

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 K-State Research & Extension work in Wichita, KS which utilizes the system for Extension Educational outreach. The new company will offer a more attractive educational content to my rural Extension clients, and this will mean enhanced educational resources for our communities in Kansas.

The majority of my customers are not able to subscribe to their local broadcast channels via satellite. This is the case because DIRECTV does not have sufficient spectrum to provide all local channels in every one of the country's 210 local television markets. Currently, DIRECTV offers local broadcast channels in only 43 markets. The merger will allow the combined company to reclaim the spectrum currently used for the duplicate broadcasting of approximately 500 identical TV channels. This will increase capacity and allow the new company to serve all television markets in the U.S. This will allow me to offer my Extension clients a broader content alternative to cable in the near future.

If the merger is approved, the new company will be able to provide community citizens 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, farm producers, and businesses in my area are beyond the reach of cable and DSL wires. For these folks, the new company may be their only chance of getting an affordable high-speed Internet service.

Whether or not my Extension clients have access to cable, and most do not, all of them will benefit from the new company's ability to better compete with cable. The new company has pledged to offer nationwide prices and services -- bringing the benefits of vigorous competition with cable -- to communities everywhere.

The new company has also pledged to offer new and enhanced services like interactive television and near video-on-demand. These products will allow satellite TV to go head-to-head in competition with cable companies and other competitors as they improve their technological capabilities.

The merged company will provide communities with a lot of new services, but the availability of an affordable, nationwide high-speed Internet access product in the near future is the most important one to me, and the good work of the Cooperative Extension Service to all of Kansas. It is for this reason that I urge you to support the merger of HUGHES and EchoStar.

Sincerely,

Dennis Main
7001 W. 21st Street North
Wichita, KS 67205