

NetExpress, LLP

January 28, 2002

Chairman Michael Powell
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20554

RE: Proceeding # 01-348

Dear Chairman Powell:

As the owner of a technology company, I am writing in regard to the "digital divide" that exists in a rural state like North Dakota, where my company does business.

I am always interested in wireless options that may be available to help bring broadband to the far reaches of our state because the physical cabling infrastructure cost is very, very high in a rural state like ours given the great land expanse. I can't blame local telephone companies (even telephone companies serving large communities) for not providing high-speed DSL service in rural areas because of the high cost. And high-speed cable Internet is not available in all areas.

So what are rural states like ours left to do? Explore wireless options for broadband Internet.

I have been reading, with interest, various articles on the Internet and in print, the merger between Hughes and EchoStar, and am very interested in what I have seen and heard. Because of the great outlook from a merger such as this, I am very much in support of this merger.

To be able to provide high-speed broadband Internet access via a small satellite dish is a great option for a rural state like ours where the costs are too great to be able to physically hook up rural residents to any type of broadband Internet access, and they are left with much-slower dial-up Internet access. In fact, I heard on a recent KFYZ-AM radio report that one of the 4 largest cities in our state, Grand Forks, over 92% of the residents are not able to obtain high-speed Internet access.

Plus, it is about time that cable companies get some competition. They have been able name their own price without worrying about competition. EchoStar would finally be an entity to provide the big cable companies some competition.

Thank you for considering the merger. I hope you can see the great benefits for a rural state like ours.

Sincerely,



Jason Brostrom
Partner

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