

**Opening Statement of the Honorable Fred Upton
Subcommittee on Communications and Technology
Hearing on “Common Carrier Regulation of the Internet: Investment Impacts”
October 27, 2015**

(As Prepared for Delivery)

Few issues have consumed and divided this subcommittee quite like net neutrality over the past few years. From the early days of the dialogue, much of the thinking and the conversations have evolved. We are no longer debating whether there should be net neutrality rules, but instead, how to best put them into place. However, there is little debate around the fact that the FCC’s Title II reclassification is the wrong way to implement smart consumer protections for folks in Michigan and across the country.

We are here again to talk about these rules because they are not the solution that we need. We need certainty, so companies can continue to plan their business models for the years ahead. We need investment, so consumers can continue to receive the high-quality, innovative broadband services we have come to rely on in our everyday lives. We need a return to the light-touch regulatory world that has served the industry and consumers so well over the years.

Recognizing that many feel that strong net neutrality rules need to be put into place, Chairman Walden, Chairman Thune, and I put forward our discussion draft earlier this year to protect consumers and encourage robust investment and innovation at the same time,. Instead of waiting on another round of arguments in court right now, we could have sustainable, enforceable, reliable rules to maintain the Internet we know. But that’s not the case, and we are here to talk about what the alternative means.

This isn’t our attempt to undermine net neutrality, rather, it is to talk about what the real-world effects of an ill-fitting regulatory scheme are: depressed investment, fewer jobs, reduced innovation. Is this really the outcome that advocates had in mind when they pushed for stronger net neutrality rules? I don’t think so, and that’s why it is so important to not lose sight of the fact that we can have our cake and eat it to. We can have protections for Internet consumers and a vibrant investment environment – just not under Title II. While net neutrality was supposed to protect consumers, Title II may be having the opposite effect, and that means nobody wins.

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