

May 28, 2014

Dear Speaker Boehner, Leader Pelosi, Chairman Rogers, and Ranking Member Lowey:

We are writing on behalf of our respective members to express support for the decision by the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) to begin a process for transitioning oversight authority over a set of technical Internet functions to the multi-stakeholder community, provided certain specified principles are met. We also wish to express concern regarding efforts to limit the availability of funding that will be essential in ensuring a successful transition. In particular, amendments such as the one being considered by Representative Sean Duffy to H.R. 4660, the Commerce, Justice, Science Appropriations bill, would significantly impede this important undertaking. While we appreciate Representative Duffy's work to protect the global Internet and look forward to working with him to ensure a successful outcome, we do not believe the amendment helps the process and urge opposition to his amendment.

For the past 16 years, the United States has performed an important role as the overseer of the contract with the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) to provide technical management of the global Internet's systems of unique identifiers. Equally important was the recognition that, ultimately, the Internet should not be governed by and held accountable to governments but, rather, by a collective array of public and private stakeholders. The NTIA announcement is consistent with this principle.

The Internet's openness, stability, and security have been critical to its success. These facets are critical to the transformational success of the Internet and, in our view, are non-negotiable. Accordingly, we welcome NTIA's continued commitment to these goals as it works with ICANN and other stakeholders on the challenging task of crafting a fair, effective way to broaden participation in critical Internet policy decisions. In particular, we strongly support the U.S. Government's opposition to any proposal that would replace NTIA's role with a government-led, multilateral, or inter-governmental organization solution.

We commend your commitment to preserving an open, stable, and secure Internet, and welcome Congressional oversight of this critical process. We fully agree that there must be oversight to ensure this process reaches a successful conclusion and that there must be improvements to the existing accountability and transparency mechanisms. However, it is important to note that as Congress deliberates, the world watches to see whether as a nation we are truly committed to the multi-stakeholder approach to Internet governance. A successful transition will require months and perhaps years of careful planning and execution, as well as a steady commitment of resources to achieve the desired outcome. Any disruption in resources would be detrimental to this goal. For these reasons, the NTIA process must be allowed to continue towards a successful transition of its role, meeting the specified principles.

The Internet community will be vigilant in pursuit of these principles, and we believe Congress should as well. We strongly urge Congress to continue fully funding NTIA activities relative to this critical transition. As stakeholders, we pledge our full support in working with you to ensure that the Internet remains a vital engine of innovation and job creation for America and the world.

Respectfully,

The Internet Association

Information Technology Industry Council