



BILL GALLAGHER

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"Living beside you. Working for you."

January 15, 2002

Michael Powell
Chairman, Federal Communications Commission
455 12th Street SW
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Chairman Powell:

I wanted to take just a moment to correspond with you on an issue important to the Farm Bureau and to rural America. That issue is the proposed merger of DirecTV and EchoStar.

Many people in rural areas are dependent upon satellite technology for both television and high-speed internet access. This merger would provide the flexibility the merged company the increased capacity that will allow it to do a number of important things.

The merged company would be better able to compete in urban areas with the cable companies and with their national pricing policy (everyone gets the same price) that means lower prices for rural consumers. In addition, the merged company has committed to providing local broadcast television in every state including Montana (we currently get NO local stations on our satellite services) and will end the current duplication of literally hundreds of channels, thus making available satellite spectrum for increased broadband services.

I hope you will support this merger that has so much potential to help so many individuals, families and businesses in rural America.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in red ink, appearing to read 'Bill Gallagher'.

W A (Bill) Gallagher CLU, ChFC