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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE,
AND TRANSPORTATION

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6125

WEBSITE: <http://commerce.senate.gov>

October 15, 2015

Dr. Stephen D. Crocker
Chairman, Board of Directors
Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers
12025 Waterfront Drive, Suite 300
Los Angeles, CA 90094-2536

Chairman Crocker,

The Internet has had a profound impact on our economy, culture, and democracy. Therefore, as Congressional leaders on Internet policy we have carefully monitored the proposed Internet Assigned Numbers Authority (IANA) transition and weighed-in with the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) and the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) to ensure the Internet remains a platform for commerce, the free-flow of information, and a growing array of services in the United States and across the globe.

It is no exaggeration to say that community empowerment over government control is the bedrock for Congressional support of the current multistakeholder system of Internet governance. Congressional activity on the IANA transition has echoed this strong preference for a bottom-up, multistakeholder approach that empowers the community to reform ICANN to meet the needs of a post-transition world. Indeed, the widely supported, bipartisan, and bicameral *Domain Openness Through Continued Oversight Matters Act of 2015*, which we co-authored in the Senate, insists upon a community-driven process that produces significant accountability reforms to ICANN.

In legislation, letters, and hearings, we have called for robust accountability reforms to ICANN as a *necessary pre-condition* to any possible IANA transition. Our support for these reforms has not wavered. We understand the Cross Community Working Group on Enhancing ICANN Accountability has been diligently developing such a package of reforms to ensure the stakeholder community can exercise the stewardship role historically played by NTIA.

Significant accountability reforms that empower the community and are developed *by* the community are necessary for Congressional support of any such transition. Perhaps recognizing this, ICANN CEO Fadi Chehade assured Congress that ICANN will transmit to NTIA a transition proposal that lessens the Board's power or authority "if the community and the

stakeholders present [ICANN] with [such] a proposal. We will give it to NTIA, and we committed already that we will not change the proposal, that if we have views on that proposal, we should participate with the community.”¹ We expect ICANN to stand by that commitment. Accordingly, we encourage the board to work toward common ground to provide Internet stakeholders with the confidence it can hold ICANN accountable in the future.

Finally, we are mindful that Assistant Secretary Lawrence Strickling has made “clear that [the U.S. government] has not set any deadline for the transition.”² We agree, and we do not believe any arbitrary timeline should be used as a way to deter the community from securing the reforms it must have to sufficiently replace the role currently played by NTIA.

Thank you for your work regarding our shared interest in ensuring a free, open, secure, and stable Internet.

Sincerely,



JOHN THUNE
Chairman
U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce,
Science, and Transportation



BRIAN SCHATZ
Ranking Member
U.S. Senate Subcommittee on
Communications, Technology, Innovation,
and the Internet

¹ *Preserving the Multistakeholder Model of Internet Governance Hrg. before the U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation*, 114th Cong. (Comm. Print forthcoming).

² *Id.*