

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 you today, not as a satellite TV subscriber, but as a consumer who is willing to examine all sides of the issues that raise caution to the pending merger of EchoStar and DIRECTV. The combination of these two satellite providers will provide numerous benefits to consumers throughout the nation, including more choices in channels, programming, broadband and new television technologies.

By merging, the combined company will be a much stronger competitor to cable television and can offer more programming choices and, most importantly, all local TV channels in every market in the U.S. By providing local TV channels everywhere, this merger will make satellite television a strong alternative to cable in my community. Throughout the country, people will now be able to turn to satellite TV to access their local news, weather and community information, in addition to a comprehensive package of national video programming. But just as exciting, the merger will bring the availability of affordable high-speed Internet service by satellite to over 40 million Americans who don't have high-speed Internet access. These tremendous benefits to consumers won't happen without the merger.

Furthermore, the technology sector of the U.S. Economy will continue to be slowed in recovery, without the increased availability of high-speed Internet access to those 40 million households where such services are currently unavailable.

There are certainly many reasons to be overly cautious over the prospects of this merger. However, cable providers have controlled the viewing choices of Americans for far too long. Given that there are some differences in the transmission and reliability of signals provided by cable and satellite providers, clearly the range of choices far outweigh concerns for unfair competition. Currently, cable providers have the clear monopoly on the majority of households in America.

Satellite-delivered Internet service will bring an affordable and competitive alternative to cable modems and DSL to consumers in big cities, small towns and rural areas alike. This will give me a competitive choice for Internet access and will be especially advantageous to rural communities where cable modems and DSL are not likely to be available anytime in the near future.

In the interest of improving our access to competitive television and Internet service, I suggest that you consider lending your support to this merger.

On the other hand, this could be the worst idea in the history of broadcast television. But unless this merger is completed, most American consumers will continue to be prisoners to those cable providers who provide substandard services and viewing choices!

Sincerely,

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