

I am a customer of Time Warner Cable, Inc., and have been ever since this corporation took over my town's local cable franchise many years ago. I have never had any choice as to my cable-TV provider, going back to when I moved to the mid-Hudson valley of New York State in 1974. The constant, yearly rate increases imposed on us by Time Warner Cable are and continue to be outrageous, outsized, and unwarranted. Given where I live in the mid-Hudson valley, 100 miles from New York City and 50 miles from Albany, I cannot get over-the-air TV broadcasts, and I have no choice in my cable-TV provider unless I choose a satellite provider. I do not wish to use satellite technology because of its inherent unreliability due to solar and atmospheric activity. Nevertheless, both Time Warner Cable and Comcast claim their combination will not increase their monopoly positions. In fact, each is already a virtual monopoly in each area it serves. We have to take what they give us and pay what they demand. I do not need or want the unbelievable number of channels that Time Warner Cable provides and for which the company forces me to pay. Conversely I cannot get channels I want. For example, for as long as I have lived in the mid-Hudson valley, I had access to WMHT and WRGB in Schenectady with my regular cable service. Time Warner Cable decided, about 5 years ago, that it would drop WRGB's analog signal despite continuing the analog signals of the New York City stations. Hence I was forced to convert to their digital TV (DTV) package, and just do without WRGB on a couple of older TV sets in my house. It was even longer ago that Time Warner Cable dropped WMHT and told us to watch WNET in New York City instead, so that the company could eliminate equipment in the mid-Hudson valley and merge our area with that of New York City. This cost us the particular programming provided by WMHT, and cost WMHT all of its long-time members in the mid-Hudson valley. Time Warner Cable simply did not care. My son, in Washington state, is a customer of Comcast. He pays more for his service than I do to Time Warner Cable. He, likewise, is stuck in a monopolistic situation. His moving to a Comcast territory from Time Warner Cable here was a material detriment to him. Neither my son nor I are the beneficiaries of decent customer service from these companies. Time Warner Cable's rate structure is so byzantine that the company itself cannot seem to find a coherent way to put it on paper, and their own customer-service agents do not understand the rates in their entirety. I have to call Time Warner Cable's CableCARD-support group every month to get my CableCARD re-authorized to receive programming for which I pay dearly and on-time because (a) the re-authorization is not part of any billing process, so the fact that my bills are paid on-time doesn't matter to their re-authorization process, and (b) their technical means for re-authorizing my CableCARD are dependent on my CableCARD being powered-on 24 hours per day, 7 days per week. In fact my CableCARD is not under constant power, and hence misses whatever automatic means that Time Warner Cable uses for re-authorization. Keeping my CableCARD powered constantly would be both impractical and extremely wasteful, both in terms of wasted electricity and degraded life of my electronic equipment. Yet I can get no satisfaction from Time Warner Cable about this problem, except that they do me the favor of taking my monthly telephone call (often making me wait on \"hold\" for up to a half-hour or more) to re-authorize my CableCARD. Both Time Warner Cable and Comcast are known to provide the same extremely poor customer service to their other customers as well. Allowing this merger will make Comcast the dominant national provider of cable-TV service and content, as the company also owns NBC-Universal. As I have said, both Time Warner Cable and Comcast already have monopolies in each and every territory in which they do business today, and combining the companies will reinforce those individual territorial monopolies under a single corporate umbrella, with NBC-Universal thrown in to boot. I am so unhappy with Time Warner Cable that I refuse to do any more business with them than I absolutely must. Hence I purchase my Internet service and local telephone service from Verizon Communications. Unbelievably, Verizon was allowed to enter into agreements with the largest cable companies a few years ago to partner with them in areas where Verizon was not already providing FiOS service. Once that happened, Verizon halted its build-out of FiOS, stopping in its tracks the in-progress build-out that existed in my area. Now I have no chance of getting FiOS service for either cable-TV or Internet service, so I am \"stuck\" with whatever Time Warner Cable (or its proposed successor, Comcast) deigns to provide, and with Verizon's DSL Internet service, with a limit of 3 Mb/second. Time Warner Cable and Comcast simply must not be allowed to combine. It is completely against the public interest and is of benefit only to the management and shareowners of these

7521778213.txt

corporations. And by the way, I say this as a shareowner of Comcast.