

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

Dear Chairman Powell:

My Wife and I are writing to you today as a current =1CDish-Net=1D satellite TV subscribers, we would like to add our voice of support to the pending merger of =1CEchoStar A.K.A.-Dish-Net=1D and=1D DIREC-TV=1D. The combination of these two satellite providers will provide numerous benefits to consumers like us, including more choices in channels, programming, broadband and new television technologies. We live in a RURAL area of Alabama in a newly incorporated town of Smiths Station zip code 36877.

Currently Cable TV and Cable internet are available in our area, we are on a fixed income and switched to Sattelite TV to save money, Currently the cable service available to us costs approximately 35% more and even with their =1CDigital Cable=1D service which we had the quality, dependability and programming is terrible compared to what we have now with sattelite. We had to give up broadband internet service because the cable company required us to carry deluxe cable to connect a cable modem 39.95 for the cable and 29.95 for the Internet, not excluding a phone line due to one way cable modem, (telephone out and Cable in), this makes broadband here over \$100.00 dollars a month. Although I was the first one to sign up for their Cable internet and Digital cable service, I was told that we were getting 2 way CABLE MODEMS WITHIN 3 MONTHS, that was over three years ago, they have put it in several areas but not to my house, their excuse being that there is not enough demand on my street, they basically LIED as I was told it was first come first serve, and with 2 way cable I would not have to have a dedicated phone line that they require Unfortunately there is no competition except Sattelite so I finally decided to give up local channels and the local =1CWeather Channel=1D forecasts but I am saving \$70.00 dollars a month. 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 U.S. 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, and especially small towns and RURAL areas alike. I used to live in southern California and see first hand now how greedy the cable companies can get when they have no competition. Only 4 miles from our home over the state line, the city of Columbus, GA has several cable companies that also offer broadband Internet, as well as DSL being available there at much more competitive costs. The local Bell Company over 2 years ago has told us DSL will be here any time now. This will give us a competitive choice for Internet access and will be especially advantageous to our communities where full duplex cable modems or DSL are not likely to be available anytime in the near future.

Please for our communities and all the others like us all over the country,
big and small, I urge you to lend your support to this merger so that fair
ness through competition, something we feel that sattelite companies as wel
l as any other carriers deserve.

Sincerely,

Michael & Pamela McCluskey
319 Lee Road 243
Smiths Station, AL 36877