in complying with the Title II rules, had delayed or reduced network expansion, had delayed or reduced services and had allocated budget to comply with the rules." None of that is good for consumers. Removing these regulations will create a strong incentive for companies to pour resources into building better online infrastructure across the country.

Bottom line: The FCC is returning to the successful, bipartisan framework that helped the Internet grow and flourish for two decades prior to 2015. This light-touch approach will protect consumers and deliver better, faster, cheaper Internet access and more competition to consumers.

The full framework is available here: <https://www.fcc.gov/document/fcc-releases-restoring-internet-freedom-order>.