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From: "ROD ESSICK" <rpackwolf@hotmail.com>
To: <mpowell@fcc.gov>
Date: Thu, Jan 3, 2002 10:23 PM
Subject: Direct TV/Dish Network Merger

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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

Mr. Powell,

I don't know what role the FCC will play in the proposed merger between DirectTV/Dish Network, but wanted to send you a copy of an e-mail I sent to the Department of Justice. I would appreciate your reading my stance on this proposed merger and let me know the FCC's role in this decision.

Dear Sir/Madam:

I am writing this note as a long-time Dish Network customer (January 1996) in opposition to their merger with DirectTV. I think that allowing Dish Network to control the entire US satellite market will not serve the public interest. By its nature it is anti-competitive because the consumer will have only two choices, local cable or Dish Network. As a show of its strong-arm tactics that Dish Network will use against program content providers, consider what happened on January 1. Dish Network dropped ESPN Classic off its channel lineup without saying one word to its customers. When I called today the customer service rep said that ESPN wanted too much money for the channel. Well, the channel is one of the most watched channels on satellite or cable TV, so it deserves to be paid accordingly. I believe if this merger is allowed there will be more of this war waging between Dish Network and the content providers with the consumers losing their channels in the dispute. If there is more competition in the marketplace they will have to settle their dispute quickly or risk losing their customers to other competitors. I have always been a supporter of Dish Network and applauded its growth and success. It had been great on customer service, but in the past two years its customer service support has fallen like a rock with incredible hold times. In addition, I get sick every time I see another promotional offer that will allow new customers to get their equipment for little to nothing when I paid almost \$500 for two receivers in 1996 and still had to pay full price for my service, no discount packages. The Dish management is using current customers to subsidize its targeting of new customers. As they continue to get more customers (that's the goal) they believe that they can make the content providers get on their knees and bow down to them. If this merger is allowed the content providers will probably relent, but the customer will suffer because these content providers will cutback on their productions because of reduced revenue from a combined Dish Network/DirectTV. I have studied this issue from all angles and although originally supportive of the merger, I am totally against it. It will create a totally uncompetitive and anti-American environment. Please join with me and preserve the principles that America was founded on, a competitive and free market society. Thank you for your time!

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Roderick Essick

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