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September 12, 2014

Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20554

Re: MD Docket 14-90: AT&T and DIRECTV Merger

Dear Sir or Madame:

On behalf of the 20,000-plus member stores which comprise the Illinois Retail Merchants Association (IRMA), we respectfully request the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) support the merger between AT&T and DIRECTV. The merger will provide consumers with integrated video and broadband Internet services, delivered over any type of device, to nearly anywhere in the country. The merger will encourage and support investments that bring new and faster broadband connections to millions more Americans, the vast majority of whom reside in underserved rural areas. Additionally, the merger will create new competition, new services, and new levels of customer satisfaction in ways that neither company could do on its own.

The integration of DIRECTV's premier pay-TV service and AT&T's powerful broadband networks will create a new competitor with unprecedented capabilities. The substantial cost savings and other synergies associated with the merger will allow AT&T to price all of their services more competitively, which will drive cable and other competitors to lower their prices and improve their own offerings. In addition, the merger fundamentally improves the business case for expanding AT&T's broadband infrastructure to millions more Americans. For instance, the merger will give AT&T the ability to expand and enhance their high-speed broadband service to at least 15 million customer locations across 48 states, mostly in underserved rural areas. This represents a multi-billion dollar commitment of capital that AT&T simply could not make without the ability to pair DIRECTV's video products and scale with their newly-expanded broadband services.

We are confident that AT&T will continue to meet or exceed the FCC's net neutrality standards and continue their best-in-class diversity and labor practices to the employees and suppliers of the combined company while providing first class competitive services for consumers. As such, we respectfully submit this letter in support of the merger of AT&T and DIRECTV.

Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rob Karr", is written over a horizontal line.

Rob Karr
President & CEO