

# *The 60 Plus Association*

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*Tax Fairness for Seniors • Repeal Unfair Inheritance Taxes!  
Guardian of Seniors' Rights Award • Senior Voice Newsletter*

*Rep. Roger H. Zion, (R-IN, 1967-75)  
Honorary Chairman*

*James L. Martin  
President*

The Honorable Michael Powell  
Chairman  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12th Street SW  
Washington, DC 20554

Re: Proceeding 01-348

June 3, 2002

Dear Chairman Powell:

As I've listened to the discussion about the merger agreement between EchoStar and Hughes, I was pleased to discover that neither of these privately owned businesses is requesting money from the government to fund their deal. While it's clear that the Federal Communications Commission has approval over this issue as a matter of public interest, we submit to you that a free market solution -- such as this -- creates more sound choices for American consumers.

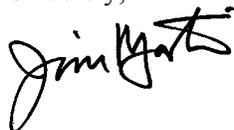
Our group, the 60 Plus Association, advocates a free enterprise, less government, less taxes approach to seniors issues. We believe that the EchoStar-DirecTV merger is one of the best examples of a private solution to public policy issues in a long time. It would begin to erase the digital divide that still yawns between rural and suburban America.

This merger would bring expanded programming choices to the viewing public as well as deliver specialty programs; for example, making entertainment or educational programming available which caters to an older viewing audience. It would also deliver local news and programming via satellite, doing away forever with rabbit-ear-and-tin-foil tuning and switching back and forth from satellite to over-the-air transmission of local channels.

Most significantly, the increased competition in the pay television industry will result in better prices and more offerings for consumers, and will offer a reasonable alternative to cable television. The "New EchoStar" has made a commitment to a nationwide pricing plan; meaning subscribers in a rural area would pay no more for service than subscribers in a densely populated urban or suburban area. A fair-minded solution like this is critical for the many seniors who live on a fixed income.

I hope you will agree with us that this proposed merger is definitely in the public interest, and give the green light for the "New EchoStar." Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



James L. Martin

60 Plus is a 10-year-old nonpartisan group with a less government, less taxes approach to seniors' issues. 60 Plus is supported by donations from its more than 500,000 citizen lobbyists to print and mail millions of letters, petitions, and voting indexes. 60 Plus publishes a newsletter, SENIOR VOICE, and a SCORECARD, bestowing a GUARDIAN OF SENIORS' RIGHTS award on lawmakers in both parties who vote "pro-senior." 60 Plus also presents a BENJAMIN FRANKLIN award to those who support death tax repeal as well as a LEGISLATOR OF THE MONTH award to the most pro-active friends of seniors in Congress. 60 Plus has been called 'an increasingly influential lobbying group for the elderly....'