

VIA ELECTRONIC FILING

Marlene H. Dortch
Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, S.W.
Washington, DC 20554

Re: Applications of T-Mobile US, Inc. and Sprint Corporation, WT Docket No. 18-197

Dear Ms. Dortch,

I have attached for your review and consideration a copy of an opinion editorial authored by me that was recently published in The Deseret News. It details the reasons I am supportive of the T-Mobile/Sprint merger. I have a background in the telecommunications industry, having worked in it for 20 years for a number of companies, including Jones Inter Cable and Comcast.

To summarize the piece, I believe that the merger is vital to the rapid deployment of 5G, which is crucial for American competitiveness. Furthermore, with a 5G network spearheaded by T-Mobile and Sprint, I believe we can finally get high-speed internet to our nation's rural communities. Getting to these smaller markets is the right thing to do, as they've been left out of wireless advancements in the past.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions.

Sincerely,

Bill Rapple
President & CEO, Draper Area Chamber of Commerce

Attachment

cc: (via email)

Chairman Ajit Pai
Commissioner Michael O'Rielly
Commissioner Brendan Carr
Commissioner Jessica Rosenworcel

Op-Ed – Bill Rappleye, President and CEO of the Draper Area Chamber of Commerce

The mission of the Draper Area Chamber of Commerce is to promote and support our local businesses by acting as a liaison between “business, government and residents of the community.” As Chamber president, I strive to serve this mission every day in my work, as do staff and Chamber Board members.

Most of the opportunities for support that come our way are important but limited to the local community and businesses. Occasionally we might be asked to support an initiative that affects our state or our region, but rarely do we have the opportunity to voice our support for something that would impact virtually every American.

The merger between T-Mobile and Sprint provides us with this opportunity. This merger will bring faster internet speeds and increase access to people and communities across the country.

I worked in the telecommunications industry for more than 20 years for such companies as Telecommunication Inc., Jones Inter Cable, United Cable of Colorado and Comcast. I have witnessed and been part of the changes that can be achieved through mergers. Bringing two companies together with a wealth of resources to make the speed of doing business better, improving the bottom line through new technology, is an opportunity to bolster all business.

Most people don't spend a lot of time thinking about the technology that drives their smartphones and internet access and how it has changed the way we all do business today. It is worth taking a look back to see how far we've come in this technology revolution. The first generation of wireless freed us from the tether of land-based phone lines. The next brought us rudimentary text messaging. That was followed by faster speeds and higher transfer rates, eventually enabling video and mobile broadband internet access.

While urban and suburban areas now have 4G access, rural areas have not been so fortunate. Many remain stuck with limited access, and some lack wireless coverage entirely.

The merger between T-Mobile and Sprint will expedite adding these upgrades to the smaller markets as well. Each company brings a set of wireless assets to the table, and it is the combination of these assets that will allow the new T-Mobile to quickly deploy a 5G network. Locally we have experienced holes in coverage, or slow downloads due to lack of available bandwidth. 5G is a game changer in providing solutions to many current limitations experienced with 4G.

Importantly, a 5G infrastructure is also critical to American competitiveness. It's easy to take for granted many of the companies that are now household names, but Facebook, Netflix and Amazon — to name just a few — have been able to grow because of the mobile internet enabled by 4G. So when we talk about 5G, we aren't just talking about how companies might benefit right now — we're talking about the framework that will enable new companies to form.

The U.S. needs to lead in 5G, because countries that provide the best infrastructure first will be the ones that see innovative new companies form. Right now, we're falling behind, but the T-Mobile merger will help change that.

This merger is important for businesses, rural communities and individuals across our country. Support is critical, and I'm proud to lend my voice to make it happen.

William Rappleye is the president and chief executive officer for the Draper Area Chamber of Commerce.