

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 Panhandle, TX 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.

None of my customers can receive their local broadcast channels via satellite. Currently, DIRECTV offers service in only 43 markets. This is a source of frustration for my customers. The proposed merger between HUGHES and EchoStar would allow the combined company to offer local broadcast channels in all 210 television markets nationwide by eliminating the duplication of identical programming carried by both services. If the merger is approved, satellite TV will be a more competitive alternative to cable, and this is good for business.

If the merger is approved, the new company will be able to provide consumers in my area an affordable high-speed Internet access service via satellite. There are a small number of customers in my area who do enjoy broadband access to the Internet via cable modem and DSL service. For them, this merger will result in increased competition in the broadband market, potentially driving down prices of DSL and cable providers. However, the majority of the homes, schools and businesses in my area are beyond the reach of cable and DSL wires. For these customers, the new company may be their only chance of getting an affordable high-speed Internet service.

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.

High Definition Television (HDTV) was supposed to be available to the American public today, but consumers are still waiting for broadcasters and cable operators to provide the service. HUGHES and EchoStar have pledged to use some of the spectrum made available by their merger to increase their HDTV channel offerings, to at least twelve HDTV channels. I am excited because greater availability of HDTV programming will translate into more sales opportunities for my HDTV televisions and related products.

The EchoStar-HUGHES merger will allow the new company to offer a stronger satellite TV product nationwide, providing local broadcast channels in every television market, and new and enhanced television services such as HDTV, interactive TV, and more. In addition, the new company will be able to offer an

affordable, high-speed Internet product to every zip code in the country. As a retailer for DIRECTV, I will benefit from increased sales. For all of these reasons, I urge you to support the EchoStar-HUGHES merger.

Sincerely,

Russell Offringa
1386 Hwy 60 W
Panhandle, TX 79068