Comcast is giving its employees $1,000 bonuses because net neutrality is dead

Comcast today announced that it would be doling out $1,000 employee bonuses in response to the Federal Communications Commission's repeal of net neutrality rules last week, as well as the Senate and House's passing of Republicans' tax reform bill poised to provide a substantial windfall to wealthy Americans and corporations. Comcast has long been an opponent to Title II classification, which gave the FCC the authority to regulate telecommunications companies and ISPs like utilities. The company sought to kill those consumer protections under the guise they harmed investment, and it celebrated the FCC's actions last week.

Following the net neutrality repeal, Comcast was unwilling to say it would never block or throttle content or offer paid fast lanes. Those actions are all prevented by robust net neutrality rules and regulatory oversight, yet now are all distinct possibilities since FCC Chairman Ajit Pai gutted Obama-era protections in the name of returning the internet to its prior regulation-free (read: corporation-friendly) regulatory system.

Comcast says it plans to spend "in excess of $50 billion" over the next five years investing in infrastructure and building out physical broadband plants and funding entertainment ventures in TV and film. The news coincides with AT&T's similar announcement today that it plans to give 200,000 employees $1,000 bonuses each in response to tax reform. AT&T did not mention the FCC or net neutrality, but as an ISP the company stands to benefit in ways similar to Comcast.

Here’s Comcast’s statement in full:

> *Based on the passage of tax reform and the FCC’s action on broadband, Brian L. Roberts, Chairman and CEO of Comcast NBCUniversal, announced that the Company would award special $1,000 bonuses to more than one hundred thousand eligible frontline and non-executive employees. Roberts also announced that the Company expects to spend well in excess of $50 billion over the next five years investing in infrastructure to radically improve and extend our broadband plant and capacity, and our television, film and theme park offerings. With these investments, we expect to add thousands of new direct and indirect jobs. We will have more to say on capital at our upcoming January 24th earnings report.*

Disclosure: Comcast is an investor in Vox Media, The Verge*’s parent company.*

https://www.theverge.com/2017/12/20/16803608/comcast-fcc-employee-bonus-net-neutrality-dead