



2024 Policy Initiatives

INCOMPAS, the internet and competitive networks association, is the leading trade association advocating for competition and innovation in the broadband marketplace, representing new network builders, internet innovators, and the world’s leading video streaming and cloud services. INCOMPAS is unique among trade associations in that we represent the entire internet value chain. Our core mission is to ensure that competitive communications and technology providers can continue to develop and deliver better service and greater innovation to consumers and businesses. Our members help deliver better service to consumers, businesses, government agencies, and local communities seeking more choice, lower prices, and faster broadband speeds that attract jobs and private investment.

Our competitive broadband companies are building networks of the future, including fiber, fixed wireless, mobile (5G), and satellite networks that connect residences, businesses, and community anchor institutions. We also represent online content companies that are investing significantly in network infrastructure and delivering streaming, cloud, social media, and other online content, services, and goods to meet consumer and business needs across the globe.

Competition Policy is Key to Delivering Fast, Affordable Broadband Networks

- INCOMPAS advocates for federal, state, and local policies that enable competitive broadband alternatives in every community, which will lead to more innovation, investment, and affordability.
- We [support](#) the deployment of robust, scalable, competitive broadband network capability throughout the U.S., including fiber-based, 1 gigabit and above infrastructure that also will provide a foundation connectivity for 5G and future generation networks.
- We have successfully advocated for competitors to be part of the Internet for All agenda. We will continue to work hand in hand with State Broadband Offices as they implement the federal Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) Program to promote opportunities for our members and encourage states to incorporate the [Broadband Ready City Checklist](#) into their plans.
- We will continue to track BEAD implementation and ensure that competitive providers that are best positioned to serve local communities are part of the solution.
- We also support state and local policies that will enable more broadband competition through reasonable wholesale access. We will work to oppose policies that deter competitive deployment, such as unreasonable franchise fees and taxes.
- We urge Congress to act swiftly to permanently fund the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP), which is an integral component of ensuring affordable internet access for low-income families and is helping to decrease deployment costs. The ACP is expected to deplete its funding in the spring of 2024 without additional funding from Congress.
- We support Congressional action to facilitate faster, more affordable infrastructure deployment.
 - We support streamlined permitting processes for faster broadband infrastructure deployment, including non-discriminatory, fast access at reasonable, cost-based rates, where charges apply.

- We support Congressional action to create a federal framework to reduce barriers to deployment especially regarding railroad crossings.
- We support Congressional action on the Broadband Grant Tax Treatment Act that would clarify that grant money is not subject to federal income tax and ensure federal dollars go as far as possible to connect America.
- We advocate at the FCC for it to address large pole projects and clarify that new attachers are not solely responsible for pole replacement costs and to ensure that competitive providers have equal access to residential and commercial multiple tenant environments.
- We encourage consumer-friendly internet, streaming, and cloud policies that keep prices low for families while driving the need for faster and better network connectivity.
- We have led the charge for open internet policies to ensure that consumers have access to the online content and services of their choice without interference from their broadband internet service provider. We will continue to advocate before the FCC as it considers reinstating a national framework for net neutrality protections.

Shared and Flexible Use of Spectrum Resources

- INCOMPAS supports efforts to increase competition for broadband through the broader use of mid-band and millimeter wave spectrum. We urge Congress to empower the FCC to leverage the nation's spectrum resources for more licensed and unlicensed broadband use cases.
- We lead the [5G for 12 GHz Coalition](#). We believe the FCC needs to take immediate action in the 12.2-12.7 GHz proceeding to modernize its rules to permit high-powered, two-way fixed broadband service in the band. This band has no federal encumbrances, does not require an auction, and can be put to immediate use for fixed broadband service by current licensees.
- We believe the FCC should also finalize a technology-neutral, licensed sharing framework in the 37.0-37.6 GHz band so the spectrum can be made available for increased commercial use. Such a framework would maximize the use of the spectrum for both federal and commercial users. Commercial operators could put the band to immediate use delivering fixed wireless broadband service in urban and rural communities across the country.

Universal Service Fund Reform

- [The Universal Service Fund \(USF\)](#) has helped millions of families, community anchor institutions, and small businesses connect to voice and broadband services for several decades, but it is in crisis. The FCC must act soon to stabilize it by addressing the high contribution factor that has reached 34.6% for Q1 2024, which telecom customers ultimately pay as an additional fee on their monthly telecom bills in order to finance the USF.
- The FCC has the authority and responsibility under the current statute to complete its reform to ensure that the USF can continue to meet its mission. Congress should communicate to the FCC that reform is necessary and must happen expeditiously by the FCC expanding the contribution base to include broadband internet access service (BIAS) revenues, which would decrease the factor to less than 4% and ensure that every consumer and business that relies on broadband is contributing to the USF.
- INCOMPAS worked with the Brattle Group to produce an [economic report](#) that agrees with the USForward Coalition's [assessment](#) that the most economically sound way to do contribution reform is to expand the current contribution base to also include BIAS revenues.
- INCOMPAS opposes assessing edge providers. Arguments to do so are rife with problems, would result in significant delay of reform, expand government regulation, and be challenging to implement without unfairly skewing online competition.

- As demonstrated in the Analysys Mason [report](#), tech and streaming innovators invest over \$120 billion annually in internet infrastructure locally and globally. These investments save BIAS providers \$5 billion to \$6.4 billion annually.
- We will continue to work with Congress' bipartisan, bicameral USF Working Group to put the USF on a sustainable path forward.
 - INCOMPAS also has proposed [reasonable changes](#) to the High-Cost program that would phase out some support mechanisms that are no longer needed.
 - It is key for the FCC to consider the billions of dollars that Congress has provided through the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act for broadband deployment and affordability and find savings in the USF programs.

Encouraging Competition and Innovation in Voice Services/Messaging

- INCOMPAS represents a variety of voice service business models, including traditional CLECs, VoIP, and OTT (over-the-top) providers, that serve residential and enterprise customers. These providers are committed to mitigating the threat of illegal robocalls and robotexts to their customers while working with the Commission to help identify ways to preserve competition and innovation in the market.
- As policymakers continue their efforts to combat illegal robocalling and robotexting, INCOMPAS advocates for solutions that will fill current regulatory gaps (including gaps for wholesale providers and enterprise customers), avoid putting any unnecessary restrictions that impact the ability of voice providers to innovate and compete, and are tailored appropriately for smaller competitors based on their resource constraints.
- To mitigate fraudulent robocalling and robotexting activity, the Commission must advance the IP transition to ensure STIR/SHAKEN operates across IP-interconnected networks, address outstanding issues related to call authentication for non-residential use cases, institute robust call/text blocking notification and redress mechanisms, and ensure industry efforts to manage or label illegal robocalls do not intentionally or inadvertently discriminate against competitive providers.