

ORIGINAL

CLAIBORNE PARISH FARM BUREAU

"Voice of Agriculture"
HOMER, LOUISIANA 71040

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February 18, 2002

Chairman Michael Powell
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th St. S.W.
Washington DC 20554

01-348

RECE

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Federal Communications Commission
Office of Secretary

Dear Chairman Powell:

I am writing to encourage your support of the pending merger of EchoStar Communications and Hughes Electronics.

I believe that the new company will pave the way for greater competition with the cable companies who currently control 80% of the pay television households in the United States. This merger will not inhibit competition; rather it will provide an equal base in which the markets can compete.

The new company will also be able to reach additional markets because of the programming and administrative efficiencies realized by the new company. Direct broadcast satellite TV offered by the newly formed company will be able to provide interactive educational programs in many schools. High Speed Internet service would be available to many rural areas throughout the state. This company would be a viable competitor that could deliver more program choices and improved services at competitive prices.

I encourage you to review the facts and hope that you can support the merger.

Sincerely,

Jim Marsalis

Jim Marsalis, President
Claiborne Parish Farm Bureau

P.O. BOX 437
HOMER, LA 71040

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