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AND INVESTIGATIONS

Congress of the United States  
House of Representatives

May 28, 2002

Mr. Michael K. Powell  
Chairman  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12th Street Southwest  
Washington, D.C. 20554

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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

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Dear Chairman Powell:

As the Representative for the largely rural Second District of New Hampshire, I am writing to express my support for the proposed merger between EchoStar and Hughes Electronics (DirectTV) and request your consideration of the positive effects this venture would bring to rural satellite service customers.

I consider this to be an important matter for rural and mountainous communities that have few telecommunications options. Although there are concerns that the merger would remove competitive incentives from the satellite broadcast industry, the larger programming market, which includes cable and over-the-air-broadcast television, should offer significant competition on price, service, and content. I am also pleased with the nationwide pricing that would be provided to subscribers.

I believe that satellite customers would benefit from the promised service, coverage, and price that the unified company would be able to provide. The merger will permit more efficient use of spectrum, allowing subscribers to access a wider array of channels, including local over-the-air broadcast signals from Maine, Vermont, or Massachusetts, depending on where the subscriber is located. This is critical for rural New Hampshire residents who are unable to receive any over-the-air broadcast signals from local markets and have been effectively excluded from reaping the benefits of telecommunications expansion.

Customers, rural and urban alike, deserve the best digital services available. I respectfully request that you consider these perspectives. If you have any questions about my views, please do not hesitate to contact me or Tad Furtado of my staff.

Sincerely,

Charles F. Bass  
Member of Congress

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