



Chairman Julius Genachowski  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12th Street SW  
Washington, DC 20554

cc: Commissioners Meredith Attwell Baker, Michael Copps, Mignon Clyburn,  
Robert McDowell

August 12, 2009

Dear Chairman Genachowski,

The Media and Democracy Coalition (MDC) is writing to express our disappointment in the lack of public interest representation on the national broadband plan staff workshop panels taking place on August 12 & 13. MDC is a collaboration of more than 30 public interest groups across the nation, working to amplify the voice of the public in debates over media and communications policies.

When Blair Levin presented on the process for creating a national broadband plan before the FCC on July 2 he outlined a “mandate for the process” to be “open, transparent, inclusive, participatory, and data driven.” According to [www.broadband.gov](http://www.broadband.gov) “the goal of the workshops will be to promote an open dialogue between the FCC and key constituents on matters important to the National Broadband Plan. Key constituents will include service providers, equipment providers, applications providers, community groups, and other groups that have a stake in the future of broadband.” Based on these statements it was our understanding that the FCC was committed to an inclusive and participatory process to get at the facts surrounding the current state of broadband in the U.S., to hear from key constituents in order to put together a comprehensive plan that ensures open, universal, high speed Internet for everyone in the nation.

The recent announcement of the panelists taking part in the workshops seems to contradict the FCC’s commitment to an inclusive and participatory process. Discussing issues such as fixed and wireless broadband and deployment, unserved and underserved, as well as rural broadband issues without public interest or consumer rights representation amounts to talking about issues without hearing from those directly affected by them. Industry groups alone can’t speak to all of the facts regarding the subjects the FCC plans to cover in the workshops this week.

We urge the FCC to explain how five of the workshops taking place this week could exclude public interest groups and consumer rights advocates. Furthermore we urge the

Commission to reconsider the line up of panelists for upcoming workshops and expand the list to include actual representation from “key constituents.” For those topics already covered at workshops held today and this week, particularly the un and underserved topic, we urge the Commission to schedule additional workshop featuring public interest voices. If the FCC is truly committed to an inclusive process that engages a diverse set of views from both the public and private sector then the workshops need to reflect that commitment. We are happy to help make connections and recommendations for organizations that represent the public interest and consumer rights.

We respectfully request that the commission respond to our concerns before additional workshop schedules are released. We look forward to working with you to expand the diversity and representation on these important workshops.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Beth A McConnell". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "B" and "M".

Beth A McConnell  
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