

AMDG
BOB SCHAFFER
MEMBER OF CONGRESS FROM COLORADO
FOURTH DISTRICT
212 CANNON HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515



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(202) 225-4878
E-mail: rep.schaffer@mail.house.gov
www.house.gov/schaffer/

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

May 16, 2002

The Honorable Michael Powell
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20554

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Dear Chairman Powell:

The announced merger between EchoStar Communications (DISH Network) and Hughes Electronics (DirecTV) is a significant step in the pay television industry, and very important to the state of Colorado.

The merger between America's two largest satellite television providers can be a benefit to consumers if their interests are addressed and safeguarded in the merger. It is my hope that you will evaluate the benefits of the merger on their merits and adopt a plan that ensures competition in the pay television market as a whole and protects those with no alternative.

Many satellite television consumers have cable television as a competitive option for service, yet many do not. Such is the case in many of the small towns in the rural area I represent.

In order for all consumers to continue to receive the benefits of competition in the pay television industry, it is vital that the merged EchoStar entity price its services on a nationwide basis. In doing so, all consumers benefit from the satellite-based television prices, which are determined by taking into consideration the extensive competition that currently exists in most areas of the country.

The potential benefits of the proposed merger, such as enhanced services and EchoStar's proposed nation-wide local station service, are considerable. For these reasons, I believe the merger proposal merits your prompt and thorough review.

Thank you for considering my views as they relate to the future of satellite television service.

Very truly yours,

Bob Schaffer
Member of Congress
from Colorado

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