

May 2, 2002

Honorable Michael Powell  
Chairman  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12<sup>th</sup> St. SW  
Washington, D.C. 20554

Dear Chairman Powell:

I am writing to you today in support of the merger between DirecTV and EchoStar Communications. The benefits to not only my constituents, but also to all Ohioans make this merger well suited for approval. I also write to you as a satellite TV consumer.

Currently, satellite consumers are unable to receive their local channels for news and other programming in 9 of Ohio's 12 markets. With the approval of this merger, the new EchoStar has committed to providing local channels in all 12 Ohio markets. No longer will only the Columbus, Cleveland and Cincinnati markets be the ones served, but all of Ohio will be better served.

The freed up space from no longer having to carry two identical signals also spells real benefit for consumers. This free space will allow for more programming, particularly in the area of educational programming for home entertainment and use in schools.

In addition to the local market benefit, the combining of these two companies will allow for DSL or cable modem service to areas of "digital have nots." This will allow many consumers in both rural and urban areas access to the Internet and at speeds that are greater than today's dial in methods.

I personally am excited to see the new possibilities that this merger will create. It will give all Ohioans the ability to view local programming and improved Internet capabilities. In short, the approval of this merger means greater benefits for the State of Ohio.

Sincerely,

SENATOR GREG L. DIDONATO  
Senate Minority Leader