

I am a current satellite TV subscriber who believes the pending merger of EchoStar and DIRECTV will increase the benefits of the services I receive, as well as making satellite TV more attractive and useful for potential satellite customers. This merger will allow a more cost-effective delivery of services including more choices in channels, programming, broadband, and new television technologies. I am particularly interested in receiving my •local• channels via satellite. In my situation, the closest NBC station is 70 miles away, which means that channel is always •snowy,• if I can receive it at all.

I was a cable television subscriber for many years. However, the continually rising prices (it seemed like my cost increased at least every other month), and the lack of pay-per-view movies caused me to invest in satellite television. I have been very pleased with my choice, but it is inconvenient to not have local channels via my satellite provider.

I am also interested in broadband internet access. To date this is too expensive for me. My hope is that through the merger, the costs will decrease.

I am also very supportive of a company with the philosophy of making services available to rural areas and smaller communities, places which have been ignored by cable television. Those of us who once lived in smaller communities well remember not having cable availability. We also remember the cable suppliers who were only interested in serving areas quick and easy to link with cable•not areas where television stations were distant and access to cable would have allowed additional viewing choices.

These benefits to consumers won't happen without the merger. Satellite-delivered Internet service will bring an affordable and competitive alternative to cable modems and DSL to consumers in big cities, small towns, and rural areas alike. This will give me a competitive choice for Internet access and will be especially advantageous to rural communities where