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**Congress of the United States
House of Representatives**

May 15, 2002

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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

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The Honorable Michael Powell
Chairman, Federal Communications Commission
445 Twelfth Street SW
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Chairman Powell:

I am writing to request your consideration of the proposed merger between Echostar and Hughes Electronics (DirecTV).

The two companies involved have concluded that consumers would have access to more services through the combined company than would otherwise be available. The proposed merger would breathe new life into the satellite services market that promises to bring more new programming and new forms of content, as well as cheaper and faster broadband (high speed) Internet access to nearly every market nationwide. Consumers are likely to benefit because efficiencies will allow the merged company to reach more rural communities with "local-into-local" television and broadband (high speed) Internet connections. In addition, Echostar has promised that it will offer nationwide pricing so that everyone in the country pays the same price.

While serving in Congress, I have worked to ensure that legislative and regulatory interests do not impede growing businesses so customers and sellers can reach their own deals without unnecessary governmental interference getting in the way. Without the merger, these companies have indicated that they will not have the market presence necessary to meet those needs and still compete with other competitors seeking to provide the same package of services - including cable, DSL lines from telephone providers and wireless services. Customers will be better able to determine whether they are capable and willing to pay for the services the merged company plans to market than Congress or any federal agency.

For these reasons, please give the merger between Echostar and Hughes Electronics (DirecTV) every consideration. I request that you consider these views to the extent possible under all applicable federal laws and regulations. Thank you for your attention to this important issue.

Sincerely,

Jim DeMint
Jim DeMint
Member of Congress

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