

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

Dear Chairman Powell:

I am employed by Ulitimate Electronics in an area in which Directv is offered to rural areas by NRTC. I have seen first hand frustrated customers because of the lack of better equipment offered from NRTC. Because of agreements between NRTC and Directv we are not able to sell consumers in these areas equipment that would allow them to increase the quality of the picture on their televisions or allow them to receive HDTV programming.

The argument that I have heard most often against the merger is concern that the rural customers will pay more for programming. I admit that this is a concern but the fact is that most rural customers already pay more if they are served by NRTC. What I pay \$31.99 for a customer served by NRTC pays at least \$2-3 a month more for the same programming. The NRTC is only concerned because their own deal with Directv since it will most likely not be honored by Dish Network. They are not concerned with offering their customers higher quality products. If they did, any one of their customers could purchase the same equipment that I can.

This merger would also serve well for consumers not purchasing satellite. The cable companies would finally have to step up to the plate and offer a product that has a quality picture and sound. I have seen pictures with a \$10 pair of 'rabbit ears' that look better than cable. Any tech that is sent out to check the signal will tell the customer that all is fine and this is the picture they are going have to live with. Cable companies are scared that once local channels are provided by satellite they are going to lose customers because the satellite product is better.

The merger would also be a step in the right direction for HDTV. If the merger is approved and local channels are available in all markets via satellite the number of satellite customers is bound to increase especially in rural areas. As more consumers are replacing their current televisions with HDTVs or HD ready TVs they will be able to enjoy the incredible quality that HDTV offers. As the number of consumers able to receive an HDTV signal increases, more stations will be inclined to switch to HDTV and see some benefit for the amount of money they will have to invest to broadcast the signal.

I thank you for your time and support for the proposed merger of these companies.

Sincerely,

Darin Guthmiller
4700 S Baha Ave Apt 42
Sioux Falls, SD 57106