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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

The Honorable William Kennard
Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
1919 M. Street, NW
Washington D.C. 20554

CC Dkt 97-231

Dear Chairman Kennard:

Let me take this opportunity as a relative of a Bell South employee to say that I have followed from the very beginning their request to get into the long-distance market here in Louisiana. I recognize that Congress established certain criteria for local telephone companies to meet before receiving approval. From what I have read and I have heard Bell South in Louisiana has met these requirements. Therefore I believe they should be allowed to enter the long-distance market and compete immediately with the numerous other companies already operating in our State.

Bell South's entry into the market, I believe, will be beneficial to me as a consumer. I have read that they have committed to lower rates by 5 percent. That will be a real saving that I can recognize immediately.

Increased competition among local and long distance providers will also give customers the ability to choose one company, whether it is Bell South or one of its competitors to provide all their communications needs, including local

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long-distance, wireless, Internet access or cable T.V. Service.

Here in Louisiana Bell South is good to its employees, customers and to our many cities and communities, participating in many charitable under-takings.

In conclusion I request, Chairman Kennard that Bell South's application to compete in the long distance market here in Louisiana be approved. I believe the results will be positive for our great State

Sincerely,

Maybelle S Powell