

For Immediate Release

Roman Catholic Diocese of Burlington

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Burlington Bishop Christopher J. Coyne, chairman of the U.S. Catholic Conference of Bishops' Committee on Communications, has urged the Trump administration to keep current net neutrality rules in place because an open internet, he said, is critical to the nation's faith communities and how they interact with their members.

"Without open internet principles which prohibit paid prioritization, we might be forced to pay fees to ensure that our high-bandwidth content receives fair treatment on the internet," said Bishop Coyne.

On Nov. 21, the current chairman of the Federal Communications Commission announced his proposal to roll back rules on neutrality put in place in 2015 by the Obama administration. Open internet or "net neutrality" ensures internet service providers neither favor nor discriminate against internet users or websites. This means providers cannot prioritize one type of content over another, nor can they speed up, slow down or block users' access to online content and services.

"Nonprofit communities, both religious and secular, cannot afford to pay to compete with profitable commercialized content," he said. These protections are "essential to protect and enhance the ability of vulnerable communities to use advanced technology and necessary for any organization that seeks to organize, advocate for justice or bear witness in the crowded and over-commercialized media environment."

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