

I support the Echostar/DirectTV merger and do not believe that it creates anti-trust problems. The satellite TV providers are not primarily in competition against each other. Rather they compete primarily against cable providers who continue to merge and grow larger. The Echostar merger will allow satellite to be large enough to effectively compete with the cable mega-corporations such as Cox and AOL-Time Warner.

As long as Echostar continues to have nationally uniform pricing, I see no concern for rural areas without cable service. I first subscribed to Dish (Echostar) while living in such an area and continue to subscribe now that I live in a cable serviced area since satellite is superior to cable on price and quality bases. The big drawback was and is the lack of local channel availability on satellite. This is also the primary synergy resulting from the proposed merger. If the satellite providers merge they will commit to providing universal local coverage, but this will not happen without the merger due to the cost. This will be a tremendous benefit to the rural subscriber who has no access to cable and poor reception of locals from conventional antennae. It will also allow the satellite companies to compete head to head on the same basis with the cable companies.

It is my opinion that this proposed merger is a win-win situation. It increases competition for the cable companies who typically have an effective monopoly in a given area except satellite service. It also allows remote rural users to have the benefit of reasonable subscription pricing, quality local service, and multi-channel access. Unless action is taken to reduce the monopolistic status the cable companies enjoy, it would be unfair to call this merger the creation of a monopoly when it would actually increase competition.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter.