

I am writing to you today as a current 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.

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. 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.

FOR A WHILE I WAS ABLE TO GET MY 'LOCAL' NETWORKS FROM ST. LOUIS. (I LIVE 200 MILES SSW OF ST LOUIS.) MORE RECENTLY, SOME JUDGE OR FCC RULING HAS MADE EVEN THAT IMPOSSIBLE. I NOW GET LOCAL SERVICE FROM CHICAGO. COULD SOMEONE TAKE THE TIME TO EXPLAIN TO THE PINHEADS MAKING THESE DECISIONS THAT THE ADVERTISERS ARE GETTING CHEATED. YOU SEE, I HAVE NEVER BEEN TO, NOR DO I ANTICIPATE EVER BEING IN CHICAGO. I GO TO ST. LOUIS AT LEAST ONCE EACH YEAR. MOREOVER, SPRINGFIELD MO IS MY LOCAL TV MARKET. I TRAVEL TO SPRINGFIELD AT LEAST ONCE EACH MONTH. DOESN'T IT JUST MAKE BETTER BUSINESS SENSE TO ALLOW LOCAL ADVERTISERS ACCESS TO ME AS WELL AS ALLOW ME ACCESS TO MY REAL 'LOCAL' NEWS, WEATHER, AND REGIONAL FOCUSED PROGRAMMING. THIS MERGER WILL ALLOW SUCH ACCESS FOR ME AND MILLIONS OF OTHER AMERICANS LIKE ME. DOES THE FACT THAT I CHOOSE TO LIVE IN A COMMUNITY OF 10,000 POPULATION NEAR A REGIONAL HUB CITY OF 200,000 POPULATION MAKE ME LESS DESERVING OF REAL LOCAL ACCESS THAN THOSE WHO CHOOSE TO LIVE IN METROPOLIS OR A CITY WITH AN NFL FRANCHISE?

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.

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