

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

Dear Chairman Powell:

I'm writing to urge you to support the proposed merger between EchoStar Communications and Hughes Electronics. I believe the merger holds tremendous potential for my company in Oak Harbor, WA which sells EchoStar's DISH Network satellite TV service. The new company will offer a more attractive product to consumers, and this will mean more business for my company.

If the merger is approved, the new company will be able to offer local broadcast stations to all 210 of the nation's television markets. Currently, EchoStar offers service in only 36 markets. This is possible because both EchoStar and DIRECTV currently duplicate hundreds of channels of identical programming. By combining their limited spectrum, the new company will become a fully competitive cable alternative in every television market in the country. This will allow me to provide a better product to my customers in the near future.

This merger will provide consumers across the country with an affordable high-speed Internet access service provider because broadband via satellite can reach areas of the country cable and DSL wires do not. This is rural Americas only realistic hope for affordable broadband service. The new company will also provide much needed competition to cable and DSL where high speed Internet access service is already available.

The merger will allow the new company to better compete with cable. This is good for all consumers because subscribers to the new service will benefit from the competition on price and services whether or not they are served by cable.

In addition to the benefits already mentioned, the spectrum savings would allow the new company to offer new and enhanced television services, such as high definition television, interactive television, and near video-on-demand. These innovations will increase the allure of satellite TV and offer new sales opportunities for satellite TV hardware.

Please support the merger between EchoStar Communications Corporation and Hughes Electronics. There are many benefits of the merger, but I believe that most importantly, the new company will increase competition with cable and help hold down cable rate increases. These savings, in turn, will be passed along to customers, which will be good for my business.

Sincerely,

Lawrence Keen
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Oak Harbor, WA 98277