

Net neutrality rules have an official end date

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The Federal Communications Commission's repeal of net neutrality rules will take effect in a month, it announced Thursday.

The net neutrality regulations, established in 2015, are meant to ensure all [internet](#) traffic is treated equally. They prohibit internet service providers from creating slow and fast lanes online, and from engaging in preferential treatment of some content over others.

The rules were a culmination of years of legal and political battles over online traffic amid the rise of the internet and as it grew to be indispensable.

"On June 11, these unnecessary and harmful Internet regulations will be repealed and the bipartisan, light-touch approach that served the online world well for nearly 20 years will be restored," said FCC Chairman Ajit Pai in a statement Thursday.

Pai, a Republican, voted against the Open Internet Rules in 2015 as a commissioner of the FCC. After he was appointed FCC chairman by President Donald Trump, Pai set out to repeal the rules. The Republican-majority FCC voted to do just that in a partisan 3-2 vote in December, after a record number of Americans weighed in during the public comment period.

"The agency failed to listen to the American public and gave short shrift to their deeply held belief that internet openness should remain the law of the land," said Jessica Rosenworcel, the sole remaining Democratic commissioner in the FCC, in a statement Thursday. "The agency turned a blind eye to serious problems in its process—from Russian intervention to fake comments to stolen identities in its files."

There were charges that bots were among the millions of commenters to the agency.

The FCC's announcement comes ahead of a Senate effort to overturn the repeal. Wednesday, Sen. Ed Markey, D-Massachusetts, launched an effort to force a vote in the Senate. That vote could come as soon as next week.

"The Senate must act NOW and pass my resolution to save the internet as we know it," Markey said in a tweet Thursday after learning of the FCC announcement.

In a later tweet, Markey said: "Next week, when we force a vote on my resolution to save #NetNeutrality, every senator will have to go on record on how they see the internet: a dynamic, diverse, democratic space that fosters innovation, or just another market for massive corporations to control."

The FCC is also facing lawsuits from nearly two dozen state attorneys general who oppose the repeal of the rules.

The FCC's repeal, titled Restoring Internet Freedom Order, was adopted in December. Pai said Thursday that the June 11 effective date should give internet providers time to comply with a new transparency rule included in the order. The transparency rule requires ISPs to state whether they block or throttle any content, and whether they engage in paid prioritization.

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