

U. S. House of Representatives
Washington, D. C. 20515

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February 27, 2014

The Honorable Tom Wheeler, Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 Twelfth Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20554

Dear Chairman Wheeler,

Last year, several members of the House Subcommittee on Communications and Technology wrote to seven of the largest wireless and wireline communications providers regarding their use of below-the-line fees on the monthly bills of consumers. The findings of the inquiry suggest that the use of such fees is widespread, and when consumers sign up for service they are usually buried in small print.

We believe consumers deserve greater transparency and disclosure prior to signing-up for service, as well as on their monthly bill. Our experience from examining the websites of these providers is that consumers cannot easily obtain a total estimate of their first month's bill, including all taxes, fees and surcharges, prior to entering personal information, such as name, social security number and credit card information. Given that the combination of such charges can add as much as 42 percent to a consumer's monthly bill, we believe that further examination by the FCC is warranted.

Additionally, after signing a service contract, we think consumers should have certainty in what they will *actually* pay each and every month during the life of their contract. We understand that the FCC has examined "bill shock," but this has typically focused on consumer-generated fees, such as unanticipated roaming or data charges. Consumers appear to have little recourse when company-imposed below-the-line fees are added or increased while a subscriber is already under contract. There should be a thorough examination of this practice to ensure consumers can more accurately assess the true cost of fulfilling a multi-year service contract.

We respectfully request that you open a proceeding on the disclosure of below-the-line fees and urge you to work with the nation's communications providers to ensure consumers are able to accurately compare competing services and choose the provider that best meets their needs.

Thank you in advance for your efforts to protect consumers, and we look forward to your timely response to our request.

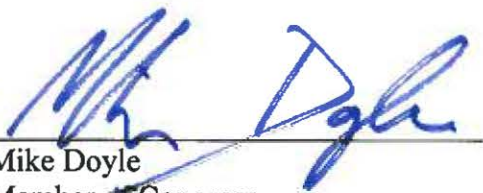
Most gratefully,



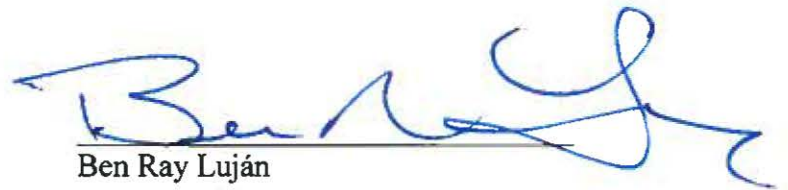
Anna G. Eshoo, Ranking Member
Communications and Technology Subcommittee
Energy and Commerce Committee



Howard Coble
Member of Congress



Mike Doyle
Member of Congress



Ben Ray Luján
Member of Congress