

April 19, 2005

Marlene H. Dortch
Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
Office of the Secretary
C/O Natek, Inc.
236 Massachusetts Ave., NE
Ste. 110
Washington, DC 20002

Re: WC Docket No. 05-65; SBC Communications Inc. and AT&T Corp.

Ms. Dortch:

On behalf of the Urban League of Metropolitan St. Louis, Inc., I write to express our support for the proposed SBC-AT&T merger. I feel that combining the strengths of SBC's strong domestic and local telecommunications holdings with AT&T's highly developed IP network and long distance services will result in a new era for the entire telecommunications industry.

Since AT& T was deregulated in the early 1980's, there have been many new developments and inventions in the telecommunications field. These events have deemed it necessary for the separate companies of SBC and AT& T to merge in order to remain competitive with new companies which are offering both local and long distance telephone services, internet service and broadband networks. At the same time, wireline traffic is increasingly moving to wireless networks, as the already ubiquitous wireless carriers overtake wireline carriers in terms of total "lines" served. These competitive developments – though of obvious benefit to consumers – pose a direct threat to the nation's traditional wireline infrastructure.

That is why the merger of SBC and AT&T provides such an ideal opportunity at this juncture, when intermodal competitors (wireless and cable in particular) are challenging the traditional networks. The existence of separate local and long distance companies no longer benefits consumers. But neither SBC nor AT&T standing alone has the assets and expertise necessary to assemble a true nationwide end-to-end broadband network. Their union will allow beneficial vertical integration without diminishing vigorous horizontal competition. The merger of these two legacy carriers is the most logical and natural outcome to ensure a strong and vibrant industry.

In conclusion, I feel that the SBC-AT&T merger is imperative to the very survival of these two institutions of American enterprise. With this being said, it is in the best interest of the economy, employees, communities and the general public to support this merger.

Sincerely,
James H. Buford
President / CEO
Urban League of Metropolitan St. Louis, Inc.