



January 31, 2002

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

Re: (Proceeding 01-348)

Dear Chairman Powell:

I am writing on behalf of the United States Internet Council to request your quick review and approval of the pending satellite merger between EchoStar and DirecTV.

More than five years ago on October 28, 1996, the founding companies and state lawmakers who launched the United States Internet Council drafted a plank of their Statement of Principles that applied to the future of broadband deployment. That plank reads:

**Growth.** "The Internet's continued expansion depends on further growth in its capacity. Public policies must be designed to foster the ongoing expansion of useful and affordable bandwidth, encourage the development of innovative technologies and promote broad access."

We believe that by allowing EchoStar and DirecTV to combine their limited spectrum resources, the new company will have twice the spectrum transmission capacity and the economies of scale to deploy next generation satellite based broadband and viably compete with cable and DSL for customers across the nation.

For Americans in communities already served by DSL and cable broadband providers, the addition of satellite-delivered broadband services represents an enrichment of competitive choice. For rural residents who have no current access to broadband, the merged satellite company would provide national coverage and access to the digital future. Satellite delivery of broadband services is essential to the economic future of rural communities.

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**UNITED STATES INTERNET COUNCIL**  
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The United States Internet Council understands that the development and deployment of broadband technologies will benefit the economy and provide new and exciting opportunities for all. Broadband Internet access can bring with it enormous benefits for education, health care, and entertainment – further expanding upon its impact.

It is our strong belief that this satellite merger will inject competition among the differing technologies and encourage investments and jobs in the high-tech community.

In view of its benefits to consumers and the high-tech community, I look on this merger favorably. It is my hope that the Federal Communications Commission will agree with the United States Internet Council that this merger is in the public interest and merits timely approval.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mark Q. Rhoads". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Mark Q. Rhoads  
Vice President