

Before the
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20554

RE: EchoStar Communications Corp., General Motors Corp.,
and Hughes Electronics Corp. (Matter 01-348)

April 22, 2002

Comments Submitted By:

Farm Business Council
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The Farm Business Council is a non-profit advocacy and public policy organization dedicated to the principles of the free market. FBC believes that free enterprise offers the best solutions to the problems confronting agricultural businesses.

FBC supports the plans which would allow the merger of EchoStar Communications, which operates the DISH network, with Hughes Electronics, which operates DIRECTV. The proposed merger makes sense economically and is especially beneficial to citizens and businesses in rural America.

The company which results from the merger - EchoStar - will be better able to serve rural areas for four reasons:

¥ the merger will make local television channels available in every rural region via satellite, ensuring better access to vital information such as daily weather reports

¥ the merger will make available improved satellite broadband access to rural areas and thereby enable expanded services such as pay-per-view, high-definition TV, and video-on-demand

¥ the merger will bring increased competition which will result in more competitive pricing

¥ the merger will make possible high-speed Internet service via satellite to rural areas at the same price available to urban areas, a very important benefit to farm businesses

One of the biggest economic benefits to the rural community from the Internet, broadband, e-mail and e-commerce is the cost-savings that result from the speed and efficiency with which this technology minimizes distance as a cost factor. Farm businesses are run by people who recognize this fact. We truly need the benefits which will come from this merger.

The Farm Business Council also recognizes that satellite is the logical and economical way to provide high-speed Internet access to rural communities and small towns where today less than 5% have access to the two dominant broadband technologies offered by local exchange carriers and cable companies. We urge the FCC to support this merger which will truly help the growers, ranchers and other agricultural businesses which are the backbone of our countries rural economy.

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