



Christy T. Morton  
Executive Director

Christy.Morton@cfrv.org  
www.cfrv.org

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Federal Communications Commission  
445 12<sup>th</sup> Street SW  
Washington, DC 20554

To whom it may concern:

I serve as the Executive Director of the Virginia Rural Center. The Center works to create innovative solutions and expand entrepreneurial opportunities to enhance prosperity for all regions of the Commonwealth. Some of our top priorities include economic development and job creation, education and workforce development and access to quality healthcare.

Rural internet access is an important component to ensure the success of these initiatives. It is critical for communities to have reliable broadband infrastructure to encourage and enjoy entrepreneurial activity, innovative educational experiences, access to specialty healthcare and other opportunities for rural prosperity.

AT&T and DIRECTV have committed to expanding broadband to 15 million Americans, the majority of them located in rural communities. It is for this reason that I write to encourage the FCC to support the proposed merger between these two companies to bring broadband to millions in rural communities across the country.

Best regards,

Christy T. Morton