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January 20, 2015

The Honorable John Thune  
Chairman  
Senate Commerce, Science &  
Transportation Committee  
511 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Bill Nelson  
Ranking Member  
Senate Commerce, Science &  
Transportation Committee  
716 Senate Hart Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Thune and Ranking Member Nelson:

On behalf of 1.1 million members of the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS® (NAR), I write in advance of your hearing entitled: "Protecting the Internet and Consumers through Congressional Action" to express NAR's belief that open internet rules are necessary to protect our members, who are primarily independent contractors and small businesses, as well as their clients. NAR is encouraged to see lawmakers acknowledge the need for action to protect the open Internet. NAR, together with other Main Street businesses, has been making this case for many years. However, the legislative process should not hold up the rulemaking currently underway at the FCC.

Recent statements from FCC Chairman Wheeler indicating that the FCC is moving toward strong, legally sustainable open Internet rules are encouraging. NAR supports open Internet rules that will protect American businesses and consumers by preventing Internet Service Providers (ISPs) from blocking, throttling, or discriminating against Internet traffic and prohibit paid prioritization arrangements. As you know, the FCC has a complete public record on this issue and should continue its work to vote on an Open Internet Order at its February meeting as planned.

The Internet has been a driving force for innovation for decades, and our members, their customers, and local communities are benefiting from this innovation every day. The economic growth and job creation fueled by the open Internet is unprecedented in American economic history. This growth has been fostered by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) under both Republican and Democrat administrations for over a decade.

Our members, who identify themselves as REALTORS®, represent a wide variety of real estate industry professionals. REALTORS® have been early adopters of technology, and are industry innovators who understand that consumers today are seeking real estate information and services that are fast, convenient and comprehensive. Increasingly, technology innovations are driving the delivery of real estate services and the future of the real estate sales businesses.

Streaming video, Voice over Internet Protocol, and mobile applications are commonly used in our businesses today. In the future, new technologies, like virtual



reality and telepresence among others, will be available that will no doubt require open internet access unencumbered by technical or financial discrimination.

The benefits of broadband Internet for innovation and economic development are unparalleled. But the nation will lose those tremendous benefits if the Internet does not remain an open platform, where Americans can innovate without permission and with low barriers to launching small businesses and creating jobs. Given this reality, it is important that this Committee work with the FCC to enact and preserve open Internet policies that promote competition between Internet application and service providers. NAR is ready to work with you on this important issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chris Polychron". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Chris Polychron  
2015 President, National Association of REALTORS®

cc: Members of the Senate Commerce, Science & Transportation Committee