

TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

TODD STAPLES
COMMISSIONER

September 11, 2014

Tom Wheeler
Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C 20554

Dear Chairman Wheeler:

As you consider the proposed merger between AT&T and DirecTV, I believe there are elements of this merger that potentially hold real benefits for rural and agricultural areas.

AT&T is a very involved partner in communities throughout Texas and their network benefits many of Texas 26 million citizens. I have personally worked with AT&T on numerous initiatives to expand technology services to all areas of Texas. The company has made a sincere investment in Texas' technology services portfolio.

AT&T has clearly stated that as a result of this merger, *"At a minimum, AT&T expects to bring new or enhanced high-speed broadband to at least 15 million customer locations, the majority of which are in rural areas with no or limited broadband service choices. Indeed, AT&T is so confident of these savings and other synergies that it is willing to commit to meet this target within four years from the close of this transaction."*

As Texas Commissioner for Agriculture, I am always concerned about the impact of mergers of this type on rural Texas. Statements by AT&T, along with information gleaned from telecommunications analysts and others, provide a clear picture of how this merger can provide a benefit to rural residents.

Competition in the marketplace is important and should remain a high priority as this merger is contemplated. Thank you for your consideration of this information in your positive review of the proposed merger.

Sincerely yours,



Todd Staples
TS/BD/jg

