

The Honorable Michael K. Powell  
Chairman  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12th Street, S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20554

Dear Chairman Powell:

I urge you to oppose this merger with all your ability to do so. Mainly, this proposal removes a great deal of the existing competition in the delivery of 'cable TV' networks to consumers, a service that already lacks in competition. You've seen what happens when one company becomes too powerful in a particular technology in the form of Microsoft. I feel that the merger will allow a similar condition to exist in the business of satellite delivery of 'cable TV' networks. The only remaining competition will be from the , usually, ONE land-based cable TV service available to most urban TV viewers, or NONE AT ALL for most rural viewers. Even this competition isn't the same as a one-on-one competition on a local basis, since satellite TV delivery sets its prices on a national basis to compete with locally set prices from all the various cable TV providers around the country.

Furthermore, the notion that the merger will encourage more local broadcast networks markets to be uplinked to the satellites actually proposes to perpetuate and increase an already very inefficient method of local channel distribution wherein bandwidth that could be efficiently used to distribute TV signals to an entire hemisphere is legally only permitted to be received by an extremely tiny number of subscribers. In actual practice this practice encourages the satellite TV broadcasters (Dish / DirecTV) to greatly overcompress each channel's signal in order to fit hundreds of local TV channels into the limited bandwidth of the satellite, channels which are provided to the relatively tiny number of subscribers in each local market. This has the effect of reducing the quality of each channel's picture and sound by introduction of digital compression artifacts. It also affects the speed at which the on-screen programming guide is updated, a 'feature' that has already deteriorated to the point of being nearly useless. It also means that not enough bandwidth is available to provide Dolby Digital 5.1 sound to but a very small number of premium movie channels.

As for broadband Internet access, this is a service that is increasingly being provided by local providers, even in rural areas, and for good reason - it is more efficient and performs better since both uplink and downlink are handled by broadband access methods. Furthermore, joining the two satellite TV providers isn't even necessary for TV satellite-based broadband Internet access, it simply allows the one remaining satellite service to make a lot more money doing so. I oppose this merger and you should too!!!

Sincerely,

Barry Lankford  
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