

As a constituent, I am writing to you regarding the proposed DIRECTV-EchoStar merger. I am deeply concerned about the effect of this planned merger on rural consumers like me.

As you may know, few homes in my part of the country have access to digital cable because of their rural location. Consumers like me currently have only two real choices for TV programming: DIRECTV or DISH Network. If this merger goes through, rural consumers will be faced with an unregulated monopoly.

Too many times, mergers promise 'more choice' and 'better service' only to have these promises fall flat after the deal is approved. I'm very concerned that this will happen with the proposed DIRECTV-EchoStar merger.

I am afraid that the monopoly will charge higher prices for my satellite television service -- and that I'll have fewer choices for my programming. I am also concerned about the level of service I may receive. It is doubtful that a new monopoly will give me the same level of quality service and customer support that I am now accustomed to.

I am also concerned about the effect this merger could have on my access to broadband Internet. Currently, both companies offer broadband -- if there is only one provider, I am concerned about costs and service options.

Please let Attorney General John Ashcroft and Federal Communications Commission Chairman Michael Powell know that you oppose this merger.

Thank you for your work in Congress to protect rural consumers. Please tell me the steps that you will take to protect me and my community from the monopoly threat of this merger.