

Rick Bauermeister, Director of Business Development

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January 30, 2002

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

RE: Proceeding # 01-348

Dear Chairman Powell:

As a businessman deeply interested in the development of at-home businesses and business startups in South Dakota, I am writing to urge your support of the purchase of DirecTV by EchoStar. South Dakota's state government has done an outstanding job of wiring public schools to wide-band internet access, but the future of communications will evolve very quickly to the next level -- internet access via satellite, making wire obsolete.

That is why I am excited by the prospect of the EchoStar purchase. A college-educated mother on a farm near Woonsocket, South Dakota, could use her home as a virtual office. She can develop a clientele and make a significantly better living than what passes for normal in Woonsocket. She can enjoy the safety and values of small town life for herself and her children, and she can keep her children in a small town school. She would not be forced to move her family to Omaha, Minneapolis or Denver to achieve the comfortable lifestyle which matches her education and experience level.

This type of entrepreneur can live in Pine Ridge, Buffalo, White Rock, White Owl or Polo, and still maintain a highly competitive telecommute business which adds value to the local communities. For farming and ranching families, this merger and the innovation of satellite internet service will have untold value. The digital divide will no longer be defined by geography.

The merger of EchoStar and DirecTV is logical in the big picture of the relatively new satellite TV industry. The winners will be consumers and businesses who will have access to the internet from anywhere in the United States.

Sincerely,



Rick Bauermeister