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STATE OF LOUISIANA
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MICHAEL G. "MIKE" STRAIN, DVM
DISTRICT 74

March 4, 2002

02-226328
01-348

Honorable Michael Powell, Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th St. S.W.
Washington DC 20554
Ref Docket: 01-348

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APR 29 2002

Federal Communications Commission
Office of Secretary

Dear Chairman Powell:

I am writing to encourage your favorable consideration of the pending merger of EchoStar Communications and Hughes Electronics. The new company will be an excellent competitor to cable companies, which control 80% of the pay television households. With this increase in competition, cable companies will be motivated to improve their own services at lower cost.

The new company would make a difference in many rural areas throughout our state that currently do not have access to high speed internet service. Direct Broadcast Satellite TV will be able to provide interactive TV educational programs in most of our schools and videos on demand. This will increase educational opportunities and enable more quality programming choices.

The merged company will also help to bridge the "digital divide" that exists between urban and rural residents. The merger 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.

By overcoming the barrier of access, homes and businesses and schools throughout the state of Louisiana will benefit economically, financially, and academically.

Please consider the facts and support this merger. It is pro-consumer, pro-competition, and would allow fast, affordable, broadband service into the homes of many rural resident across the state.

Sincerely,

Michael G. "Mike" Strain, DVM
Louisiana State Representative
District 74

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