

The Honorable John D. Rockefeller
Chairman
Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee
United States Senate
254 Senate Russell Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kay Bailey Hutchinson
Ranking Member
Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee
United States Senate
254 Senate Russell Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Rockefeller and Ranking Member Hutchinson:

In response to the December 8 hearing regarding new generic top-level domains (gTLDs), we write to register our concern with the mischaracterization of elements of the gTLD program, and to communicate our support for new gTLDs.

The organizations signing this letter believe the introduction of new gTLDs will be innovative and economically beneficial, that the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) has conducted an inclusive and well-handled review of the program, and that preparations for gTLD introduction are sufficient to ensure Internet security and stability and to protect rights holders.

ICANN, along with multiple relevant stakeholders and policy organizations, including the Generic Names Supporting Organization, undertook a very lengthy, comprehensive and transparent process that led to the approaching application for and introduction of new gTLDs. Since the formation of the multi-stakeholder Internet governance, no process has been as inclusive, and no level of outreach has been as far-reaching as the one facilitating discussion of namespace expansion. ICANN, its stakeholders, the intellectual property community, and governments are to be applauded for actively seeking, welcoming and incorporating the input of so many.

As undeniably inclusive as this process has been, however, we believe it is even more important to recognize the significant social and economic opportunities new gTLDs will provide, particularly in a fragile global economy. Since ICANN's establishment in 1998, a key element of its mandate has been not only to ensure the secure and stable operation of a global domain name system, but to promote the competition and consumer choice that contributes to global economic growth. Established and developing economies are anticipating the new opportunities afforded by new gTLDs—and it is noteworthy that this expansion will include internationalized domain names (IDNs), TLDs that permit Internet users, for the first time, to access domain names in their native languages and character sets.

Innovation and expansion into new areas of technology always bring questions and concerns—further development of the namespace is no exception. Since ICANN's inception in 1998, it has successfully managed careful generic namespace expansion while addressing the well-known concerns of many, including cybersecurity experts, government representatives, intellectual property rights holders, and others. Since the process for the current round of expansion was introduced in 2005, more than six years ago, all interested stakeholders took unprecedented steps—well in advance—that provide further protections against infringement, damage or harm to national interests. More than a dozen open-to-the-public global meetings, nearly fifty public comment periods, a dedicated meeting between the ICANN Board and its Governmental Advisory Committee, and the exchange and discussion of tens of thousands of documents confirm that the decision in favor of new gTLDs can't be logically characterized as sudden.

These painstaking deliberations have involved some of us more than others. However, we each equally respect and support the efforts and the intentions of ICANN in this beneficial endeavor. We are confident the evaluation process for applicants, including the stringent attention to DNS stability and security, will allow for a safe and productive new gTLD introduction.

While new gTLDs will experience different levels of end-user adoption, we optimistically anticipate the useful possibilities for new services and applications from the namespace, the positive economic impact in the United States and globally, the inclusion of developing nations in Internet growth and development, and the realization of the hard work and preparation of the thousands of interested stakeholders dedicated not only to their own interests, but that of the global Internet.

Sincerely:

Alexa Raad, Chief Executive Officer, Architelos
Alexander Siffrin, Chief Executive Officer, Key Systems GmbH
Andreas Schreiner, Chief Executive Officer, InterNetWire Communications GmbH
Angie D. Graves, President, WEB Group, Inc.
Antony Van Couvering, Chief Executive Officer, Minds + Machines
Bhavin Turakhia, Chief Executive Officer and Founder, Directi
Bret Fausett, President and Founder, Internet Pro APC
Clyde Beattie, Principal, The Yorkland Group
Dr. Liz Williams, Chief Executive Officer, Sedari
Elliot Noss, Chief Executive Officer, Tucows
John Styll, Chief Operating Officer, Far Further
Jonathon Nevett, President, Domain Dimensions, LLC
Kevin Saimon, President, Urban Brain
Krista Papac, Chief Strategy Officer, ARI Registry Services
Loren Balman, Chief Executive Officer, Far Further
Mason Cole, Principal, 5x5 Communications
Michael Berkens, Director, RightOfTheDot LLC

Mike Rodenbaugh, Founder, Rodenbaugh Law
Monte Cahn, President/Director, RightOfTheDot LLC
Nacho Amadoz, Legal & Policy Director, Fundació PuntCAT
Paul Stahura, Chief Executive Officer, Donuts Inc.
Richard Wilhelm, Principal, RJW Partners, LLC
Robert Connelly, President, Domains Only
Robin Gross, Executive Director, IP Justice
Steve Miholovich, Sr. Vice President Sales & Marketing, Safenames Ltd.
Susan Prosser, Vice President, Marketing, Domain Tools
Tad Yokoyama, President, Interlink Co., Ltd.
William Mushkin, Chief Executive Officer and Founder, Name.com

cc: Members of the Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee