

For what it's worth, I wanted to add my opinion regarding this proposed merger between the major satellite TV providers.

The bottom line for me is that I can only see one drawback - the potential for rural customers who have no access to cable to be charged higher rates. As long as the new company is required to follow through with their one rate plan, this concern will be satisfied. There is no question they will have to keep prices lower in densely populated areas to compete with cable companies. As long as those of us in rural areas benefit from that competition the merger will be a great benefit to all consumers.

I am aware there is some concern about a reduction in options for consumers. Because I am moving to a rural area soon this is particularly of concern to me. Since I do not have access to cable, I have only two real options - Dish Network and DirectTV. But as I have studied each company and their offerings I have concluded that there is so much overlap between the two that there really is no choice as it is. With either company I will get pretty much the same channels, at the same price, with the same level of service. However, if the companies merge I will have access to more channels - particularly the local channels which are not currently available in the Yakima Washington area (where I am moving).

In short, the only valid reason to deny this merger request is if the new company will increase prices in rural areas where cable is not available. By requiring the new company to stick to a nationwide rate plan there will be more than enough competition with the cable companies to keep the rates reasonable.

One more thing. It appears to me that the only opposition to this merger is coming from the cable companies. Ironically, they allege that it will reduce competition. But if that's the case what are they worried about? What company does not really want fewer competitors? Their very opposition to the merger undermines their alleg