

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

Dear Chairman Powell:

I'm writing to urge you to support the proposed merger between Hughes Electronics and EchoStar Communications. I believe the merger holds tremendous potential for my company in Woodland Park, CO which sells the DIRECTV satellite TV service. The new company will offer a more attractive product to consumers, and this will mean more business for my company.

I can offer local broadcast channels to all of my customers when they subscribe to DIRECTV. This is not the case for all retailers. Currently, DIRECTV offers local broadcast service in only 43 television markets. The merger will allow the new company to end the duplication of programming and free up hundreds of channels allowing consumers in all 210 television markets across the country to receive their local broadcast channels. As a DIRECTV retailer, I am very excited by this development because satellite TV will be perceived nationally as a real alternative to cable.

None of my customers currently have broadband access to the Internet via cable modem or DSL service, but it is clearly something that many of them want given the number of times I have heard them ask about it. If the merger is approved, the new company will be able to provide the homes and businesses in my area affordable high-speed Internet access service. My customers will benefit from this merger because HUGHES and EchoStar can combine their resources, satellites, and spectrum to provide high-speed satellite Internet access service to areas not otherwise served by cable modem service or DSL.

This merger will increase satellite TV's ability to respond competitively to the roll out of digital cable, forcing cable companies to respond in a variety of ways including accelerating their digital upgrades and extending their wires out to reach those customers they currently do not serve. The resulting expansion in digital capabilities across the board will increase competition generally, will drive hardware upgrades for consumers, and drive retail traffic and sales nationwide.

Since its inception, direct broadcast satellite TV providers have offered uniform, nationwide pricing structures, and the new company has guaranteed that it will continue this practice. Nationwide pricing offers customers in rural America the full benefits of the rigorous competition occurring in urban and suburban areas. I can rest assured that satellite TV will remain a competitively priced product.

The merged company will provide consumers with a lot of new services, but the availability of an affordable, nationwide high-speed Internet access product in the near future is the most important one to me. It is for this reason that I urge you to support the merger of HUGHES and EchoStar.

Sincerely,

Dave Blanc  
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Woodland Park, CO 80863