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January 14, 2002

**Re: EchoStar/Direct TV merger**  
**Docket # 01-348**

The Honorable Michael K. Powell  
Chairman  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 – 12<sup>th</sup> St., S.W.  
Washington, DC 20544

Dear Mr. Powell:

The EchoStar/Direct TV merger pending before the F.C.C. and the D.O.J. will provide many benefits to most Americans. The new company, EchoStar, will be a good competitor to cable companies, which today control 80% of the pay television households in the United States. Too, with the increase in competition from the improved EchoStar, cable companies would be motivated to improve their own services at a lower cost.

Satellite space is limited and the EchoStar/Direct TV merger will free up more satellite spectrum space because duplicative programs will be eliminated. EchoStar would be able to offer significantly more educational, specialty, and foreign language programming than it could before. It's logical that the cost to extend cable to underserved rural areas is expensive and that cost means higher rates for customers in rural areas; compared to simply installing a satellite dish to your TV for a small installation fee. The cost to the consumer for satellite TV would be the same whether you live in town or on a farm.

The new EchoStar company would make a difference in many rural areas in our country that do not have access to high speed internet service. Direct Broadcast Satellite TV will be able to provide interactive TV educational programs in most of our schools and videos on demand. The educational opportunities and more quality programming choices will be increased.

Again, this merger will enhance competition with the cable companies that have a stranglehold in most every urban market. The merger will allow a viable competitor to deliver more program choices and improved services to our rural areas at a competitive

price. Today we have an option to have better programs and more choices at a cost everyone can afford. I hope your review will concur and the F.C.C. and D.O.J. will support the EchoStar/Direct TV merger.

Sincerely,

CRAFT FRIDKIN & RHYNE, L.L.C.

Richard D. Rhyne

*(transcription – original on file; call (816) 561-7555)*