

The Honorable Michael K. Powell
Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20554

Dear Chairman Powell:

I am writing to you today to urge your support of the EchoStar and Direct TV merger. I live in a rural area outside of the Myrtle Beach, SC area and am extremely frustrated at the service provider that we have in this area. I thought that we were a nation founded on the premise that competition is a good thing. Well in Loris, SC where I live there is NO competition. My local phone company has everything sewn up tight around here and I think that that is truly an unfair set of circumstances in our society. They have local phone, long distance, broadband, internet, cable, digital cable and wireless. And when I make mention of NO COMPETITION I mean... I have tried to use another long distance carrier due to their advertised lower rates and when I tried to sign up was told I couldn't get the advertised rates because of an agreement with my local company that they would not charge a per minute rate lower than HTC provided! UNFAIR. Next a few years ago we went with AOL internet and proceeded to get \$200 bills just in the local extended portion of the bill because the closest number available was Myrtle Beach or Conway. I can drive to either one of these locations in 15 minutes and yet we get charged local extended minutes in the same county. Years ago daytime rates were between 5 and 8 cents a minute (more per minute at times than for me to call California at anytime during the day), they have come down on the MEAS rates to 2.5 cents a minute but that is still outrageous for the lack of distance involved. UNFAIR! To internet now, I HAVE to use HTC internet in order to have a local access number in which to connect, but I despise the content they provide for \$21.95 a month and that continues to rise because they know it's their way or no way and they can do what they want. I enjoy AOL a LOT better so I now have that but, I have to pay HTC still in order to be able to bring my own access to AOL so I am not charged a per minute access rate. So I am paying twice. Now on to cable, their next joke!!!! My cable service pops out more than it is in. And 2 or 3 years ago on a Friday evening we came in to find that there was no cable service. And regardless of what the records say I CAN NOT GET A GOOD SIGNAL FOR MY LOCALS (yet I am only able to get NBC distant carrier on satellite) Anyway I drive a truck all week long and on Fridays when I come in all I want to do is sit down and relax in front of the television and unwind. At 7:00 pm my wife called the phone company and told them our cable was out, she was told someone would check into it. At 9:00 pm when there was still no cable I called and was told that since there were no other complaints there would be no service sent out to fix the problem until at the earliest Monday morning at 10:00 am during business hours. On Saturday morning we were a Sam's buying a satellite system. We didn't have TV all weekend because we still had to get the satellite installed but on Monday morning my wife took all of the cable boxes and the two DMX boxes back and had HTC drop us down to basic cable in order to receive our locals. And we quickly found that all in all we were paying more for cable (because without competition again they knew they could rip us off!!) It angers me that we have to pay them for the locals still because they are overpriced also! On to wireless service, my wife has to use HTC so she can have a local access number but I have to use Suncom because of my profession and the distance I travel the service is less for the region that I need but again even though there is a Suncom dealer here in Loris the access number is a Myrtle Beach number and if any of my family has to c

all me from Loris they get charged a per minute rate. RIDICULOUS!!!! The portion of my phone bill for my wife to call me is greater than the portion for long distance and my wife's entire family lives in NC and she is always calling them. Tell me where the fairness in any of this is. Now I realize that this merger has nothi

Sincerely,

Darren Floyd
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