

Dear Chairman Martin:

I wish to challenge the Comcast/Time Warner/Adelphia merger (FCC Docket No. 05-192) and the AT&T/BellSouth merger (FCC Docket No. 06-74). It is not in the public interest to allow the largest telecommunications company and the two largest cable companies and in the United States to grow even larger.

Media powerconcentration is a growing problem in this country. We have more channels available than ever before, increasingly falling under the control of a handful of giant corporations. The cost of broadband service is out of reach for many households. We need more competition in services. These new mergers will only deprive us of this needed competition.

Th combination of AT&T with BellSouth will give the top three broadband providers control of over half of all broadband connections in the country. The Time Warner/Comcast/Adelphia merger will give Comcast and Time Warner increased power over entire regions of the United States, allowing rates to rise even as the digital divide continues to grow.

The FCC should either block these mergers or impose strict conditions to protect free speech and competition under its "public interest standard." At very least the FCC should impose following conditions on these mergers:

1. Subscribers must be able to choose from competitive Internet Service Providers ("open access"),ensure that these companies cannot discriminate against any Internet content or rival service and that every service will be treated exactly the same ("Network Neutrality").
2. Companies must sell broadband access separate from video and telephone service, and at the same price ("naked broadband" or "unbundling").
3. Any subscriber must be able to connect any device to the network (such as a Wi-Fi router) that does not harm the network.
4. Protect public access programming ("PEG"). Cable companies have become less responsive to the needs and requirements of communities. The quality of public accountability in local franchise agreements has declined, as big companies leverage their power to squeeze local governments. Likewise, telecommunications giants — like AT&T — are trying to eliminate the remaining vestiges of effective local oversight and control altogether.
5. Independent programmers must be able to reach subscribers. We are required to buy channels we don't want or need because providers of video service bundle them together.

6. Any company that owns both programming and video systems should be required to provide competitors with access to their regional sports and other programming needed to offer competing services, so consumers will still have real choices.

I ask the FCC to consider the interests of the people like me who pay the cable, telephone and broadband bills and watch the programming. Many of us already have enough trouble trying to afford broadband or cable TV. Please don't make it even harder for us to find competitors, or make it easier for Comcast, Time Warner and AT&T to raise prices or block local and independent voices.