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Placer Independent Resource Services

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MAR 10 2016

1-866-418-0232

Chairman Tom Wheeler
Honorable Commissioners
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street SW
Washington, DC 20554

Federal Communications Commission
Office of the Secretary

RE: OPPOSE Charter merger with Time Warner Cable DOCKET FILE COPY ORIGINAL

Dear Chairman Wheeler,

In keeping with your remarks yesterday to the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation, in which you stated that the work of the FCC is:

"to ensure that our communications networks reflect our core values – universal access, public safety, and consumer protection. Preserving and promoting competition continues to be the underlying foundation of our agenda."

We believe that allowing Charter to merge with Time Warner would undermine and destroy the competition that remains in the cable market. Furthermore, it would be contrary to consumer protection at its very core.

We are the federal and state designated Center for Independent Living serving individuals with disabilities and their families throughout Placer El Dorado and Alpine Counties in the Sierra Mountains and foothills of north central California.

Many people residing in rural or mountainous areas including seniors, individuals with disabilities and economically-deprived families, frequently have low or fixed incomes, may subsist below the poverty line, have to choose between food and medicine, have to rely on food banks, may rely on public transit, and cannot afford "luxuries" like cable or internet services.

Over-the-air digital reception of television broadcasts is nearly non-existent in the mountains due to terrain, big trees, and the behavior of digital signal waves. With analog signals, we received many channels with rabbit ears. With digital signals, we have no television reception at my home and it is no different for the families we serve.

In particular, I am reminded of one senior lady, age 83 and deaf. She is very poor and cannot afford cable service, nor Internet. She relies on a subsidized landline to communicate with the world through her TTY. She cannot receive any TV signal since the conversion to digital services.

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This proposed merger is a threat to the well-being of all these people. Allowing a merger of two cable giants, effectively creating two remaining monopolies, will drive up prices by eliminating competition. These folks that are most at risk will be further alienated and the isolation will impact their physical and mental health, contributing to debilitating depression, and presenting serious safety concerns by not being adequately informed of dangers like wildfire.

We urge you in the strongest possible terms to OPPOSE and DENY the merger of Charter and Time Warner Cable.

Thank you for considering this testimony to the devastating effect it would have on very vulnerable people. Economic growth must not be gained at the cost of threatening the health and well-being of at-risk people.

Very sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Susan L. Miller".

Susan L. Miller
Executive Director

SLM: