

**REMARKS OF  
CHAIRWOMAN JESSICA ROSENWORCEL  
AT NET NEUTRALITY ROUNDTABLE  
SANTA CLARA COUNTY FIRE DEPARTMENT  
McCORMACK TRAINING CENTER  
SANTA CLARA COUNTY, CA  
APRIL 8, 2024**

Good morning! Thank you, Chief Kerdkaew, for that introduction and for hosting us today, and a special thank you to County Supervisor Otto Lee.

Thank you to all the experts joining us today. You're a diverse bunch. We have public safety leaders, start-ups, academics, and consumer advocates.

It's great to be in Santa Clara County. It makes perfect sense that I would be in the Bay Area to speak about the need for federal net neutrality rules.

After all, this area has long been home to companies that count on an open internet. So many of them—big and small—are a short drive from here. They have been able to grow, from ideas in garages, coffee shops, and cubicles because the internet is an open platform where you go where you want and do what you want without having to ask for anyone's permission. And restoring national net neutrality rules will make this approach the law of the land.

Net neutrality rules protect internet openness by prohibiting broadband providers from playing favorites with internet traffic. That means that is the policy of the United States that broadband providers are not allowed to block internet traffic, slow services or censor content. Those policies are popular and court-tested. But, in Washington, the last Administration took them away.

So, here in California, you did something about it. You stepped in. You went to your state capitol—Sacramento—and passed your own net neutrality laws. You were not alone. Nearly a dozen other states stepped in to pass their own policies, too, taking a cue from the Golden State.

So that explains why we are in Santa Clara County. But why exactly are we at a fire station?

We're here today, because the net neutrality rules that the FCC will vote on in two weeks are about more than just preserving the internet as an open platform for innovators and entrepreneurs. They are also about public safety. They are about national security.

That's because our proposed net neutrality rules would do more than just keep broadband providers from blocking, throttling, or prioritizing lawful content. They would also re-classify broadband as a telecommunications service under Title II of the Communications Act, which reasserts the FCC's role as the country's leading communications watchdog.

Think about it. We came out of this pandemic and broadband became more important, not less important. It went from being nice-to-have to need-to-have for everyone, everywhere. It's common sense that we should have some meaningful oversight of the service that we rely on for almost every aspect of our lives.

Just start with the story of our hosts. When they were responding to an emergency, they discovered that the internet connection in one of their command vehicles was being throttled, compromising their ability to stay connected and fight fires. But the previous FCC gave up the authority to even investigate what happened, let alone intervene in this or similar situations.

Another key intersection our proposed rules have with public safety involves network outages. I think everyone would agree that we should have a good ability to track outages around the country. But the reality is that right now the FCC can look at long distance voice outages, but not broadband outages. There is nothing modern about that. Because it makes it harder to identify patterns of failure, fix them whenever they occur, and put in place policies to make our networks more resilient across the board.

This lack of authority also creates a security risk by limiting our ability to deny companies controlled by hostile foreign governments from accessing our broadband networks.

We're joined this morning by a number of experts to discuss additional reasons it makes sense to adopt the net neutrality proposal before the commission.

Before I turn it over to them, I'd make one more point. I know it seems obvious to people in this room that we should have federal open internet rules. It's worth remembering that it was also obvious to an overwhelming majority of the public. Survey after survey showed that 80 percent of the public support the FCC's national net neutrality rules and opposed their repeal.

Thank you for being here today.