

I would like to add my support for the pending merger of EchoStar and DirectTV. Being a fairly technically astute member of the public, I'm amazed at how this merger can be considered anything but a benefit to the TV viewing public. I can only assume that the heavy resistance it is facing is due to the strong lobbying power of America's cable companies. Please allow me to list a few of the benefits I can come up with.

- Local channels through satellite for everyone. This will make satellite a true competitor with local cable companies. Today cable has an unfair advantage.

- Pricing. I've heard the argument that rural customers will suffer because there will now only be one satellite provider. The combined company cannot raise these prices without raising the prices of everyone. This would not be in their best interest. Besides, they could raise their prices about 100% and I'd still have more channels and better quality than the same money would get me with cable.

- HDTV - People in rural areas looking for a reason to buy a new HDTV capable set would have one with this merger. This would be a great stimulus to the local economies.

- True competition for cable. Cable companies are converting customers to digital cable so they can offer more channels with a lower quality at a higher price. If the combined satellite company continued to offer the same superior picture that they do now cable companies would be forced to do the same or lose customers.

I have several other valid points but I think this is enough to get my point across. Plus, after reading the sentence that said I support it I'm sure this letter was not read any further. I urge you to consider this merger with an open mind and to not allow the powerful lobbyists from the cable industry to influence you. The one point that should be noted is how against this merger they are. They know this combined company is going to be a huge competitor to them. That means they're going to have to stop sc