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H.R. GENTSCH
PRESIDENT AND
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

July 22, 1994

The Honorable Reed Hundt
Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
1919 M Street, NW., Room 814
Washington, DC 20554

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Dear Chairman Hundt:

I am writing this letter in support of the comments of the National Rural Telecommunications Cooperative (NRTC) in the matter of Implementation of Section 19 of the Cable Television Consumer Protection and Competition Act of 1992, Annual Assessment of the Status of Competition in the Market for the Delivery of Video Programming, CS Docket No. 94-48.

We are a small independent telephone company located in southern Illinois and, as a member of NRTC, are participating in the DIRECTV project of delivering television programming to customers who are largely outside of the area served by cable TV companies. In order for us to compete in our local marketplace, we need a "Level Playing Field" that guarantees complete access to all programming at fair rates, comparable to those paid by our competitors.

We currently do not have DBS distribution rights to Time Warner and Viacom programming, like HBO, Showtime, Cinemas, The Movie Channel, VH-1, MTV, Nickelodeon, etc., because of the distribution arrangements made with United States Satellite Broadcasting Co., Inc. (USSB).

We were of the opinion that Congress had previously solved this problem when the 1992 Cable Act was passed. It is difficult to understand why other distributors, such as PrimeStar have access to HBO and Showtime, while we are unable to deliver these packages to our customer base.

If we, as a distributor of DIRECTV, were allowed to provide these services, consumers would be able to choose their service providers resulting in effective competition.

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We strongly agree with the NRTC position that the FCC should act to enforce the wishes of Congress as put forth in the 1992 Cable Act. We urge you to prohibit this type of exclusionary arrangements represented by the USSB/Time Warner/ Viacom deal.

We appreciate your consideration to our request.

Sincerely,



cc: U. S. Senator Paul Simon
U. S. Senator Carol Mosley-Braun
U. S. Representative Jerry Costello
U. S. Representative Dennis Hastert
U. S. Representative W. J. (Billy) Tauzin

William Caton, Secretary
The Hon. James H. Quello
The Hon. Andrew C. Barrett
The Hon. Susan Ness
The Hon. Rachelle B. Chong