



# Georgia Department of Agriculture

Gary W. Black, Commissioner

19 Martin Luther King Jr. Drive, SW • Atlanta, Georgia 30334-4201

October 8, 2014

Ms. Marlene Dortch  
Secretary  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12<sup>th</sup> Street SW  
Washington, DC 20554

**Re: Applications of AT&T, Inc. and DIRECTV for Consent to Assign or Transfer Control of Licenses & Authorizations, MB Docket No. 14-90**

Dear Ms. Dortch:

Thank you for this opportunity to express my support for the DIRECTV / AT&T merger, which will benefit agricultural communities throughout Georgia. With over a 77 billion dollar impact, agriculture is Georgia's leading industry. Agriculture employees one in seven Georgians, most of which are in rural communities across our state.

Modern Internet access is a key resource and tool for agriculture. Looking forward, ag-technology's future is limitless offering new ways to manage vital information on the farm. From high-tech irrigation systems to unmanned aerial work, internet connectivity is key. These tools provide more accurate and useful information, but additionally, being able to access the information remotely, at any time, makes them more beneficial to the farmer. But many of our farms and agricultural communities throughout Georgia have a hard time getting online at all, and even when service is available obtaining access to the speeds and capacity needed to use today's high-tech tools is often impossible.

I am privileged to serve all Georgians by helping to ensure that our food is safe and farms thrive, and in this capacity, I have learned much about the needs of our rural communities and farms throughout the state. Expanding access to advanced communications networks and cutting-edge Internet services would bring new opportunities to all of our people. This access would give farmers the ability to use high-tech tools that can help them increase yields and productivity, and it can bring new quality of life possibilities and educational opportunities to our farm families and communities.

AT&T has announced plans to bring high-speed Internet to many additional customer locations in Georgia, predominantly rural ones, once the merger is completed. This commitment is part of a solution to the widespread rural broadband disparities that exist, and I'm eager to see it implemented.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you need additional information.

Sincerely,

Gary W. Black, Commissioner  
Georgia Department of Agriculture