

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

December 17, 2010

The Honorable Julius Genachowski
Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street
Washington, DC 20554

The Honorable Robert M. McDowell
Commissioner
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street
Washington, DC 20554

The Honorable Michael J. Copps
Commissioner
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street
Washington, DC 20554

The Honorable Mignon Clyburn
Commissioner
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street
Washington, DC 20554

The Honorable Meredith Attwell Baker
Commissioner
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Mr. Chairman and Commissioners:

We understand that the Federal Communications Commission is considering adopting safeguards to ensure that the Internet remains open as a platform for economic growth, innovation and free expression. We applaud the FCC for moving forward on this critical initiative. However, during your proceedings, we want to ensure that America's community anchor institutions – the schools, libraries, community colleges, and other higher education institutions – are not left out of the proposed safeguards.

Community anchor institutions rely upon the openness of the Internet for education, research, job-training, and many other essential services to the public. As you know, these institutions are essential to providing broadband access to unserved and underserved populations unable to maintain computer service in individual homes because of financial or technological impediments. In fact, virtually all of our nation's public libraries, for instance, offer Internet access to the general public at no charge, and in two-thirds of our communities, the library offers the *only* free access to the Internet.

During the current, economic climate, more and more Americans are traveling, in some instances, miles to the nearest anchor institution to access the internet. Community colleges, libraries and higher education also rely upon the internet for distance learning, collaborative research, and access to a wide variety of educational applications and information resources.

The services provided by these public institutions are vitally important to our educational achievement and economic growth of this nation.

We believe there is a critically important issue which needs to be addressed by the Commission to ensure that anchor institutions and the public they serve will benefit from the FCC's rules:

- Community anchor institutions should be included in the definition of broadband Internet access service and in the non-discrimination protections. Leaving these critical institutions out of the proposal will create a gaping hole in the FCC's net neutrality safeguards. Many community anchor institutions purchase standard access to the public Internet from broadband Internet service providers and simply cannot and do not negotiate their own terms or conditions unlike large corporations that purchase their own private networks.

Community anchor institutions should be able to provide their Internet-based services equally to all members of their community, whether at a library, on a school campus, or at home. Learning and research over the Internet are not dependent on physical location, and the freedom to use the Internet on an open and nondiscriminatory basis should be guaranteed from anywhere, especially from our nation's anchor institutions. It is absolutely critical that the general public's access to the Internet through our nation's community anchor institutions is not impeded. We urge you to include the recommendations above in any upcoming net neutrality order.

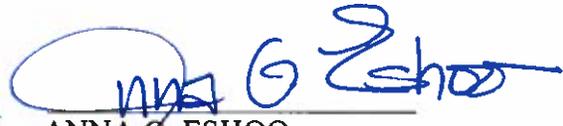
Sincerely,



DORIS O. MATSUI
Member of Congress



EDWARD J. MARKEY
Member of Congress



ANNA G. ESHOO
Member of Congress