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Tech Community Joins FCC in Court Fight to Protect Net Neutrality Rules

Vimeo, Meetup, Kickstarter, Etsy, Union Square Ventures, Tumblr Seek to Defend the FCC's Open Internet Order in Response to the Broadband Industry's Legal Challenges

WASHINGTON—Today, tech startup companies and Internet Freedom Business Alliance (IFBA) members—Vimeo, Meetup, Kickstarter, Etsy, Union Square Ventures and Tumblr—are filing papers with the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit to intervene in appeals over the Federal Communications Commission's (FCC) groundbreaking Open Internet Order, published in April 2015.

"Net neutrality is vital to protecting freedom of speech and innovation, and it is essential to the livelihood of all businesses that operate online. The Internet Freedom Business Alliance and its members played a major role in the fight for a free and open Internet leading up to the FCC order, and we remain steadfast in our commitment to preserving net neutrality," said Lauren Culbertson, Executive Director of the Internet Freedom Business Alliance.

"The FCC's order ensures that the pre-conditions that made the Internet a success—an open architecture and no discrimination against traffic between websites and consumers—remain intact, giving businesses and individuals the freedom to innovate without permission. We at Vimeo believe that the FCC got it right with its commonsense, light-touch regulations, and we look forward to helping defend those rules," said Michael Cheah, General Counsel of Vimeo.

"A truly open internet is critical to freedom, innovation, and economic growth in the US. We at Tumblr feel strongly that the FCC's open Internet order, with its bright line rules preventing gatekeepers from choosing winners and losers online, is a meaningful and necessary step toward defending the open Internet for all Americans. Today we proudly continue our efforts to preserve Internet openness by supporting the open Internet order in court," said Ari Shahdadi, Counsel for Tumblr.

In its Open Internet Order, the FCC reclassified broadband Internet access service as a Title II telecommunications service and implemented strong net neutrality rules—rules that prevent broadband carriers from blocking, throttling, or charging priority fees for Internet traffic within their networks. The order concluded a year-long rulemaking process that saw unprecedented public participation. Nearly four million people, companies, and groups filed comments, the overwhelming majority of which demanded strong net neutrality rules.

Following the order's release, a number of broadband carriers and their trade associations filed appeals in the D.C. Circuit seeking to overturn the order. The appeals challenge the FCC's use of Title II and FCC's authority to issue net neutrality rules such as the ban on paid prioritization. Vimeo, Meetup, Kickstarter, Etsy, Union Square Ventures and Tumblr—which have advocated for strong net neutrality rules—are filing motions to intervene in those appeals. The motions, if granted, will allow these companies to participate in the appeals process and help defend the FCC's order. At this time, no briefing schedule or oral argument date has been set by the court.

The Internet Freedom Business Alliance (IFBA) is a coalition of startups, small businesses, and venture investors advocating for strong, enforceable open Internet rules to promote American businesses, jobs, and small business investment.

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