

I am writing to you today as a long-time Dish Network satellite TV subscriber who would like 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. That's exciting!

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., including the Austin-Rochester-Mason City market in which I live in in Rochester, Minnesota. By providing local TV channels everywhere, this merger will make satellite television a strong alternative to cable in our community. Throughout the country, people will now be able to turn to satellite TV to access their local news, weather and community information, in addition to a comprehensive package of national video programming.

But just as exciting, the merger will bring the availability of affordable high-speed Internet service by satellite to more than 40 million Americans who don't have high-speed Internet access. As a user of broadband high-speed Internet, I realize the importance of this service to rural Americans who don't live in an area serviced by cable television or who don't live within the necessary short distance of telephone central offices to receive digital subscriber line (DSL) high-speed service.

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.

In the interest