

March 1, 2002

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

Dear Chairman Powell:

I am writing in regard to the lack of broadband Internet access and the role that EchoStar can play in closing the “digital divide” in a rural state like ours.

Our company, Nexus Innovations, is a strategic planning and high-level technology consulting firm. We have worked very closely with businesses and their information technology needs across our state. We have worked with rural areas that simply do not have the access to high-speed Internet access. DSL is not available. Cable Internet is not available. This is a travesty. We must work to find solutions to bring broadband to all parts of North Dakota – and wireless means are a good option.

That is why I have been interested in the proposed merger of EchoStar and Hughes, with the new company, EchoStar, planning to provide high-speed broadband Internet access via a small satellite dish. This would provide a great option to bring broadband services “the last mile” to users and small businesses in a rural state like ours. In addition, EchoStar CEO Charles Ergen has promised nationwide pricing and will not engage in regional pricing – good news for rural North Dakota.

I hope you can support this merger between EchoStar and Hughes – it will be a positive move that will have tremendous benefit for rural states like ours where other options are far too expensive given the vast expanse of the state. A wireless solution like satellite broadband would provide more options to the consumers in North Dakota.

Sincerely,

Robert J. Pope
President