

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 urge you to support the pending merger of EchoStar and HUGHES.

I am a DISH NETWORK customer in Wichita, Kansas. I believe the merger will increase video and broadband choices for consumers like me because the combined company will provide increased competition to cable companies.

I'd like to inform you what the merger could do for people in a RURAL setting by describing the situation I have with my parents:

My 82 year old Mother is 5.5 hours away from Wichita in SW Kansas. She is over 100 miles away from 'local TV' in Dodge and Garden cities and has a huge TV tower (which has crashed on the house at least twice in the past 40+ years) and a VERY expensive and unreliable booster system in order to receive 'local' TV. You should see how awful her reception is even WITH all of this very expensive equipment!

All of this expense (and danger from the high tower) could easily be eliminated with a small satellite dish. A dish isn't likely to damage the house should it fall!

The monthly programing costs from a satellite service would be INSIGNIFICANT compared to the prices Mom pays her service man to climb her TV tower to repair the antenna after high winds and to replace the expensive booster system in the attic every few years.

Looking beyond the merger's benefits for just great television reception, the broadband internet possibilities are tremendous.

As I mentioned, Mom is 82 and is full-time sole caregiver for my Dad who has Alzheimer's. I've set Mom up with an internet email account and we correspond daily. I live 5.5 hours away from Mom and keeping in close contact with her would be impossible were it not for email and the internet.

However, her internet service is a 56k modem using her only telephone line. I NEED her to have some kind of broadband (non-telephone) solution so I could implement on-line video conferencing to keep a visual check on her and Dad's condition. Broadband access would also make possible a whole world of options when it comes to maintaining her computer remotely. This and some other ideas I have are just not feasible over a dial-up modem. Broadband is required. Where she lives in SW Kansas is VERY rural and a satellite broadband service is about the only way she'll ever see high-speed internet connectivity.

The EchoStar/Hughes merger has been delayed (last I heard) and this deprives me of being able to take advantage of several broadband tools that could otherwise be at my disposal to assist in watching over the condition of my aging Senior parents.

I'm sure others are in a similar situation as I am with Senior parents in rural (and somewhat isolated) settings.

Finally, I think it absolutely ludicrous (but typical) that the government has enacted the 'must carry' legislation when NEITHER satellite service could possibly comply because of bandwidth limitations -- and then delay (or deny) the merger of the two!

I appreciate your consideration of my views.

--Brian Johns

Sincerely,

Brian Johns
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Wichita, KS 67212