March 1, 2006

The Honorable Joe Barton
Chairman
Committee on Energy and Commerce
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable John D. Dingell
Ranking Member
Committee on Energy & Commerce
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Barton, Ranking Member Dingell and Members of the Committee:

We are a broad based group of Internet consumers, content providers, service, device and application companies that believe that unless Congress acts, the Internet is at risk of losing the openness that has made it an engine for phenomenal social and economic growth. We are writing to urge that Congress take steps now to preserve this fundamental underpinning of the Internet and to assure the Internet remains a platform open to innovation and progress.

Specifically, as Congress considers legislation to update the nation’s telecommunications policy, it must recognize that the Internet’s open architecture and the pre-existing legal framework that created the Internet should not be just “hoped for” in a broadband world. The essential elements must be guaranteed by a meaningful and enforceable net neutrality requirement.

The open architecture of the Internet has always let providers, as well as individual innovators, share, offer and create the content, devices, applications, and services that the marketplace desires. Consumers in the marketplace, and not network operators, should decide what content and services succeed or fail. The end-to-end design of the Internet was made possible by the non-discriminatory framework that has long been the bedrock of U.S. telecommunications policy. It is this framework that has prevented gatekeepers on the Internet and guaranteed the innovation and economic success that has driven the American economy over the past decade.

While it is appropriate for Congress to develop new legislation to promote competition among broadband networks, it must also ensure that consumers and providers continue to have the right to use those networks to send and receive content, and to use applications and services, without interference by network operators. As Internet pioneer Vint Cerf said, the Internet is, and must remain, ‘innovation without permission’.

We stand ready to work with you to pass legislation that will continue the successful legal policies that are essential to allowing the broadband Internet to thrive.
Sincerely,

Aegon Direct Marketing Services, Inc.
Adaptive Marketing LLC
Amazon.com
American Association of Libraries
AngleBeds.com
Ask.com
Association of Research Libraries
Bloglines
Cendant
Circumedia LLC
CitySearch
COMPTEL
Consumer Electronics Association
Consumer Federation of America
Downstream
Dreamsleep.com
Dresses.com
EarthLink
eBay
eBrands Commerce Group
Educause
Electronic Retailing Association
Entertainment Publications
Evite.com
Excite
Expedia
Free Press
Gifts.com
Google
Hawthorne Direct
Home Shopping Network
Hotwire
Hotwire
IAC/InterActiveCorp
Iceland Health Inc.
iNest
InPulse Response
Interactive Travel Services Association
Internet2
iWon
LendingTree
Livemercial
Match.com
Media Access Project
Media Partners Worldwide
Mercury Media
Merrick Group
Microsoft
Nationalblinds.com
NetCoalition
Product Partners LLC
Public Knowledge
Pulver.com
RealEstate.com
Savvier
ServiceMagic
Skype
Sling Media Inc.
Ticketmaster
TiVO
Tonystickets.com
Tranquilitymattress.com
Travelocity
Yahoo!