

Access Humboldt applauds FCC on Lifeline and Privacy

<http://accesshumboldt.net/site/access-humboldt-applauds-fcc-lifeline-and-privacy>

FCC Opens Privacy Proceeding and Updates Lifeline Program
Access Humboldt applauds progress to close the Digital Divide

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Immediate Release

Today at their March Open Meeting the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) took two important actions that advance the public interest for broadband access by helping to close the digital divide.

Updating the Lifeline program to include broadband access is a huge step forward in making affordable internet available for low income folks. And opening a new proceeding to review protections for consumer privacy to ensure that the US doesn't fall into a continuing divide between the privacy haves and privacy have nots.

FCC's Open Meeting agenda today included:

"Providing Affordable Broadband for Low-Income Americans" to "comprehensively restructure and modernize the Lifeline program to efficiently and effectively connect low-income Americans to broadband, strengthen program oversight and administration, and take additional measures to eliminate waste, fraud, and abuse."

(WC Docket Nos. 11-42, 09-197, 10-90)

Access Humboldt's executive director Sean McLaughlin expressed local support:

"Lifeline can help bring affordable broadband connections to our least served communities in remote and rural places including the North Coast of California. We applaud the FCC's action to modernize the Lifeline program - with great appreciation to our colleagues across the nation who are working for universal access to open networks."

FCC's Open Meeting also opened a new proceeding:

"Protecting the Privacy of Customers of Broadband and other Telecommunications Services"

"... seeking comment on a proposed framework for ensuring that consumers have the tools they need to make informed choices about how their data is used and when it is shared by their broadband providers."

Access Humboldt's executive director Sean McLaughlin said; "Privacy protections are essential to ensure freedom of information and expression. FCC needs to take a deep look into issues that

arise when people rely upon open networks for public health, education, commerce, culture and safety. Transparency and accountability are essential."

Access Humboldt is a non-profit, community media organization formed in April 2006 to manage local cable franchise benefits on behalf of the County of Humboldt, California and the Cities of Eureka, Arcata, Fortuna, Rio Dell, Ferndale and Blue Lake.

Community media resources of Access Humboldt include: cable access TV channels; a wide area broadband network with dedicated optic fiber connections to twenty locations serving local jurisdictions, educational institutions and other public facilities; broadband access wireless networks; a Community Media Center with studio and other production equipment and training on the Eureka High School campus; and ongoing operational support for public, educational and governmental access media services from franchised cable operator, Suddenlink Communications.

Access Humboldt's Board of Directors convenes regular public meetings, provides local accountability and sets governing policy to guide the organization

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"Local Voices Through Community Media"