



**AMERICAN FARM BUREAU FEDERATION®**

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September 28, 2004

John Muleta, Chief, Wireless Bureau (Also sent to FCC Commissioners)  
Federal Communication Commission  
445 12<sup>th</sup> St., SW  
Washington, DC 20554

Re: Ex Parte Communication WT Docket No. 04-70

Dear Mr. Muleta:

The American Farm Bureau Federation is the largest general farm organization in the country. We represent more than 5.3 million member families in 50 states and Puerto Rico. Our members rely heavily on communications and would benefit greatly if technology in rural areas could be improved. Our purpose is to implement policies that are developed by members and provide programs that will improve the financial well-being and quality of life for farmers and ranchers.

We write to support the merger of Cingular Wireless and AT&T Wireless. We believe this merger will be good for competition, and particularly good for rural consumers. Cingular should become a more effective provider as a result of the merger and will be able to expand and improve its service across the country, including many rural areas.

Farm Bureau supports competition rather than specific companies. The best result for rural Americans is powerful wireless competition. Directly and with its rural carrier partners, the new Cingular will create a strong competitor to other technology. Stronger competitors will give rural Americans much broader technology choices, and drive price competition as well.

The merged entity will have a greater ability to procure at reasonable prices and deploy new wireless services to expand coverage, including into rural areas. This will benefit rural consumers by increasing the availability of high-speed data services.

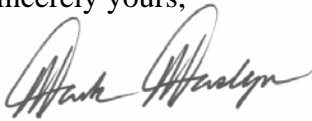
Cingular serves areas with almost 200 million Americans, but there are 93 million, living in 7 million square miles, it does not cover. Cingular has already helped its vendors put together group purchasing for its rural roaming partners who needed more advanced

digital standards that allow for high-speed data and broadband services. This resulted in significant saving for small rural carriers.

If the merger is approved by the FCC, Cingular has informed us they will launch a formal alliance with smaller rural wireless GSM carriers that serve those 93 million Americans. This alliance will benefit rural customers by extending to smaller rural carriers the combined buying power of the merged companies.

Wireless has become a vital service for rural Americans. We want our members to have the same services and competition as our urban neighbors. We believe this merger is a step in that direction, and encourage you to approve it as rapidly as you can.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mark Maslyn". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Mark" and last name "Maslyn" clearly distinguishable.

Mark Maslyn  
Executive Director  
Public Policy

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