



For Immediate Release

CEO Letter to Congress: Cutting off Broadband Competition Hurts Deployment, Raises Prices, Cuts off Communities

WASHINGTON, D.C. (June 20, 2018) – Leaders of 16 competitive broadband providers have sent a letter to Congress warning them of big telecom’s effort to cut off broadband competition.

At issue is a recent USTelecom petition filed at the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) that will allow incumbent providers to escape their obligations under Section 251 of the Communications Act requiring them to provide wholesale access to unbundled network elements (UNEs) and offer certain resale arrangements. UNEs and resale offer an important means of competitive entry that spurs new fiber building and innovation.

The letter from the 16 CEOs and company leadership emphasizes the threat to Congress’ bipartisan broadband deployment goals that are critical to our nation’s economic growth, education, health, and public safety needs.

Highlights from the letter include:

“In markets where competitive providers have installed Gigabit fiber networks, speeds rise, prices fall, and the incumbents are forced to invest...Cutting off competitors’ access to critical network elements in key areas dramatically reduces the pool of customers in each market, reducing competitive investment incentives. This also creates an incumbent incentive for milking money from old, outdated lines rather than investing in new fiber deployment.”

“In several rural communities, our companies are the only broadband provider because the incumbent provider has abandoned the market altogether. This move AT&T is seeking would mean our companies will no longer be able to provide broadband service, cutting off entire communities from the jobs and economy of the future.”

“More competition keeps prices affordable for all customers. But through this petition, AT&T is seeking an immediate price increase of 15 percent. The unnecessary price hike will impact residential and small business customers in your districts.”

Companies who have signed the letter include: Allstream, Dialog Telecom LLC, Digital West, First Communications, Fusion, Gorge.Net, GWI, IdeaTek, Mammoth Networks, SmartCom, SnowCrest Inc., Socket, Sonic, TPX Communications, Uniti Fiber and Windstream.

Read the full letter [here](#).