

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

Dear Chairman Powell:

I am a DishNetwork subscriber and support the merger of that company with DirecTV. I live in a rural area of western NC (Jackson county). Before getting satellite service, I had no TV reception at my house. Cable TV service is not available and I have been told will never be available where I live.

Without satellite TV service, me and others that live here would have to rely only on radio and newspapers for news. Radio signals are awful here, too. Thankfully, there is an excellent NPR station out of Asheville that I get which provides decent news information. Newspaper coverage stinks. The Asheville Citizen Times, our 'regional' newspaper seems to stop at the Haywood-Buncombe county border. You only see snippets of what is happening in the state, the US, the world.

In other words, without the excellent coverage available through the programming provided by our satellite provider, I would not be as well informed about what is going on in my state, the country, and the world. Weather coverage provided is important, also, and I appreciate the educational programming available to me and my family.

If the merger of the two companies will help them be more profitable, provide local programming and other services, I support it. Cable is not an option for us and even if it was I believe I would still go with satellite service based on the quality of service and complaints about service I hear about the local cable provider.

Finally, the prospect of the combined companies being able to offer high-speed Internet access to rural residents is a real plus. I've read that the market is so small that it would not be profitable for companies to offer it, making their prices higher. But if cable and DSL aren't available, and there's NO broadband ISP on the horizon, satellite is the only option for many. (I don't know why the phone companies don't offering it to more areas/people; they come into most homes.) I would support government assistance to them to provide access to rural America -- it can only be good for us all.

I work at a local university and have high speed access through my job, using a state implemented network for the university system. I know what the benefits of Internet access are for individuals, especially those with children who are in school. Slow dial-up access makes it almost a chore to use (and as web delivery advances, I think those of us with dial-up access will be at more of a disadvantage).

DishNetwork is a good company and provides a great service. My relatives that live in Graham county, NC use DirecTV and find them a good company, also. If in combining they can improve and expand service options for their customers, let them do it! Don't leave us in the dark and on the edges of the information economy.

Sincerely,

Deborah Justice

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