

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

Dear Chairman Powell:

As a current satellite TV subscriber I would like to add my voice of support to the pending merger of EchoStar and DIRECTV.

1. Many communities are in rugged terrain making it difficult to receive signals from local broadcast stations. Some broadcast stations use translators to extend their area coverage. At the same time these translators are poorly maintained, thus giving these communities something less than a grade 'B' signal. Note: Use of these translators should be required to provide nothing less than a grade 'A+' signal. The merger would give us access to a quality signal.

2. Local cable companies are usually assigned to maintain these translators and have no incentive to improve the reception of these translators. Now the local communities are at the mercy of the cable companies. Either you get cable service or not much else. Again the use of these translators should be required to provide nothing less than a grade 'A+' signal. The merger would create competition for the rural mass public.

3. Cable and Satellite service does indeed expand the viewing area of these broadcast stations. Why are these broadcast stations charging a fee for a service that was free to begin with? You would think these broadcast stations would be tickled to have their viewing area expanded. This was never fair to mass public as they end up paying for this unnecessary added expense. Echostar has already stated it will be the same price for all subscribers across the nation. The merger will keep those broadcast stations from increasing this fee that should be free to begin with.

By merging, the combined company will be a much stronger competitor to cable television and can offer more programming choices and, most importantly, all local TV channels in every market in the US. By providing local TV channels everywhere, this merger will make satellite television a strong alternative to cable in our community. Throughout the country, people will now be able to turn to satellite TV to access their local news, weather and community information, in addition to a comprehensive package of national video programming. But just as exciting, the merger will bring the availability of affordable high-speed Internet service by satellite to over 40 million Americans who don't have high-speed Internet access. These tremendous benefits to consumers won't happen without the merger. Satellite-delivered Internet service will bring an affordable and competitive alternative to cable modems and DSL to consumers in big cities, small towns and rural areas alike. This will give me a competitive choice for Internet access and will be especially advantageous to rural communities where cable modems and DSL are not likely to be available anytime in the near future.

In the interest of improving our access to competitive television and Internet service, I urge you to lend your support to this merger.

Sincerely,

Fred Mayer
PO Box 1246
Glenns Ferry, ID 83623