

MARY L. LANDRIEU  
LOUISIANA

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-1804

January 22, 2002

*CSB  
merger  
for  
MKP  
0666*

Mr. Michael K. Powell  
Chairman  
Federal Communication Commission  
445 12<sup>th</sup> Street, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20554

Dear Mr. Powell:

I am writing regarding recent news reports concerning the proposed merger and consolidation in the satellite-television industry between EchoStar and DirecTV. During your review of the antitrust case, I urge you and the Federal Communication Commission to assess the overwhelming market power that will result in multi-channel television services resulting from this merger.

This merger would have a profound impact on Louisiana. In Louisiana, roughly 366,859 rural households (23% of all Louisiana households) have no cable access. For these rural households and other rural Americans without any cable option, satellite is the only option available to them if they want to access multi-channel television. In addition, this merger will currently impact 303,229 rural households (19% of all Louisiana households) who currently enjoy satellite service.

Currently, satellite subscribers in Louisiana and elsewhere can choose between competing satellite services offered by DirectTV and EchoStar. If these two satellite companies merge, it could leave these rural consumers with a single provider of multi-channel television. Furthermore, consumers in those areas with three providers (cable, EchoStar, and DirectTV) may find themselves suddenly subject to diminished competition. Finally, it may also leave one company with control over roughly 95 percent of the home satellite market.

Given the potential impact of this merger on Louisiana, I ask that the Department carefully assess the proposed merger to ensure continued competition in multi-channel television. Thank you for your attention and consideration in this most important matter.

With kindest regards, I am

Sincerely,



Mary L. Landrieu  
United States Senator

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