

Emily Hackett, Executive Director
1615 L Street NW, Suite 1100
Washington, DC 20036-5624
Tel: 202-861-2476
Cell: 202-329-0017
Email: emilyh@internetalliance.org
Web: www.internetalliance.org



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Suzanne R. Sene
Office of International Affairs,
National Telecommunications and Information Administration
1401 Constitution Avenue, N.W., Room 4701
Washington, DC 20230

Dear Ms. Sene:

My name is Emily Hackett. I am the executive director of the Internet Alliance (IA), the leading Internet trade association operating in the states. The IA's mission is to promote confidence and trust in the Internet so it can reach its potential as the most dynamic market medium of this century. My members include AOL, VeriSign, Comcast, AT&T, eHarmony, IAC, Expedia, Experian, Match.com, Yahoo and others. I am writing today on behalf of all my members to comment on the midterm review of the Joint Project Agreement (JPA) between the Department of Commerce and the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN). Simply put, there is more work to be done. The U.S. government, through the Commerce Department, must remain involved in the governance of ICANN and the JPA must continue.

To function effectively and fairly there must always be a stable, independent governance structure in place to protect the Domain Name System (DNS) against governmental and private sector interference. At this time the JPA, provides ICANN with this critical stability. The ideal governance structure will be independent of any one government. We urge you to use this mid-term review to recommit to a process that will resolve outstanding issues and pave the way toward this important independent oversight.

ICANN will be ready to stand alone only when it achieves the stability, accountability and global legitimacy that were envisioned when it was created in 1998. ICANN is not there yet. It needs a plan, a path to independence. It has not yet identified a way to ensure long-term procedural transparency or protect against undue commercial or governmental interference. We urge the U.S. government to seek and obtain an international commitment to the independence of ICANN and to its privatized, bottom-up process. This plan need not take years to develop if ICANN, the U.S. government and the global Internet community renew their commitment to the process.

We share the goal articulated by Chairman Peter Dengate Thrush in his letter of January 8, 2008 where he wrote it is critical to the long term success of ICANN that "no single government" be seen as controlling the system. We do not agree with him that ICANN is strong enough yet to assure that its process and decisions will remain independent over

the long term. The JPA is scheduled to expire in 2009. We urge you use the remaining several months to work with all stakeholders to resolve the remaining issues to create a lasting, long-term governance process that operates independently of any one government or private sector interest. My members are committed to this process.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Emily Hackett
Executive Director