

Robert Farms

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January 14, 2002

Chairmen Michael Powell
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th St. S.W.
Washington DC 20554
Reference Number: 01-348

Dear Chairmen Powell:

I am writing to urge you to strongly consider the benefits afforded to rural America when considering your approval of the merger between Echostar Communications and Hughes Electronics.

For over 20 years, Echostar has been committed to a nationwide pricing plan. Both DISH Network and Direct TV have offered programming on a uniform, nationwide pricing basis since the launch of small dish satellite TV service in 1994. This pricing structure extends the benefits of competing with cable companies in urban areas to those who live in the most remote areas. It is a policy that has benefited rural Americans, and the merged company has stated on the record that it plans to continue this nationwide pricing structure in the future.

For many rural Americans, this merger offers the most realistic chance of bringing an affordable high-speed Internet access service to their homes. The merger between Echostar and Hughes will bring a virtual third line, similar to the bundled offerings of video and data by cable, into the homes that cable has deemed too expensive to serve. I look forward to the benefits that a combined Echostar and Hughes Electronics can offer and I urge you to support this merger.

Sincerely,

Shelby Robert