

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 Pineville, NC 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.

The majority of my customers are able to subscribe to their local broadcast channels via satellite, but some of those who live in smaller television markets cannot. Currently, DIRECTV offers local broadcast service in only 43 television markets. If the merger is approved, DIRECTV and DISH Network can more efficiently use their limited channel capacity and offer local service via satellite in all 210 television markets nationwide. The ability to offer local broadcast channels to all of my customers makes selling the product easier and gives customers more choices among satellite and cable providers in the near future.

For my customers who do enjoy broadband access to the Internet via DSL and cable modem, this merger will result in increased competition in the broadband market, because the new company will be able to provide an affordable high-speed Internet access service via satellite. This would help drive down prices of the DSL and cable providers. For those living beyond the reach of cable and DSL wires, 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.

Since its inception, direct broadcast satellite TV providers have offered uniform, nationwide pricing structures, and the new company has guaranteed that it will continue this practice. Nationwide pricing offers customers in rural America the full benefits of the rigorous competition occurring in urban and suburban areas. I can rest assured that satellite TV will remain a competitively priced product.

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,

Robert Wimer  
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Pineville, NC 28134