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United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-1803

May 1, 2002

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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
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Honorable Michael K. Powell
Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW
Room 8A201
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Chairman Powell:

I am writing in regard to the proposed merger of EchoStar and DirecTV.

The proponents of this merger have pointed out some very real benefits for the people of Louisiana. Currently, no Louisiana DBS customers have access to any local channels. According to the records we have reviewed, that is 27% of the television households in my state. As you know, local broadcast service has been a passionate desire of DBS customers for many years. We also know that access to local stations is very important to the public interest. These local stations provide local news and information that viewers want to know and also play critical roles in cases of public emergencies.

It is my understanding that the merged company would provide local broadcast service to all 8 television markets in Louisiana. The proponents of the merger tell me that all DBS television households in Louisiana would have local channel delivery within 24 months of the merger approval.

This proposed merger might also provide much needed high-speed Internet access to rural Louisiana households and businesses. I have heard from a multitude of my constituents on the lack of access to high speed Internet services. There are vast areas of Louisiana that do not have access to DSL or cable modem services. The merged company would provide that access and help end the "digital divide" that exists between rural and urban areas of my state.

I appreciate your consideration of my views on this matter.

Sincerely,



JOHN BREAUX
United States Senator

May 14 2 47 PM '02

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