

March 14, 2002

The Honorable Mike DeWine
United State Senate
Senate Office Building
Washington, D. C. 20510

Dear Senator DeWine:

I am writing to you today in support of the merger between DirecTV and EchoStar Communications. The benefits to not only my constituents, but also to all Ohioans, make this merger well suited for approval.

Currently, satellite consumers are unable to receive their local channels for news and other programming in nine of Ohio's 12 markets. Included in those nine markets is the Dayton/Springfield market. With the approval of this merger, the new EchoStar has committed to providing local channels in all 12 Ohio markets. No longer will only the Columbus, Cleveland, and Cincinnati markets be the ones served, but all of Ohio will be better served.

The freed up space from no longer having to carry two identical signals also spells real benefit for consumers. This free space will allow for more programming, particularly in the area of educational programming for home and school use.

In addition to the local market benefit, the combining of these two companies will allow for DSL or cable modem service to areas of "digital have nots." This will allow many consumers in both rural and urban areas access to the Internet and at speeds that are greater than today's dial in methods.

I personally am excited to see the new possibilities that this merger will create. It will give all Ohioans the ability to view local programming and have improved Internet capabilities. In short, the approval of this merger means great benefits for the State of Ohio. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Merle G. Kearns
State Representative
74th House District

Agriculture and Natural Resources
Natural Resources, Parks and
Recreation Subcommittee
Education
Health and Family Services, Vice
Chair
Children and Family Services
Subcommittee
JCARR
Ohio Children's Trust Fund Board,
Chair
Legislative Office of Education
Oversight, Chair