



December 13, 2017

---

## MADIGAN DEMANDS FEDERAL INVESTIGATION INTO FRAUDULENT NET NEUTRALITY COMMENTS

### *AG Madigan Urges FCC To Delay Vote On Plan To Eliminate Net Neutrality Rules*

**Chicago** — Attorney General Lisa Madigan today called for a federal investigation in light of widespread reports that millions of comments received by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) in its net neutrality rule-making process were submitted under fraudulent or stolen identities. Madigan also called for the FCC to delay its vote on its plan to end existing net neutrality rules.

In response to numerous complaints from Illinois consumers, Madigan asked the FBI to investigate the sources of the fraudulent comments to uncover both how the fraudulent comments were submitted and to require the FCC act to protect the reliability of its public comment system. In a letter to FCC Chairman Ajit Pai, Madigan urged the FCC to delay the planned Dec. 14 vote and cooperate with investigations and ensure the integrity of the rulemaking process.

"My office has received complaints from Illinoisans whose names and addresses were used to submit comments to the FCC without their consent," Madigan said. "These fraudulent comments need to be investigated thoroughly, and the FCC cannot rely on them to support ending net neutrality."

Although it has acknowledged that more than 7 million comments were submitted using temporary email addresses and more than 40,000 comments were associated with a single address in Russia, the FCC has dismissed concerns that its vote on the Restoring Internet Freedom Order will have been influenced by fraudulent comments.

As Attorney General of the State of Illinois, Madigan is responsible for protecting the public interest by ensuring that Illinois consumers have access to a transparent and open government. The Attorney General requested the FCC and FBI investigate the source of the fraudulent comments in order to ensure that consumers can participate in decision-making by government agencies.

"Fraudulent comments likely drowned out the legitimate voices of consumers who participated by filing comments," said Madigan. "How can consumers be confident that its government is responsive to its views if the agency is so disinterested in the public true opinions and takes no action when the process has been corrupted?"

Madigan also joined a coalition of 17 other state attorneys general urging the FCC to delay its vote, stressing the importance of public participation to the democratic process. The attorneys general encouraged the FCC to cooperate with investigations by the New York Attorney General and other law enforcement agencies. In the letter, the attorneys general stressed that public participation on the net neutrality rulemaking was essential.

They wrote:

*"It is essential that the Commission gets a full and accurate picture of how changes to net neutrality will affect the everyday lives of Americans before they can act on such sweeping policy changes."*

In July, Madigan led a coalition of 14 attorneys general in submitting comments to the FCC in opposition to the proposed rollback of critical net neutrality protections. Madigan argued that the FCC must ensure open access to the internet and the continued equal access to all content providers, which can only be upheld through the principles of an open internet or net neutrality.

The letters can be found [here](#).

[Return to December 2017 Press Releases](#)

