



MB Docket No. 01-348

# City of Winnfield

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Deano Thornton, Mayor

**Council Members**  
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Honorable Michael Powell  
Chairman  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12th St. S.W.  
Washington, D.C 20554

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Dear Chairman Powell:

I am writing this letter to encourage you to support the proposed merger between EchoStar and Direct TV. As the Mayor of a rural city, I can see the many benefits that this merger would provide to our town and state.

Many rural Americans do not receive local broadcast signals using an antenna, and are not served by cable. It was not until satellite TV services became available in the mid 1990's that these rural Americans could subscribe to a service similar to those found in urban and suburban parts of the country.

The merger between EchoStar and Hughes will bring a virtual third line, similar to the bundled offerings of video and data by cable, into the homes that cable has deemed too expensive to serve. The merger creates the economies of scale necessary to offer competitively priced, high-speed Internet access via satellite to my rural areas, especially businesses and schools that do not have access to cable modem service or DSL.

This merger will allow for many benefits for rural areas throughout our state: local-to-local channels will be provided, the elimination of duplicative programming, one rate card for one nation, and affordable high-speed Internet access.

Please review the facts and enable rural America to have the same opportunities that are provided to urban areas throughout our nation.

Best Regards,

Deano Thornton  
Mayor, City of Winnfield