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New  
Century

January 18, 2002

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

Dear Chairman Powell:

I'm writing to ask your support for the proposed merger of EchoStar and DIRECTV on behalf of Project 21, an initiative of The National Center for Public Policy Research (NCPFR) dedicated to getting public exposure for the political and social views of moderate and conservative African-Americans.

We share the views expressed to you separately by the leadership of NCPFR that the merger of these two companies would be a strong example of private enterprise working in the public interest. The only real competition in the pay-TV market today is between the competing technologies of satellite and cable TV. Until satellite technology made its presence felt over the last 10 years, the pay-TV market was mired in monopoly by the cable TV companies.

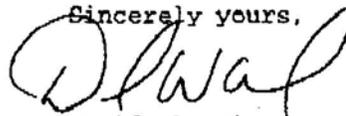
Those companies still control 80 percent of the market, but EchoStar and DIRECTV have introduced competition to the point where they have a combined market share of 17 percent. The actual combination of these two wireless companies will give them the economic and technical resources to significantly expand their programming choices and make America a nationwide offer of satellite-delivered consumer broadband services, including high-speed Internet access.

Both these improvements would expand satellite's ability to compete with cable to the point where satellite competition could stop or roll back the unreasonable increases in cable prices. As an organization of African-Americans who believe in free enterprise, however, Project 21 has a particular interest in seeing the new EchoStar deliver nationwide broadband services.

We believe this would once and for all set aside the so-called digital divide problem. African-American families are steadily increasing their use of the Internet. They don't need the coddling of government programs to continue this trend. They simply need reasonably priced broadband access that's available everywhere in the country. This is exactly what the EchoStar/DIRECTV merger would provide.

For the good of all Americans, we encourage you to see that your agency gives this merger the speedy and unambiguous approval it deserves.

Sincerely yours,



David Almasi  
Director