Dear Chairman Martin:

There was a time when the telephone monopoly was required to break up into many smaller telephone companies for the benefit of the public. Now the process is being reversed and it definitely is NOT for the benefit of the public. The mergers of today result in a uniformity of service and pricing that lacks the option of consumer choice and merely protects the bottom line of the telecom companies. I very strongly object to the government acting for the benefit of these private companies at the expense of the taxpaying public. There is no benefit for the public whatsoever resulting from these gigantic mergers. The FCC must not approve these mergers and instead require that these companies actually work to provide beneficial services and appropriate pricing.

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

The concentration of media power is a growing problem in this country. Though we have more channels available than ever before, they are increasingly falling under the control of a handful of giant corporations. The cost of broadband service also remains out of reach for many households. Americans are hungry for more competition in services. However, these mergers will only starve Americans of this needed competition.

Allowing AT&T to combine with BellSouth will give the top three broadband providers control of over half of all broadband connections in the country. At the same time, 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 block these transactions or impose strict conditions to protect free speech and competition under its "public interest standard." If the FCC decides to allow either of these mergers, it should require the following conditions:

1. Subscribers must be able to choose from competitive Internet Service Providers ("open access"). The FCC should also 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 be required to 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. Take steps to 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. There is no competition here. If a buyer could buy the exact channels that he wanted then those that have no appeal would disappear and the buyer would have only those channels that were wanted. There is a lot of waste and frustration with being forced to buy channels that are of no value to the buyer. Let us have exact choice and diversity of programming and those channels and programs that are of value will be adequately supported and the rest will die. Isn't this the market approach?

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.

The success of our democracy depends on ready access to a broad range of information and opinions. When only a few large corporations control this access, the variation of information is decreased. I strongly object to mergers which result in the elimination of local programming and diversity of opinion. This would be a very dangerous direction for media access to take. Do not approve further mergers. This is just another form of monopoly, a danger for the public and its ability to be informed and participate productively in its governance and public service.

In conclusion, 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.