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ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-2903

ARMED SERVICES

May 23, 2002

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

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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

*M.P. Step
Boyd
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MKP*

01-348 2069

Dear Chairman Powell:

I am writing you with regard to the pending merger of EchoStar and DIRECTV. For many people in New Hampshire, satellite service is the only option available for multi-channel programming. I am concerned that the merger provide fair pricing, prompt service and cutting-edge programming and technology.

Proponents have stated that the merger will benefit from the massive increase in Direct Broadcast Satellite capacity which will result in the elimination of duplicate programming. As a result, consumers will not only have access to national broadcasts, but local broadcasting with a digital-quality picture and CD-quality sound at competitive rates.

I also understand that the merged company will be able to deliver meaningful satellite-based broadband – this is of particular importance to me as many rural areas do not have access to either cable or DSL broadband service.

If concerns about rural service and fair competition are addressed in the final provisions, I believe that the merger should receive every consideration. Whatever the decision, however, it is clear that a decision needs to be made soon as possible. Many small businesses who directly or indirectly provide satellite television service are on hold awaiting a final determination by the Department of Justice and the Federal Trade Commission. This is having a negative effect on many of those businesses.

I recognize that there are many aspects to consider before a decision can be made regarding such a complex merger; however, a quick resolution will allow consumers and business alike to move forward.

Sincerely

Bob Smith
Bob Smith
U.S. Senator

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