April 2018

DMEA/Elevate Position Statement, Regarding the end of Net Neutrality

In December 2017, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) removed some of the consumer protections, popularly known as net neutrality. While we are not changing the way we deliver internet service to our internet subscriber, the Board would like to express its official stance on this issue.

What is Net Neutrality?
The phrase net neutrality is most commonly used in reference to restrictions put in place by the FCC in 2015. These restrictions kept Internet Service Providers (ISPs)—the companies that provide internet service to consumers and businesses, like Elevate—from privileging certain types of content. It was required that every website be treated neutrally (hence net neutrality)—every website should load as quickly or cost the same to deliver as any other website.

Without net neutrality, an ISP could charge Company A premium prices to load their content as fast as Company B (this is called throttling). The increase in price Company A pays would, likely, be passed on to Company A's customers. For another example, an ISP could choose to load their competitors' websites far more slowly than their own or block them altogether. Customers who currently have service with that ISP would then find it difficult to switch providers (this is called blocking). The intent of net neutrality restrictions was to protect consumers. The end of net neutrality means that ISPs can choose whether to throttle or block websites.

Our Position
The Board's position is that Elevate will follow the original net neutrality restrictions from 2015, even if the FCC no longer requires us to do so.

• We will not prioritize certain types of content over others.
• We will not throttle the speeds of various websites.
• We will not slow down customers' internet speeds.

The Board believes equal access to every part of the internet—without throttling or blocking— is not only desirable for our customers, but also is in the best interest of the communities we serve.

While we can control the effect of the repeal of net neutrality within our network, we cannot control the effects that other companies (upstream wholesale providers or the peering partners) have on website destinations. There are many throttle points and many different network owners that comprise the World Wide Web, and unfortunately we cannot control what policies they put in place or how they will impact our consumers.