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From: "Brian J. Koch" <Brian.Karen.Koch@worldnet.att.net>
To: <mpowell@fcc.gov>
Date: Mon, Jan 7, 2002 6:25 PM
Subject: EchoStar Hughes merger application

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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

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Dear Commissioner:

I am undecided about whether EchoStar should merger with Hughes DirecTV unit.

I do however have MONOPOLY concerns.

CC 01-348

If this merger is approved strong regulations need to be in place for those with no alternatives.

I am a rural customer. My zip code is 97437. According to ABC I am able to receive their signal. I have tried to contact my local ABC affiliate via phone and e-mail. I NEVER did get a response. I tried to watch the Fiesta Bowl on New Year's day televised by my local ABC affiliate. The signal was so poor that every 5 to 10 seconds the TV screen went blank. It was IMPOSSIBLE to watch. This was a very important game for Univ of Oregon fans. Admittedly, January 1 was a rainy day, but it RAINS frequently in Oregon. The next day I got a lousy signal, but at least the screen didn't go blank every 5 to 10 seconds. This is the kind of thing I have to put up with -- the monopoly ABC TV station claims I can receive them. As a result I NEVER watch ABC network TV except when it's something extremely important and only available through ABC.

My concerns with the EchoStar Hughes merger is the power a single company will have over satellite customers with no alternative. This is true both in TV services and broadband internet services.

EchoStar Hughes claims this merger will be more competitive -- more choices with cable and satellite services. I don't think so. Look at Electricity Deregulation.

I don't have any choices -- except either get satellite or watch a blank screen (Fiesta Bowl story above). There is NO cable services in my area and no possibilities also no plans to broadcast my local stations on satellite. Even with a cable competitor they are virtual monopolies. Also quote "Pegasus is a separate company that hold the exclusive right to provide Directv programming in your area." WHERE's MY CHOICE.

These services are monopolies and need to be regulated.

Yes, EchoStar "gives customers free equipment", but I have noticed that the current customers must pay for this. Rates keep going up and what service do they provide? I had to pay for my equipment and the current customers are paying the costs of adding "new" customers through raised rates. Every year they add new channels --- most of which I don't watch, but I still have to pay for --- no choice.

Rates keep going up while some people steal the signals costing paying customers more money.

If you approve the merger, STRONG REGULATION need to be in place to protect the customers who are at the mercy of a MONOPOLY.

Sincerely,

Karen Koch

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