

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

Dear Chairman Powell:

As a customer of DIRECTV (1 year), and a former customer of Echostar (over 4 years), I am writing to urge you to NOT support the pending merger of EchoStar and HUGHES, the parent company of DIRECTV. I believe the merger will significantly decrease video and broadband choices for consumers like me, and millions of rural consumers.

Each company individually has been unable to slow the rise of cable rates, even in many of the markets where they deliver local channels. The combined company will be no stronger a competitor to cable operators, due in no small part to the enormous debt load it will carry, and the costs associated with the launch of the proposed '210 DMA locals' plan. In addition, the competition between the two DBS providers have served to significantly decrease the cost of entry to satellite reception. For the first two years of DirectTV's existence, the cost of DBS receivers and associated equipment remained constant. Once Echostar introduced competition into the DBS market in 1996, prices fell dramatically and quickly. Eliminating this competition will inevitably lead to higher hardware and service costs. Further, Echostar's commitment to offering all local TV channels in all markets (the 210 DMA plan), via satellite, must be weighed against their continuing opposition to must-carry regulations.

The combination of EchoStar and HUGHES will also not likely result in increased competition in the internet broadband market since satellite based internet service is inherently less efficient than terrestrial alternatives.

When consideration is given to the fact that Echostar has been guilty of many anti-consumer practices in the past (for which they are under investigation in several states), it leads me to question whether this is a company that should be trusted with nearly ALL of the nation's DBS resources.

So, for all these reasons, I urge you to oppose this proposed merger most strenuously.

I appreciate your consideration of my views.

Sincerely,

Daniel Collins
14 Drury Lane
Demarest, NJ 07627