

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 company in Vineyard Haven, MA which sells the DIRECTV satellite TV service. The new company will offer a more attractive product to consumers, and this will mean more business for my company.

I can offer local broadcast channels to all of my customers when they subscribe to DIRECTV. This is not the case for all retailers. Currently, DIRECTV offers local broadcast service in only 43 television markets. The merger will allow the new company to end the duplication of programming and free up hundreds of channels allowing consumers in all 210 television markets across the country to receive their local broadcast channels. As a DIRECTV retailer, I am very excited by this development because satellite TV will be perceived nationally as a real alternative to cable.

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

This merger will increase satellite TV's ability to respond competitively to the roll out of digital cable, forcing cable companies to respond in a variety of ways including accelerating their digital upgrades and extending their wires out to reach those customers they currently do not serve. The resulting expansion in digital capabilities across the board will increase competition generally, will drive hardware upgrades for consumers, and drive retail traffic and sales nationwide.

High Definition Television (HDTV) was supposed to be available to the American public today, but consumers are still waiting for broadcasters and cable operators to provide the service. HUGHES and EchoStar have pledged to use some of the spectrum made available by their merger to increase their HDTV channel offerings, to at least twelve HDTV channels. I am excited because greater availability of HDTV programming will translate into more sales opportunities for my HDTV televisions and related products.

Please support the merger between HUGHES and EchoStar. There are many benefits of the merger, but I believe that most importantly, the new company will increase competition with cable and help hold down cable rate increases. These

savings, in turn, will be passed along to customers, which will be good for my business.

Sincerely,

Linda Sibley
RR 1 Box 287
Vineyard Haven, MA 02568