

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 DENY the pending merger of EchoStar and HUGHES, the parent company of DIRECTV. I believe the merger will HURT consumers who will have no other choice of whom to receive satellite TV.

The combined company will have to re-fit all Direct TV customers with new equipment and re-point their dishes to the DISH satellites. The two companys currently use different technologies and admit they will have to deal with the changes in the future. I recently could not get DISH to install my system when I relocated to Illinois, having waited four different days between noon and 6pm only to have them not show up without as much as a phone call!

I instead exercised my right to choice and activated service with DirectTV - a choice I would not have had without a viable and avialable competitor to turn to. I also was billed \$350 because I broke the contract with DISH, although I tried in good faith to stay with them and after explaining my problem, they refused to refund my \$350 - even hangin up on me at one point. I have names, dates and times of these conversations, and will gladly share.

In light of my problems, and DISH's handling of such, how does DISH plan to convert 9 million subscribers overnight when they currently cannot handle new installations? How will they compensate DirectTV subscribers who have invested hundreds of dollars in their current equipment and must dispose of it and switch to DISH equipment for undoubtedly more money (and contracts)? If they go bankrupt with the heavy debt load they're undertaking for this merger, and promise not to raise rates, then will 17m subscribers with no signal be forced to accept a rate hike?

Why rely on promises that Cablevision will be avialable in 2003, wait until it is reality. What if a mishap in satellite launch occurs, such as what happened when Ted Turner lost his first satelite and almost cost him his TBS/TNT dream. I fear that this is an ill-thought venture with no room for error or ability to turn back if things go wrong.

This is still a yong industry, much like cable was years ago. Allow it to grow and foster a more competitive atmosphere so subscribers can survive a failure with options, just as we've survived cable failures in the past when it too was an immature industry. Competiton must stay healthy, and subscribers must have choices so they are not forced to do business with a company they do not wish to do such. I exercised my choice and am glad I had such a choice available to me! There is a future in this industry if competition prevails.

I appreciate your consideration of my views.

Sincerely,

Karl Schreiber  
724 W Wrightwood  
Chicago, IL 60614

