

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

Dear Chairman Powell:

I'm writing to urge you to support the proposed merger between EchoStar Communications and Hughes Electronics. I believe the merger holds tremendous potential for my company in DeForest, WI which sells EchoStar's DISH Network satellite TV service. The new company will offer a more attractive product to consumers, and this will mean more business for my company.

None of my customers can receive their local broadcast channels via satellite because the DISH Network does not have the channel capacity to carry smaller television markets. Currently, EchoStar offers service in only 36 markets. This is a source of frustration for my consumers. The proposed merger between EchoStar and DIRECTV would allow the combined company to offer local broadcast channels in all 210 television markets nationwide by eliminating the duplication of identical programming carried by both services. If the merger is approved, satellite TV will be a more competitive alternative to cable, and this is good for business.

For my customers who do enjoy access to high-speed DSL and cable Internet service, this merger will result in increased competition in the broadband market, because the new EchoStar will provide an affordable high speed Internet access service via satellite. This would help drive down prices of the DSL and cable providers. For those living beyond the reach of cable and DSL wires, the new EchoStar would be their only chance of affordable high speed Internet service.

This merger will increase satellite TV's ability to respond competitively to the roll out of digital cable, forcing cable companies to respond in a variety of ways including accelerating their digital upgrades and extending their wires out to reach those customers they currently do not serve. The resulting expansion in digital capabilities across the board will increase competition generally, will drive hardware upgrades for consumers, and drive retail traffic and sales nationwide.

In addition to the benefits already mentioned, the spectrum savings would allow the new company to offer new and enhanced television services, such as high definition television, interactive television, and near video-on-demand. These innovations will increase the allure of satellite TV and offer new sales opportunities for satellite TV hardware.

The new company will offer many benefits to customers, but the most important one is local broadcast channels via satellite in all U.S. television markets. This is the one service most sought after by my customers. I urge you to support the proposed merger between EchoStar and DIRECTV because local channels for all Americans is only possible if the companies are allowed to combine.

Sincerely,

Melanie Thielbar  
639 South Main Street Suite 105  
DeForest, WI 53532