



January 31, 2001

Mr. Michael Powell
Chairman, Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street SW
Washington, D.C. 20554

Dear Chairman Powell:

The future of economic development in rural areas like Montana depends in large part to our ability to maximize the opportunities of broadband communication. As a small businessman, I have dedicated myself and my business to helping enable businesses in this part of the country gain access to the global marketplace via high-speed communications.

One of the ways we can accomplish this goal is to reduce the duplication of services that has the effect of limiting the amount of spectrum available for advanced services. The proposed merger between DirecTV and EchoStar promises to do just that and provides real opportunity for rural economic development.

As you are well aware, the two companies currently use a great deal of the scarce satellite television spectrum to broadcast dozens, if not hundreds of the same channels. By eliminating this duplication of basic television services, we will create a real opportunity to utilize this spectrum for more productive purposes.

In rural America we need this kind of opportunity to effectively compete with more urban areas and I hope you will look favorably on this merger.

Sincerely yours,

Doug Nelson