

LABOR NEWS INC.

423 WESTPORT RD. KCMO 64111

February 8, 2002

The Honorable Michael K. Powell
Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 – 12th Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20544

**Re: EchoStar/DIRECTV merger
FCC Docket # 01-348**

Dear Mr. Powell:

I am writing to ask you to support the proposed merger of EchoStar Communications and Hughes Electronics, currently pending before the Department of Justice and the Federal Communications Commission as proceeding # 01-348.

The combined company, which would be called EchoStar and use the DIRECTV brand for its services, will be in a position to provide more and better services, especially to rural residents who are currently on the wrong side of the “digital divide.” It will also present a significant competitive challenge to the entrenched cable companies that currently control more than 80 percent of pay television households in the United States.

This merger will lead directly to the elimination of duplicative programming and the creation of bandwidth efficiencies, which will enable the new EchoStar to offer greatly expanded television and high-speed, broadband Internet access – competitive with cable in terms of both price and quality. It seems like a no-lose decision. I hope you will agree, and support the EchoStar/DIRECTV merger.

Sincerely,

Kevin B. O’Neill
Publisher

(original on file: call (816) 561-7555)