

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

Dear Chairman Powell:

I am a resident of Austin, Texas and a customer of DishNetwork Satellite TV service.

As you are aware, the FCC and the Justice Department are pondering the proposed merger of DishNetwork and DirectTV. The question comes up regarding monopolies. There is a lobby that would have you believe that the combination of these two businesses would constitute a monopoly.

I suppose you could agree with that statement, however, in the spirit of competition, I believe it is a positive move. The true competition is between Cable TV and Satellite services. There is one Cable TV service available in both Marin and Sonoma Counties and that is ATT Broadband. Why is that not considered a monopoly? Of course it is, but do to franchising in the communities, there is no choice in the matter.

The crux of the matter is that Cable TV and Satellite services are two methods of bringing television into our homes. If competing satellite services want to merge, nobody loses, we still have satellite service available. No one blinks an eye when cable systems merge or are bought out. Good examples are that ATT traded territory with Century Cable here in Rohnert Park and is, in turn, merging with Comcast Cable.

The lobby would have you believe that the rural consumer is at risk because, in many cases, they have just satellite service available. This is because cable services don't reach that consumer. Is that the satellite companies fault? If cable wants to compete in those locations, they can spend their capital to reach those customers.

The lobby would have you believe that the rural customer would be charged more than the city dweller. EchoStar has repeatedly committed to a national pricing plan, a system they have today. After all, it doesn't cost any more to beam that signal to San Francisco than to Podunk.

In summary, the competition should be between cable and satellite, not satellite alone. Nobody loses with a satellite merger, and perhaps everyone gains because the duplicity that exists today in satellites can be used to further expand the signals to more local, and even high definition, services.

I urge you to support the merger between DishNetwork and DirectTV.

Sincerely,

Mario Prudencio  
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