

Mayor Soglin: Issues statement on FCC's decision to repeal net neutrality rules

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Eliminating “Net Neutrality” gives more economic power to the internet providers, particularly the two biggest telcos, AT&T and Verizon, and the two largest cable companies, Comcast and Charter (Spectrum). They can more easily create “fast lanes” for big, established content providers like Netflix, Amazon, Google and Facebook, who can pay more to have their info streams run faster and smoother. And while providers are not allowed to “throttle,” or slow down, smaller, non-paying upstart companies, the FCC has given up its legal powers to stop them if they do. It's the “honor” system.

The FCC will now legally treat the internet and broadband service less like a public utility such as telephone, and more like cable television companies, which are almost entirely deregulated, allowing pricing, service bundling, and service quality to be solely determined by providers. Consumers will pay more and get less in the long run. Meanwhile, the internet has become more like a necessary public utility and less like cable, which is primarily packages of entertainment television channels. Legal challenges will take a couple of years and during that time, new internet-dependent companies will be at a disadvantage compared to already established ones like Google, Amazon and Facebook.