

I am writing today as a current satellite TV subscriber who would like to add my voice of support to the pending merger of EchoStar and DIRECTV.

Both providers offer unique and different programming. I cannot afford to subscribe to both services, but with a merged company I could select from the combined resources of both. I believe the competition offered by the cable television industry will keep prices competitive. I also agree with the applicants in this case that their merger will not create a programming monopoly due to the presence of the much larger cable television industry, and would go a step further to suggest that they, along with future competitors in current and emerging technologies, be governed by a unified set of rules. This would assure that neither delivery system would have monopolistic privileges in any aspect of the business.

To the extent that program delivery is deemed to be a de facto monopoly since few subscribers have both, I would favor government legislation that would advocate for the public interest, but for the most part, I believe competitive pressures will provide quality offerings for all.

As a side note, I have been following what appears to be a rather secretive and deceptive plan by Northpoint to appropriate public spectrum with as little due process as possible, trying to lock out other prospective applicants by closing them out of a spectrum auction, and at the same time suppress evidence that their transmissions as proposed, will cause potential degradation to some satellite viewers such as myself. I would just like to request that the new FCC of the Bush administration act with as much integrity and openness to public input as is politically possible in this matter.

As a final note, I would like to express my displeasure with the way the current Copyright Protection Act has been applied to censor the programming choices offered the viewing public. Here in Tacoma Washington, I can subscribe to the New York Times even though some of the same articles appear in the local paper. I can legally listen to network radio stations hundreds of miles away that duplicate some of the programming on the local stations. Yet, because I should be able to receive a weak and ghostly over the air broadcast from my local network TV stations, I am denied the right to watch ANY broadcasts, duplicated or not, from distant stations. As an American, why should I be denied the right to subscribe to TV broadcasts from my home city while a neighbor from the Middle East can subscribe to broadcasts from his home country half way around the world? What does that tell the world about America's freedom of choice? I understand that a local station loses advertising revenue and syndicated exclusivity if I watch out of market programming. The solution to this is to calculate the fair market loss of a single viewer, add this amount into the subscription charge for a distant signal subscription, then pass the revenue directly back to the local station in a royalty payment. I am not averse to paying more to watch my hometown stations, but am frustrated that to do so under current legislation, I become a lawbreaker. I think the whole copyright policy in this area needs to be rethought, and as long as I still have the right to vote in America, I will support those who support our freedom of choice.

My apologies for the length and diverse content of this letter. I am grateful for the opportunity to express my thoughts to you.

Thanks for allowing me the opportunity to express my views for your consideration.