December 21, 2011

Dr. Stephen D. Crocker
Chairman of the Board of Directors
Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers
1101 New York Avenue, N.W.
Suite 930
Washington, D.C. 20005

Mr. Rod Beckstrom
President and CEO
Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers
4676 Admiralty Way, Suite 330
Marina del Rey, CA 90292

Dear Dr. Crocker and Mr. Beckstrom:

Last week, the House Energy and Commerce Committee Subcommittee on Communications and Technology held a hearing to examine the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) pending expansion of the generic Top-Level Domain (gTLD) program. Although we believe expanding gTLDs is a worthy goal that may lead to increased competition on the Internet, we are very concerned that there is significant uncertainty in this process for businesses, non-profit organizations, and consumers. To that end, we urge you to delay the planned January 12, 2012, date for the acceptance of applications for new gTLDs.

At the December 18, 2011, hearing, ICANN’s Senior Vice President Kurt Pritz detailed the process by which your organization developed the gTLD expansion program as well as additional protections that have been put in place to protect businesses and consumers. However, many stakeholders are not convinced that ICANN’s process has resulted in an acceptable level of protection. A wide coalition of interested groups, including top U.S. and multinational companies and large non-profit organizations, support the call for a delay. Both at our hearing and in the days since, the Council of Better Business Bureaus, the National Restaurant Association, Goodwill Industries, the United Nations, the International Monetary Fund, the Coalition Against Domain Name Abuse, and the Coalition for Responsible Internet Domain Oversight – collectively representing hundreds of brands and charities – have all expressed concerns with gTLD expansion and suggested changes that could alleviate those concerns.
On December 16, 2011, the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) Chairman and Commissioners sent a letter to ICANN highlighting “the potential for significant consumer harm resulting from the unprecedented increase in new gTLDs” and asked ICANN to “mitigate the risk of serious consumer injury and to improve the accuracy of Whois data” before approving any new gTLD applications.

Given these widespread concerns, a short delay will allow interested parties to work with ICANN and offer changes to alleviate many of them, specifically concerns over law enforcement, cost and transparency that were discussed in recent Congressional hearings.

We look forward to hearing from you on this time sensitive matter.

Sincerely,

Fred Upton
Chairman

Sue Myrick
Vice Chairman

Greg Walden
Chairman
Subcommittee on Communications and Technology

Anna G. Eshoo
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Communications and Technology

Cliff Stearns
Chairman
Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations

John Shimkus
Chairman
Subcommittee on Environment and the Economy

Mary Bono Mack
Chairman
Subcommittee on Commerce, Manufacturing, and Trade
cc: The Honorable Henry A. Waxman, Ranking Member

Jamie Hedlund, Vice President of Government Affairs - Americas
Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers
SIGNATORIES

Fred Upton  
Greg Walden  
Cliff Stearns  
Mary Bono Mack  
Charles Bass  
Edward Markey  
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