

For more than ten years, I subscribed to my local monopoly cableTVservice. After deregulation, prices went up. After re-regulation prices went up. After de-re-regulation prices went up. As Continental Cable became TCI Cable which then became AT&T Cable, prices went up after each merger, presumably so that these companies could pay off the enormous debt incurred by the acquiring company. Channel assignments got juggled, and I was forced into purchasing blocks of garbage channels to get the few programming services I considered worthwhile.

After ten years of increasing prices, poor customer relations, limited programming options, and unreliable service, I switched last year to satellite subscription TV. I thought I was finally free of the race by ego-driven executives to absorb and dominate wire-based cable TV. I had two INDEPENDENT choices: Dish Network and DirectTV. I would be free of local TV taxes and franchise fees. Looking for the closest match between my viewing preferences and the programming offered, I chose Dish and I have been satisfied with the service, the quality of reception, and the price.

However, I fear that a merger of DirectTV into Echostar will put me and millions of other viewers back into the same grind I went through with the monopoly land-based system: ratcheting prices to pay off mountains of debt, consolidation of programming into fewer, more pricey packages, and no other choice but the wire cable I was so glad to have disconnected.

I believe that because DirectTV and Dish are head-on competitors, prices will remain steady. Equipment subsidies and incentives will continue to be offered. Programming will continue to be offered in a more "ala-carte" fashion vs "take-it-all-or-leave-it".

I urge the FCC to deny the merger of DirectTV and Dish, and instead to encourage competition. I would welcome the presence of more STV providers. I fail to see how this proposed merger would benefit the average subscriber.

Respectfully,
Paul Kasley