

The Maine Heritage Policy Center Testimony to Oppose LD 1364 “An Act Regarding Net Neutrality and Internet Policy”

Senator Lawrence, Representative Berry, and distinguished members of the Committee On Energy, Utilities and Technology, my name is Adam Crepeau and I serve as a policy analyst at the Maine Heritage Policy Center. Thank you for the opportunity to express our opposition to LD 1364.

The Maine Heritage Policy Center strongly believes that this bill, in reinstating net neutrality, would double down on a misguided policy that undermines internet freedom and hurts consumers.

Though net neutrality has been sold as a critical safeguard for a free and flourishing internet, these claims ignore the fact that net neutrality rules were adopted in 2015, after two decades of rapid internet innovation that saw Google, YouTube, Facebook, and Twitter grow to hundred-billion dollar enterprises. What spurred the success of the internet was not heavy-handed government intervention but rather a light-touch approach that allowed entrepreneurship to thrive.

Additional internet regulations were not needed in 2015 and are not needed today. While net neutrality’s supporters claim that ISPs will block or throttle content to silence dissent and maximize profits, these fears have not materialized.

In addition, despite predictions that repealing net neutrality would reduce incentives for internet providers to invest in capital improvements, the data show that investment actually increased in the months after the FCC’s 2017 decision.¹ In fact, net neutrality itself had a dampening effect on investment. Between 2011 and 2015, when neutrality rules were being debated by the FCC, the mere possibility of implementing them reduced ISPs’ investments in network upgrades by \$150-\$200 billion.² And while net neutrality rules were in place from 2015 to 2017, investment in broadband fell for the first time ever outside of an economic recession.³ More investment means more access to broadband for rural communities in Maine, faster speeds to help small businesses interact with clients all over the world, and more reliable service for all consumers.

The FCC did the right thing in repealing net neutrality. Trying to pressure ISPs into abiding by these rules is a mistake. I urge you to reject this bill. Thank you.

¹<https://www.insidesources.com/despite-doomsday-predictions-broadband-investment-is-up-after-end-of-net-neutrality/>

² George S. Ford, "Net Neutrality, Reclassification and Investment: A Counterfactual Analysis," *Perspectives*, Apr. 25, 2017

³ Federal Communications Commission, "FCC Fact Sheet: Restoring Internet Freedom Declaratory Ruling, Report and Order – WC Docket No. 17-108," [apps.fcc.gov](https://www.fcc.gov), Nov. 2, 2017