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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

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November 18, 2003

The Honorable Michael K. Powell
Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 Twelfth Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20554

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Federal Communications Commission
Office of the Secretary

MB
Merger
(DIRECTV)

Dear Chairman Powell:

As Members of Congress who represent rural constituents, we are writing to request that you ensure, as part of any approval of the News Corporation/DIRECTV acquisition, that the provision of local over-the-air TV station signals via satellite is available to all consumers by a specified date in the near term.

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MKP
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Millions of consumers in rural America have no access to cable and rely on satellite television for their multi-channel video programming. Currently, Dish Network and DIRECTV offer local-into-local service via satellite to approximately 85 markets. News Corporation and DirecTV, as part of their transaction, have pledged to carry all local stations in all 210 TV markets by 2006 and no later than 2008.

While we applaud News Corporation's new pledge to serve even more markets, we do not think our constituents should have to wait that long for services that have been available to parts of the country since 1999. All consumers should have comparable access to the local news, weather and public interest programming that consumers in large cities already enjoy.

Accordingly, we believe that a near term timeline on offering local-into-local service to all 210 markets should be ensured as a part of the merger's approval. We urge the Department of Justice and the Federal Communications Commission to scrutinize this proposed merger to ensure that rural consumers in smaller television markets are served with their local television stations via satellite as soon as possible.

We look forward to working with you on this very important issue. Thank you for your consideration of our views.

Sincerely,

Bob Goodlatte
Member of Congress

Rick Boucher
Member of Congress

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Message: enclosed please find a letter from Congressman
Goodlatte to Boucher to chairman Powell. If there are
any problems with this transmission, please contact
Branden Ritchie in our office. Thank you.

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