

*Original*  
~~ROBERTS BROADCASTING COMPANY~~



**WHSL**

March 7, 2002

The Honorable Kathleen Q. Abernathy  
FCC  
445 Twelfth Street SW  
Washington, DC 20054

**RECEIVED**

MAR 12 2002

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

*Have placed in  
docket as an  
ex parte*

*01-348*

**EX PARTE OR LATE FILED**

Dear Chairman:

Roberts Broadcasting is a minority-owned business that currently owns two local television stations in St. Louis, Missouri and Boulder, Colorado. We recently acquired additional licenses for stations in Columbia, South Carolina, and Jackson, Mississippi.

None of our stations are carried by Echostar or DirecTV, and we remain skeptical that Echostar will fulfill its recent promise to carry local TV stations in all 210 markets. Echostar has made promises to local broadcasters before and broken them, and even while Mr. Ergen pledges to one day carry our stations, his lawyers are suing the government to overturn the "carry-one, carry-all" obligation. When such behavior is juxtaposed with the potential DBS merger and their increasing market share, it becomes even more important that the FCC license new competitors.

One such competitor that we are excited about is Northpoint Technology's Broadwave affiliate network. Northpoint will carry every local station in all 210 markets, an essential ingredient to continue providing diverse regional news and programming to rural viewers.

Furthermore, as successful African-American businessmen, we are particularly excited that the vast majority of Northpoint's affiliates are women and minorities. Such an influx of diversity in media ownership will have a dramatic impact on the industry and will expand program and content offerings to serve the needs of local markets.

We are concerned that the Commission is considering licensing this new service by holding an auction, and urge you to vote against such an unnecessary procedure. The continuing consolidation of both the cable and DBS industries makes it imperative that the FCC license new competitors as quickly as possible. The consumer benefits an innovative company such as Northpoint will bring more than outweigh the marginal benefits of an auction. Furthermore, an auction will not only delay the introduction of new competition, but will make it unlikely that minority-owned small businesses will be able to compete effectively by pitting them against large companies that have received most of their spectrum without an auction.

Clearly, we need competitive alternatives now. We urge the Commission to issue licenses to Northpoint to bring its vital new service to the nation.

Sincerely,

Michael V. Roberts  
CEO

**ROBERTS BROADCASTING COMPANY**

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