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October 23, 2006

To: FCC Chairman Kevin J. Martin
FCC Commissioner Michael J. Copps
FCC Commissioner Jonathan S. Adelstein
FCC Commissioner Deborah Taylor Tate
FCC Commissioner Robert McDowell

From: David Burgess, Commissioner – Georgia Public Service Commission

Re: **WC Docket NO. 06-74**

Commissioners, I am writing to you regarding the pending merger between AT&T and BellSouth. Georgia was one of the last states to review the merger and we spent a great deal of time reviewing the issue in depth.

I have been a Commissioner in Georgia for eight years now, and before that I served on the Staff of the Georgia Commission for 17 years. I have considerable experience in telecom issues. I have been a long-time proponent of competition in all facets of telecommunications, and I have long been an advocate for policies that directly benefit consumers. Indeed, BellSouth has oftentimes disagreed with my decisions and has appealed some of those orders – one such appeal concerning BellSouth's DSL policy was ultimately decided by the FCC.

It is my strong opinion that the merger between AT&T and BellSouth, if accompanied by the conditions set forth in AT&T's letter of October 13, 2006, would be good for consumers in Georgia and elsewhere in the Southeast. The benefits of the merger are considerable and they include the potential for more aggressive broadband and IPTV deployment, and the additional competition to the cable companies which would result from this network deployment. However, I have been concerned that the merger could have an impact on local voice telephony competition. For that reason, my fellow Georgia Commissioners and I wrote to you this June and asked that stand-alone DSL be part of any approval regarding this merger.

I have long been a proponent of stand-alone DSL service. I believe it provides consumers with a way to take advantage of the multiple VOIP services that are in the marketplace without having to buy local service from BellSouth. Here in Georgia, my attempts to get stand-alone DSL implemented have been thwarted by FCC decisions and also by state legislative action which prevents this commission from regulating broadband services.

This merger, combined with the conditions proposed by AT&T, provide a way for the benefits of stand-alone DSL service to be finally realized in Georgia. I hope that you will look at this purely from a consumer standpoint and set aside any political differences that may exist between commissioners. Consumers will benefit from this merger given the conditions that AT&T has proposed. As a long-time advocate for policies that benefit consumers, I urge you to support this merger so long as it contains a requirement and a commitment to provide stand-alone DSL service.

Sincerely,



Commissioner David Burgess

Cc: Georgia PSC Chairman Stan Wise
Georgia Commissioner Robert Baker
Georgia Commissioner Doug Everett
Georgia Commissioner Angela Spier

Marlene Dortch
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