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April 25, 2005

Marlene H. Dortch
Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
445 – 12th Street, SW, Room TW-B204
Washington, DC 20554-0001

Re: Support for the SBC and AT&T Merger

Dear Secretary Dortch:

Once the envy of the world, America's traditional telecommunications industry, and the broadband future of our country, is at risk.

That's why the Northwest Arkansas Council so strongly supports the merger of SBC and AT&T and the Federal Communications Commission's approval of the requested transfer applications.

The SBC and AT&T merger presents an ideal opportunity to secure for America's people the enormous efficiencies of 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, and we believe that's in America's public interest.

SBC, with its local and regional services, and AT&T's global and national IP-based networks, complement each other, and if joined together, provide the strength of resources and expertise to create a stronger and more enduring U.S.-based global competitor. Neither company, acting alone, has the capability to deliver the technologies that provide Americans with integrated, high quality and competitively priced telecommunications services.

Without question, the merger will produce a flagship U.S. carrier that will offer the most efficient, highest quality capabilities to government, business and residential customers nationwide. Combining the two companies' core strengths will result in more investment in, and faster deployment, of innovation new technologies and services, and those services will benefit all customers, not just those now served by the legacy companies.

We encourage the Commission to approve the requested transfer applications.

Sincerely,

John Paul Hammerschmidt

NORTHWEST ARKANSAS COUNCIL



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