

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 as a current cable subscriber who is quite unhappy with the lack of competition in this market. I would very much like to subscribe to satellite TV but feel it is imperative that I receive local news, weather and community information. Currently over 25% of people in this market are choosing satellite over cable which means they can not view their local news or weather without first disengaging their satellite. Not only is this an inconvenience to subscribers, but it continues to give cable an unfair advantage when many people don't have an option to choose. The high penetration of satellite dishes in this area illustrates the advantage to consumers if local stations are allowed to be carried via satellite. I want to add my voice of support to the pending merger of EchoStar and DIRECTV. The combination of these two satellite providers will provide numerous benefits to consumers like me, including more choices in channels, programming, broadband and new television technologies.

By merging, the combined company will be a much stronger competitor to cable television and can offer more programming choices and, most importantly, all local TV channels in every market in the U.S. By providing local TV channels everywhere, this merger will make satellite television a strong alternative to cable in our community. A cable company that has continued to increase rates with no increase in services. Throughout the country, people will now be able to turn to satellite TV to access their local news, weather and community information. But just as exciting, the merger will bring the availability of affordable high-speed Internet service by satellite to over 40 million Americans who don't have high-speed Internet access. These tremendous benefits to consumers won't happen without the merger. Satellite-delivered Internet service will bring an affordable and competitive alternative to cable modems and DSL to consumers in big cities, small towns and rural areas alike. This will give me a competitive choice for Internet access and will be especially advantageous to rural communities where cable modems and DSL are not likely to be available anytime in the near future. As you are well aware, many of the areas of Kentucky offer no option for cable and therefore residents receive a poor signal from their local television affiliates. This is common in many counties such as Versailles where many people have no choices currently.

In the interest of improving our access to competitive television and Internet service, I urge you to lend your support to this merger.

As this is an election year, I am sure that you, as a potential political advertiser can take a moment to see the benefits of increasing viewership of your messages by 25%. This same benefit would be seen by the small businesses in the community.

Thank you for your time. I would appreciate a response outlining your stance on this merger.

Sincerely,

Gail Branham  
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