

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

Dear Chairman Powell:

I am writing to you today as a current satellite TV subscriber who would like to add my voice of support to the pending merger of EchoStar and DIRECTV ..

Let's be honest right up front. Competition in the cable industry doesn't really exist! I have lived in many markets and have had cable service in all of them. Until there was the option to switch to satellite, I had to deal with a cable monopoly. Because cities offer exclusive franchise rights to cable companies they know that they will never really have to compete with anyone. I was hesitant to switch to satellite because, at the time, I could not get my local channels. I am one of the few lucky ones in that I live in a big enough market that I am now offered my local channels. However, if this merger is not allowed, my sister, who lives in a smaller market will never have a real choice when it comes to cable television because she will only have one option (a monopoly) to receive local channels clearly.

I am a high speed Internet user. Presently my only option is through the cable company. I am too far away to ever receive high speed Internet access from my local phone service. I would like to have competition in my market so that one company doesn't have a monopoly in this area of business too.

The combination of these two satellite providers will provide numerous benefits to consumers like me, including more choices in channels, programming, broadband and new television technologies.

By merging, the combined company will be a much stronger competitor to cable television and can offer more programming choices and, most importantly, all local TV channels in every market in the U.S. By providing local TV channels everywhere, this merger will make satellite television a strong alternative to cable in our community. Throughout the country, people will now be able to turn to satellite TV to access their local news, weather and community information, in addition to a comprehensive package of national video programming. But just as exciting, the merger will bring the availability of affordable high-speed Internet service by satellite to over 40 million Americans who don't have high-speed Internet access. These tremendous benefits to consumers won't happen without the merger. Satellite-delivered Internet service will bring an affordable and competitive alternative to cable modems and DSL to consumers in big cities, small towns and rural areas alike. This will give me a competitive choice for Internet access and will be especially advantageous to rural communities where cable modems and DSL are not likely to be available anytime in the near future.

In the interest of improving our access to competitive television and Internet service, I urge you to lend your support to this merger.

Sincerely,

Richard Woolf

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