

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, I am writing to urge you to support the pending merger of EchoStar and HUGHES, the parent company of DIRECTV. I believe the merger will increase video and broadband choices for consumers like me.

The combined company will be a much stronger competitor to cable operators by being able to offer me a substantial number of local TV channels via satellite in my market area. I do not understand the arguments being made by some (obviously listening to cable lobbyists) who say the people in rural areas will then only have one satellite company to choose from. So, then, why doesn't cable invest to run the infrastructure out to these people to give them options? Is not ONE choice better than none?

I currently have broadband access to the Internet, but the combination of EchoStar and HUGHES will result in increased competition in the broadband market by providing an affordable high-speed Internet service nationwide via satellite. I am using Comcast cable as my broadband provider. I was paying \$44.95 per month for the service, even though Comcast cable subscribers pay only \$39.95. Recently, I received a letter from Comcast stating that my fee was going up to \$54.95 per month because I did not subscribe to cable. However, if I did subscribe to at least basic cable (\$9.95), I would only have to pay \$39.95 for internet (a total of about \$49, saving \$5 per month). Can this be fair to raise fees for some and not others? It does not cost them any more to support me as it does a cable subscriber. How about investigating this? It is basically extortion, which they call 'discounted' fees for bulk subscribers.

I appreciate your consideration of my views.

Sincerely,

Peter Armstrong
208 Spruce Tree Road
Radnor, PA 19087